

**The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Town Centre Fund Working Group** held in the Leader's Meeting Room, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Tuesday 26 November 2019 at 2.00 pm.

**Present:-**

Miss J Campbell  
Mr C Fraser  
Mr J Gray  
Mr A Henderson

Mr J Gordon  
Mrs A MacLean  
Mrs T Robertson (Chair)

**In attendance:-**

Mr A McCann, Economy and Regeneration Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Service

**Business**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dr I Cockburn, Mr S Mackie, Mrs F Robertson, Mr K Rosie and Mr A Sinclair.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes**

There had been circulated, and was **NOTED**, Minutes of Meeting of the Town Centre Fund Working Group held on 30 October 2019.

**4. Town Centre Fund Project Assessment and Approval - City of Inverness Area Projects**

There had been circulated Report No TCF/03/19 dated 22 November 2019 by the Executive Chief Officer Transformation and Economy.

Members were reminded that the Town Centre Fund Working Group on 30 October 2019 had approved three projects but referred two projects considered to be ineligible by officers to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure (EDI) Committee on 7 November 2019. The EDI Committee agreed that the Inverness projects be deferred out of the approval process and brought to the Inverness City of Inverness Area (CIA) Committee for project ranking and to bring these recommendations back to a future meeting of the Town Centre Fund Working Group. At the CIA Committee on 21 November 2019, Members agreed ranked recommendations. However, three projects, namely, the Pavilion Ardersier, the Sports Pitch and Fisherman's Hut, did not meet the Scottish Government eligibility criteria and a final decision on these three projects would require determination at the Highland Council meeting on 9 December, as the

Town Centre Fund Working Group did not have authority to do so. These projects were considered ineligible for the following reasons:-

- The Pavilion, Cromal Hill, Ardersier - while located in an eligible settlement, the project location is on the edge of the settlement and removed from the commercial centre of the town. The project therefore does not seek in itself to increase footfall and improve the viability and sustainability of a town centre.
- Inverness Campus Sports Pitch - the project location was not located within an eligible town centre and sports infrastructure or sports facilities was not considered as town centre infrastructure.
- Fishermen's Hut, Bught Park – the project was for sports infrastructure with a cultural/heritage dimension, it was not town centre infrastructure and the proposed new build property at Bught Road was not located within an eligible town centre.

If Council consider these projects as ineligible and rejected them, the CIA sought that the grant was re-disbursed to the Victorian Market and Midmills as both projects sought higher grant levels and could utilise an increased Town Centre Fund award.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- the Inverness Lighting Project had been withdrawn by Members at the CIA Committee;
- if the Scottish Government deemed that any project did not meet its criteria there was a potential risk that it could seek to withhold or recover grant paid to Council. If this arose and project had grant offer letter in place and had commenced, the funding would have to be met from the Council's resources; and
- letters intimating award of grant would not be made until after the Council meeting.

The Working Group:-

- NOTED** the ranked recommendations received from the City of Inverness Area Committee;
- AGREED** the following project awards, recognising that the value of the final award letter might slightly vary:-

Ranked Projects	Applicant	TCF award
Victorian Market – redevelopment of the market hall to create a quality food and beverage offering, including 18 units and flexible entertainment space.	Inverness Common Good / Highland Council	£250k
Midmills Phase 2 – meeting spaces; exhibition/event spaces, café, 54 workspaces, 26 flexible co-working spaces and access ramp/lift.	WASPS	£160k

- \* iii. **NOTED** the referral to the Highland Council on 9 December 2019 for determination of the three projects assessed by officers as ineligible:-

Pavilion, Cromal Hill Ardersier – refurbish Cromal Hill Recreation £40k  
pavilion including new windows, doors, Trust  
showers, flooring, kitchen units and  
external refresh.

Sports Pitch, Inverness College UHI – Inverness College UHI £126k  
construction of a full size 3G synthetic  
sports pitch.

Fishermans Hut, Bught Park – rebuilding Inverness Angling Club £20k  
of Inverness Angling Club hut.

- \* iv. **NOTED** that the City of Inverness Area Committee had requested that should the grant award for the Pavilion Ardersier, Sports Pitch and Fisherman’s Hut projects be rejected, the funding be reallocated to the Victorian Market and Midmills building.

The meeting ended at 2.10 pm