

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday 21 February 2019 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour	Mr A Jarvie
Mr B Boyd	Ms E Knox
Mr I Brown	Mr R Laird
Mrs C Caddick	Mrs I MacKenzie
Miss J Campbell	Mr D MacPherson
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr A Christie	Mrs E McAllister
Mr G Cruickshank	Mrs T Robertson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr G Ross
Mr J Gray	Mr C Smith

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms F McNally, ICATN Programme Manager, Development & Infrastructure
Ms N Wallace, Environment Manager, Development & Infrastructure
Mr S Eastaugh, Access Officer, Development & Infrastructure
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport, Community Services
Mr J Taylor, Roads Operations Manager (Inverness), Community Services
Mr R Bartlett, Technician, Community Services
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance, Community Services
Mrs S McKandie, Benefits & Welfare Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector C Gough, Police Scotland
Ms L Junor, Operations Manager, High Life Highland

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 Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr K Gowans and Mr A Graham.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-
Item 5 – Miss J Campbell and Mr A Christie (non-financial)
Item 6 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)
Item 8 – Mr A Jarvie and Mr D Macpherson (non-financial)
Item 11 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)
Item 15 – Mr A Jarvie (non-financial)

3. New Year's Honours Urraman na Bliadhna Ùire

The Committee **NOTED** that the following individuals had been recognised in the New Year's Honours List:-

- Susan MacKenzie, OBE
- Ann Gloag, Dame

The Committee also **NOTED** that:-

- Highland pupil, Matthew Clark, had received a national award for Geography in SQA Highland Geography 2018 exam; and
- Inverness Town House had been commended in the UK Natural Stone Awards 2018 winning joint first place with the Palace of Westminster in the Repair and Restoration category.

4. Police – Area Performance Summary Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/1/19 dated 7 February 2019 by the Inverness Area Commander.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Concern was expressed that there had been no reduction in the number of drink driving offences compared to the previous year and it was requested that a breakdown of the drink and drug driving offences be provided;
- A number of concerns were raised in regard to drug activity and the need for early and effective intervention was stressed. It was queried whether the increase in drug misuse offences was the result of more proactive policing or increasing drug activity;
- Concern was expressed at the level of shoplifting and further information was sought and provided on the support being provided to repeat offenders. Requests were made for further demographic information with a view to identifying and tackling the root causes of shoplifting;
- Assurance was sought and provided that vulnerable people, particularly children, were provided with strong multi-agency support in regard to domestic violence. The importance of supporting multi-agency partners to drive down this statistic and also sexual crimes was stressed;
- Confirmation was sought and provided that Police Scotland was preparing for potential crime spikes post BREXIT and that this structure would include a strand in regard to hate crimes; and

- There was a need to discuss the issues raised in the report in more detail as well as examining ways to enhance cross partner agency working to improve outcomes and it was suggested that a seminar would provide an opportunity for this.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20 Year 2, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2018 to 1 December 2018; and
- ii. **AGREED** that:-
 - a. a breakdown of the drink and drug driving offences be provided to Councillor J Campbell;
 - b. an analytical profile be provided in regard shoplifting and circulated to Members; and
 - c. an Inverness Seminar be arranged in order to gain a better understanding of the local issues and how to improve outcomes.

**5. Inverness Community Safety Partnership – Operation Respect City Centre 2018/19 Winter Festival Period Evaluation Report
Com-pàirteachas Sàbhailteachd Coimhearsnachd Inbhir Nis – Aithisg Mheasaidh Ùine Fèis Geamhraidh 2018/19 ‘Operation Respect’ Meadhan a’ Bhaile**

Declaration of Interest – Miss J Campbell declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Member of the Inverness Community Safety Partnership 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.

Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/2/19 dated 21 January 2019 by the Inverness City Area Manager and the Inverness Area Commander (Highland and Islands Division, Police Scotland) Inverness BID, British Red Cross and Inverness Street Pastors.

During discussion Members commended the multi-agency working and recognised the valuable contributions by partners to ensuring enhanced community safety within the Inverness City Centre.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the evaluation available to date on the effectiveness of Operation Respect – City Centre for Winter 2018/19.

6. Accessing Inverness Inntrigeadh Inbhir Nis

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of Highland and Islands Society for Blind People 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 Joint Report No CIA/3/19 dated 13 February 2019 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure and the Hitrans Partnership Director.

Following a detailed presentation of the report, Members raised the following issues during discussion:-

- Although the overall concept of the project was welcome, Members expressed a number of concerns regarding the proposals including removal of the controlled crossings and realigning the pavement and road to the same level on Academy Street and the safety implications of these, particularly for vulnerable people such as members of the blind/partially sighted community. In addition, further concern was expressed at the impact of the proposals on buses (usage of which should be encouraged/increased) trying to join on to Academy Street if controlled crossings were removed thus reducing the likelihood of breaks in traffic. Even though pavement widening was welcome, concern was expressed at the removal of the filter lanes for right turning in order to facilitate this and it was felt that removal of these lanes would be detrimental on overall traffic flow. It was not felt that the proposals were helpful in terms of encouraging cyclists and it was highlighted that speeding was not an issue on Academy Street but that pollution was and this should be addressed;
- Concern was expressed at the lack of feedback within the report on the outcome of the consultation process. The importance of ensuring that consultees’ responses, particularly from vulnerable groups, had been listened to by demonstrating that they had influenced the outcome to ensure a design that was both inclusive and functional was emphasised. There was a need for an Equalities Impact Assessment to be undertaken as quickly as possible;
- A request was made to ensure that adequate cycle racks and storage were included within the design; and
- Overall, although supportive of the project, Members were not comfortable with the recommendations set out in the report and were of the view that further work had to be undertaken as a matter of priority in view of the deadline for submission of a funding application to Sustrans to progress the project to detailed design stage. On that basis it was recommended that the report should be noted at this stage pending a further report being submitted to a special meeting of the Committee indicating the outcome of the consultation process in a ‘You said we did’ format along with an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report, including the background to the Accessing Inverness project, community and stakeholder engagement, and consultation process;
- ii. **NOTED** that the outcome of the public consultation that closed on 1 February 2019 and **AGREED** that the outcome of this be reported back as swiftly as possible to Committee Members and the public on a 'You said, we did basis' along with an Equalities Impact Assessment; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a Special meeting of the Committee be arranged prior to the funding deadline to consider the aforementioned information.

At this point (12.15 pm), the meeting was adjourned and reconvened at 12.20 pm.

7. Inverness and Nairn Local Access Forum Appointments

Cur an Dreuchd gu Fòram Inntrigidh Ionadail Inbhir Nis agus Inbhir Narann

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/4/19 dated 7 February 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion Members welcomed that the appointments process would be reviewed with a view to being more streamlined in future.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the applications submitted to fill the Access Taker vacancy on the Local Access Forum;
- ii. **APPROVED** the appointment of the preferred candidate; and
- iii. **AGREED** a solution to selecting a preferred candidate should the Nairnshire Committee not endorse the same candidate.

8. Town House Tours

Cuairtean Taigh a' Bhaile

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Jarvie and Mr D Macpherson declared a non-financial interest in this item as directors 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 their interest did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/5/19 dated 5 February 2019 by the Inverness City Area Manager and Principal Cultural Manager High Life Highland.

During discussion it was clarified that:-

- a tour group could comprise of a maximum of 12 people with each tour averaging approximately 4/5 tourists; and
- tours were advertised across a number of platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Inverness Museums website and also via the Viewpoint.

The Chairman further reported that there had been approximately 800 attendees at the Town House Open Day and that this would continue as an annual event.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

At this point (12.40pm), the meeting was adjourned for lunch and reconvened at 1.10 pm.

9. Roads Maintenance Programme 2019/2020 Prògram Càradh Rathaidean 2019/2020

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/6/19 dated 7 February 2019 by Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- It was important that Members listened to the advice of the professional officers and on that basis it was essential that the surface dressing works commenced as soon as possible, as delaying these works resulted in increased costs, with discussions being held thereafter on how additional monies could be allocated on the roads distribution formula. Appreciation was expressed to the roads maintenance team for the considerable work that had been undertaken to date;
- Although the advice and expertise of officers was valued, concern was expressed that at the significant disparity of the budget allocation between the City of Inverness area and the rest of the Highlands. It was highlighted that the existing roads distribution formula was based on road length as opposed to usage which was a key factor that should also be taken into consideration. A number of other Members expressed a similar view that the existing formula was flawed and was in need of review, particularly as maintenance needs increased and the budget allocation lessened. It was suggested that the current system was too parochial and there was a need for an allocation formula for roads maintenance to be devised to better reflect infrastructure design, usage and actual maintenance costs. In addition, it was further highlighted that this issue of ensuring a fair allocation for the City of Inverness area had been raised last year and disappointment was expressed that the matter had not been further progressed;
- However, concern was expressed at the level of claims being levied against the Council for damage to cars as a result of the condition of some roads at present and it was therefore imperative that the surface dressing works, which was the most cost efficient method of repair, were undertaken as soon as possible;
- At present roads maintenance proposals were submitted on a ward basis for consideration at Ward Business Meetings, however the roads network crossed ward boundaries and it was therefore essential that Members collectively considered proposals on a City wide basis; and
- Key roads such as industrial estates were not being prioritised and consequently were in a desperate state of repair and this needed to be addressed.

Thereafter, Mrs M Davidson **MOVED** a **MOTION** seconded by the Provost that work begins immediately on the road maintenance programme for Inverness and Area as outlined in the report and to agree to additional discussion in Inverness on the application of the additional roads monies following the budget and any proposed changes in the Highland wide community services allocation formulas.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Christie seconded by Mr J Gray, moved that the report be noted and to agree that an urgent seminar be held with a special meeting of the Committee thereafter to approve the Roads Maintenance Programme 2019/20.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 7 votes and **AMENDMENT** received 13 votes with no abstentions and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED** the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr R Balfour, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Ms E Knox, Mr D Macpherson and Mr G Ross,

For the Amendment:

Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mrs C Caddick, Miss J Campbell, Mr A Christie, Mr J Gray, Mr A Jarvie, Mr R Laird, Mr I Mackenzie, Mr R MacWilliam, Mrs E McAllister, Mrs T Robertson, and Mr C Smith.

Abstentions:

None

Decision

The Committee **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that an urgent seminar be held with a special meeting of the Committee thereafter to approve the Roads Maintenance Programme 2019/20.

**10. Smithton Primary Safer Routes to School
Slighean nas Sàbhailte do Bhun-Sgoil Bhaile a' Ghobhainn**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/7/19 dated 31 January 2019 by Director of Community Services.

During discussion Members welcomed the scheme acknowledging the enhancement that it would bring to the school environment. It was suggested that consideration should be given to installing barriers at both ends of the street in order to restrict traffic whilst the works were being completed.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the traffic calming feature on Smithton Park.

**11. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 31 December 2018
Aithisg Dèanadais Taigheadais – 1 Giblean gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2018**

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item as General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/8/19 dated 6 February 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- It was highlighted that some local authorities in England were offering incentives for promptly vacating properties and it was requested that consideration should be given to implementing a similar scheme;
- Further information was requested on the reasons for voids as was a breakdown on the reasons for tenancy offers being refused;
- It was queried whether the Council could do more to help tenants address/avoid rent arrears; and
- Clarity was sought and provided on the Emergency Repairs benchmark.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on Housing Performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018; and
- ii. **AGREED** that further information be provided to Councillor A Christie on a breakdown of the reasons for voids and a breakdown be provided to Councillor J Campbell on the reasons for tenancy offers being refused.

**12. Inverness Common Good Fund: Discretionary Scheme for Winter Payments 2018/19 Interim Update
Maoin Mathas Coitcheann Inbhir Nis: Sgeama fo Ùghdarras airson Phàighidhean Geamhraidh 2018/19 Cunntas Eadar-amail**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/9/19 dated 8 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion Members commended officers for implementing the Discretionary Scheme for Winter Payments and their proactive approach to ensuring maximum take-up.

Thereafter, the Committee;-

- i. **NOTED** the fairly significant increase in take-up of the scheme to date;
- ii. **NOTED** the ongoing measures that were being taken to ensure the scheme continued to be both effective and efficient; and

- iii. **AGREED** an annual recharge from 2019/20 in respect of the administrative overhead currently being absorbed by the Highland Council's Revenues & Customer Services section (as per the Budget Setting Report for 2019/20 on the agenda).

13. Homologation of New Street Names Aontachadh Ainmean Ùra Sràide

There had been circulated Report No CIA/10/19 dated 25 January 2019 by the Acting Head of Policy and Reform.

During discussion, Members raised the following main issues:-

- Concern was expressed at the proposed street name of Cumberland Crescent which was felt to be insensitive and distasteful;
- There was an element of honour associated with street naming and it was therefore essential that names were selected following careful consideration;
- It was highlighted that the names had been considered and approved by the relevant community councils; and
- It was reported that Culchunaig Road already existed/was in use adjacent to Culloden Battlefield.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED TO HOMOLOGATE** the naming of new streets as set out in the report with the exception of Cumberland Crescent.

14. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

(a) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/11/19 dated 25 January 2019 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 3 January 2019 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets.

(b) Budget Setting for 2019/20 and Capital Programme Suidheachadh Buidseit airson 2019/20 agus Prògram

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/12/19 dated 21 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and the Inverness City Area Manager.

In presenting the report, the Inverness City Area Manager proposed that in order to generate cost efficiencies, the installation of the new doors should be deferred to coincide with the planned mechanical and electrical works.

During discussion, confirmation was provided that an update would be provided to Councillor D Macpherson on the building at Upper Bridge Street.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the Common Good Fund budget for 2019/20 detailed within the report and appendices;
- ii. **AGREED** to maintain a general reserve of £2m and reallocate the remaining uncommitted sum of £1.6m to a Property Investment Fund;
- iii. **NOTED** that Officers would continue to monitor projected cash flow for the Common Good Fund, in particular through the Capital Projects Monitoring Report, with an emphasis on the utilisation of surplus revenue either within projects or as an opportunity for investment;
- iv. **AGREED** that the works to replace the entrance doors at Academy Street be deferred to coincide with the planned works to the Market Shopfronts; and
- v. **AGREED** that an update be provided to Councillor D Macpherson on the building at Upper Bridge Street.

(c) Grants and Capital Projects
Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/13/19 dated 7 February 2019 by the Inverness City Area Manager. In this connection, there had also been circulated a copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the applications for funding and those from Inverness BID and **NOTED** the current status of capital projects.

(d) Investment Performance Summary Report
Geàrr-Aithisg mu Dhèanadas Tasgaidh

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/14/19 dated 11 January 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Inverness City Area Manager.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

(e) Events and Festivals – Outturn Report 2017/18
Tachartasan agus Fèisean – Aithisg Suidheachadh Deireannach 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No. Report No. CIA/15/19 dated 8 February 2019 by Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Members welcomed the detailed financial breakdown and requested that this information continue to be provided on an annual basis;
- Concern was expressed at the level of money being spent on the Hogmanay event and it was queried whether spending such a significant sum on a single event was value for money. It was further suggested that a report should be undertaken examining the feasibility of charging for such an event as well as more collaborative working with partners with a view to the event being self-financing in the future;
- It was requested that consideration should be given to investing in new Christmas decorations for the City;

- The Chairman of the Events and Festivals Working Group highlighted that an excellent series of safe events had been delivered and Members acknowledged the benefits that these provided for locals as well as the wider positive impact on the economy of the City. Continuing he explained that the Group was endeavouring to operate more commercially, highlighting the success of a recently launched merchandising contract, but he requested support and patience to enable these measures to come to fruition; and
- It was recommended that there be more collaborative working with partner agencies in order to achieve economies of scale and it was confirmed that work had commenced in this regard.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

15. Appointments to Outside Bodies **Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean on Taobh A-muigh**

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Board of Management Member of Highland Disability Sport 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 decision.

Following the resignation of Mrs B McAllister, the Committee **AGREED** the following appointments to Outside Bodies –

- Inverness Area Sports Council – Duncan Macpherson
- Highland Disability Sport – Andrew Jarvie
- Inverness Town Twinning – Bill Boyd

Following the resignation of Mr A Christie, the Committee **NOTED** to that a vacancy remained on the ICArts Working Group.

16. Minutes **Geàrr-chunntas**

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

- Victorian Market Stakeholder Group held on 6 November 2018 and 8 January 2019 **NOTED**;
- City of Inverness Area Committee held on 22 November 2018 **NOTED**;
- Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 3 December 2018 for **APPROVED**;
- Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 19 January 2019 **APPROVED** and
- Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 28 January 2019 **APPROVED**.

Arising from the Victorian Market Stakeholder Group Minutes (Page 130), it was reported that in return for a modest fee it was feasible to ensure that the website was listed at the top of the first search engine page.

At this point (3.25 pm), the meeting was adjourned and reconvened at 3.30 pm.

**17. Exclusion of the Public
Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

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

There had been circulated to Members only Joint Report No CIA/16/19 dated 31 January 2019 by the Head of Development and Regeneration and the Property Manager (Estates).

The Committee **NOTED** the report and that a response would be provided on the query raised by Councillor T Robertson.

The meeting ended at 3.35 pm.