

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held **REMOTELY** on Thursday 27 August 2020 at 10.00am.

Present:

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| Mr R Balfour | Mr A Jarvie |
| Mr B Boyd | Ms E Knox |
| Mr I Brown | Mrs I MacKenzie |
| Miss J Campbell | Mr D Macpherson |
| Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair | Mr R MacWilliam |
| Mrs H Carmichael | Mrs B McAllister |
| Mr A Christie | Mrs T Robertson |
| Mrs M Davidson | Ms E Roddick |
| Mr K Gowans | Mr G Ross |
| Mr J Gray | Mr C Smith |

Non-Member also present:

Mr A Baxter

Officials in Attendance:

Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure and Environment
Ms A Clark, Head of Policy, Chief Executive's Office
Mr A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration
Ms S McKandie, Head of Revenues and Customer Services
Mr K Forbes, Property Manager (Estates Management)
Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr J Kelman, Principal Project Manager
Mr R MacLeod, Housing Manager
Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager
Mr G Munro, Policy and Assurance Officer
Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator

Also in attendance:

Ms F Hampton, Director of the Inverness Castle Project, High Life Highland
Ms A Bell, Marketing Officer, High Life Highland
Mr S MacKellar, LDN Architects
Group Commander R Nixon, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Chief Inspector M MacInnes, Inverness Area Commander, Police Scotland

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

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Provost and Leader of Inverness and Area highlighted that the former Divisional Commander for Highland and Islands Division, Chief Superintendent George Macdonald, had taken up a new post. A new Divisional Commander, Chief Superintendent Conrad Trickett, was now in post and

she would be meeting with him in the next few weeks to hear about Police plans for the city and area, and to discuss matters of mutual concern. She commended the excellent collaborative work that had been undertaken during Chief Superintendent Macdonald's tenure, particularly the substantial progress that had been made in dealing with challenging behaviour in public spaces within the city which had led to significant improvements in use and enjoyment of the city streets. She thanked Chief Superintendent Macdonald for all his work in supporting the city and area, and looked forward to welcoming Chief Superintendent Trickett to a future meeting of the Committee.

In addition, in relation to the new pedestrian crossing on the A82 trunk road, Highland Senior Citizens Network and Inverness Sight Impaired Group had expressed thanks to the Council, particularly Local Members for bringing this forward and for their assistance throughout the project.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs C Caddick and Mr A Graham.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 3 – Mr A Jarvie (non-financial)

Item 8 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)

Item 13 – Mr K Gowans and Mr A Jarvie (both non-financial)

3. Presentation – Inverness Castle Project Update Taisbeanadh – Cunntas às Ùr mu Phròiseact Caisteal Inbhir Nis

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Jarvie declared a 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 by representatives from the Inverness Castle Project Team updating Members on the progress of the project.

In this regard, a video was shown providing a virtual tour of the castle, prior to transformation. It was commented that this video could be circulated to Members if they so wished and would be in the public domain through social media outlets shortly.

An update was provided on the design process and images were shown of the project design. It was commented that there was some delay in the project process due to the current pandemic with approximately eight weeks being lost overall. However, officers were confident that this time could be made up as the project progressed.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- an assurance was sought that all areas of the building would be fully accessible, including the areas outside the building and the access from Castle Street;
- Members commended the overall design, contemporary and consistent theme, and use of high-quality materials and ideas for the project;
- concerns were expressed regarding the choice of colour for the hoardings on the river side, given that the castle was a focal point for photographs, and it was requested that consideration be given to altering the colour to match the brickwork of the building rather than the trees. In relation to the street-facing hoardings, it would be good if there was some mention of the other elements of the development;
- several Members having raised the issue of what would be available inside the castle building, it was requested that consideration be given to a Members' briefing on matters including proposals for inside the castle building, the business plan, landscaping and Phase 2 of the project. It was added that regular briefings would be helpful;
- information was sought on energy efficiency standards and whether there was scope to use micro-renewables on site;
- in relation to the 100 stories element of the project, it was asked what the timescales would be for public consultation and how local views would be fed into the process at an early stage;
- information was sought on the strategic plan to encourage patrons to visit the castle repeatedly rather than on a one-time basis;
- in relation to the asbestos survey, information was sought on whether any potential removal works and associated contingencies had been included in the budget;
- concern was expressed that the Gaelic Society of Inverness had not been involved in the project;
- it was suggested that a standalone website be created to show the stages and progression of the project and provide an opportunity for feedback;
- it was suggested that there could be an online event whereby the public could view the presentation and have an opportunity to provide feedback;
- it was queried whether there would be retail opportunities inside the castle and whether they would be sourced locally;
- in relation to the use of technology, it was queried whether augmented reality would be utilised;
- information was sought on whether an educational aspect would be explored with schools;
- in relation to accessibility, it was queried whether there would be a drop off point;
- it was suggested that if more than 100 stories were received they be kept, utilized and rotated so everyone had an opportunity to tell their story and repeat visitors would have new stories to experience; and
- it was necessary to use social media to promote the castle as a venue, and to invest in advertising to attract future customers.

Officers responded in detail to the points/questions raised, during which it was confirmed that:-

- accessibility had been a key focus in the design phase and there would be two new lifts installed, one in each building, as well as wide spaces and ramps that took account of minor changes in levels. It was commented that the vast majority of the building and the esplanade would be accessible. However, there were minor inaccessible areas such as the basement;
- given Members' comments, officers would look into altering the colour of the hoardings to match the castle brickwork;
- The Spirit of the Highlands was the theme of the content and would be told within 100 stories in the castle. Beginning next week these stories would be gathered from across the Highlands and themes would be drawn out. The Spirit of the Highlands went beyond the walls of the castle and would be interpreted from artists across the region to create content;
- the community engagement for the 100 stories was in the very early stages. The aim was that it would be one of the most publicly involved projects, with the community being key to providing the content. The first layer of assessment would be completed by local panels that would be set up in each area. Young people were a key group in terms of engagement, and stories would be told with a feel for the past, present and future. Feedback would be sought from Members on how to gather the stories;
- the Gaelic community had been and would continue to be closely engaged in the process;
- there were no concerns regarding the asbestos survey. However, there was ample funding within the contract to cover any eventuality;
- a feasibility study on energy sources had been carried out, further information on which would be provided following consideration by the Project Board and Delivery Group;
- a web portal would become available on 5 September 2020 and would contain a virtual tour, information about submitting stories, background on Castle Hill and artists impressions. This would be a temporary web portal until such time as the long-term website was designed and procured;
- in the near future, the School Engagement Officer would be engaging with schools and "Young Flora", who would be introduced on the hoardings, would be developed into a character that primary schools in particular could engage with;
- augmented reality technology would be developed for the project;
- there were many opportunities for retail and catering developments with a focus on local produce;
- the suggestion of an online event for the public would be taken forward by officers;
- the use of technology would allow the team to keep the stories new and fresh for repeat visitors;
- Creative Scotland had awarded £150,000 of funding which would allow the first batch of stories to be interpreted by local artists in various mediums such as film, poetry and song. The ultimate interpretation would be completed using professional expertise and by liaising with colleagues from other visitor attractions, such as Edinburgh Castle, to get the venue to a world class standard that would attract locals and international visitors alike; and
- officers could continue to attend Ward Business Meetings to provide updated information on the project as and when required.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation; and
- ii. **AGREED** that discussions take place regarding the possibility of a Members' briefing on matters including proposals for inside the Castle building, the business plan, landscaping and Phase 2 of the project.

**4. Appointments to Sub-Committee, Working Groups etc
Cur an dreuchd gu Fo-Chomataidh, Buidhnean Obrach is eile**

Following the death of Mr George Cruickshank, the Committee had been invited to appoint a replacement Member to the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee.

Following discussion as to whether the Sub-Committee was politically balanced, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. that the appointment of a replacement Member to the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- ii. that a list of the various sub-groups of the Committee, and whether or not they were politically balanced, be provided to Committee Members.

**5. Scottish Fire and Rescue – Area Performance Report
Smàladh is Teasairginn na h-Alba – Aithisg Coileanaidh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/14/20 dated 14 August 2020 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

Following an introduction by Group Commander Nixon, discussion took place during which reference was made to a recent fire in the Inverness South Ward due to hot coals being put into a recycling bin, and a view was sought as to whether extending the uplifting of recycling waste from the current two-week interval to a three-week interval would be a potential fire hazard. In response, Group Commander Nixon explained that it was more a matter of educating people about what they should and should not put in recycling bins. He undertook to liaise with the Prevention and Protection Directorate in that regard, and to engage with the Council if education was required in communities.

On the point being raised, it was confirmed that people being on furlough/at home during lockdown had impacted positively on station availability.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

**6. Police – Area Performance Summary Report
Poileas – Geàrr-aithisg Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/15/20 dated 14 August 2020 by Chief Inspector Mairi MacInnes, Area Commander.

Following an introduction by Chief Inspector MacInnes, Members raised the following issues:-

- gratitude was expressed for the work of the Police over the past few months, and for everything Chief Inspector MacInnes and her team did to make Inverness a safe place;
- reference having been made to complaints from constituents regarding long waiting times upon dialling 101, Chief Inspector MacInnes undertook to pass on Members' comments;
- the caveat that lockdown had impacted on the current year's statistics was acknowledged, and this would be borne in mind when considering the next Area Performance Report;
- constituents were concerned about doorstep crime, particularly bogus workmen targeting vulnerable elderly people, and information was sought on what was being done to address this. In addition, it was requested that clear information be provided to the public on the procedure for reporting such incidents and who to phone, both during the day and in the evening/at weekends;
- concern was expressed regarding complaints from parents about antisocial behaviour in Inshes Park and bottles/cans and drugs paraphernalia being left in the same car park they used to drop their children off at school. Of particular concern was the discovery that the CCTV cameras were not working and the behaviour, which it was understood was happening most weekends, had not been captured. Crowds gathering was against the law, and the behaviour also contravened the byelaws prohibiting drinking in public places. Information was sought on how it was intended to address the situation so that Members could give assurance to constituents and other people from outwith Inverness who visited the park regularly. Chief Inspector MacInnes confirmed that the matter would be investigated, and emphasised the need to report such behaviour at an early stage;
- thanks were expressed to Chief Inspector MacInnes for her effective and inspirational chairing of the Merkinch and South Kessock Locality Plan group
- reference was made to the significant increase in the number of drink/drug driving offences, which it was confirmed related to the recent implementation of roadside testing for drugs. On the point being raised, Chief Inspector MacInnes confirmed that she would look into differentiating between drink and drug driving offences in future reports. However, she explained that the individuals concerned had not yet been to court so there had not yet been a conviction;
- concern was expressed regarding the related thefts in care and nursing homes by perpetrators from outwith Scotland. However, it was good to see that this was in hand;
- the reduction in hate crime was welcomed. However, it was sad to see the increase in domestic crime as a result of Covid;
- concern was expressed regarding speeding and road safety issues on the B9006 road, and the need for it to be classed separately and for the speed limit to be reduced was emphasised. Chief Inspector MacInnes undertook to liaise with colleagues in the Road Policing Unit in that regard;
- reference was made to the ongoing issue of antisocial behaviour, including drink and drug use, in the Culloden Avenue area. Local people were worried about going there now that the nights were getting darker, and concern was expressed that there would be a serious incident if nothing was done to address it. In addition, concern was expressed regarding a recent incident of vandalism near the flood alleviation scheme in Smithton, and young people congregating in the park, and a request was made that the community policing team be asked to keep a close eye on these areas. Chief Inspector MacInnes

undertook to implement a more focussed planned approach to antisocial behaviour in the areas in question;

- concern was expressed that the issue of drugs supply was getting worse in the Inverness Central Ward, and the need to be more proactive was emphasised; and
- information was sought, and provided, regarding missing persons, particularly the high percentage of missing children, and on the issue of cuckooing, whereby criminals took over the home of a vulnerable person.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the:-

- i. Highland Local Policing Plan 2017-2020 Year 3, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020; and
- ii. Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-2023 Year 1, attached as Annex B to the report, for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

7. City Recovery

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/16/20 dated 12 August 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure and Environment

There had also been circulated Action Notes of the City and Area of Inverness Economic Recovery Sub-Group held on 24 June, 9 July, 23 July, 7 August, and 20 August 2020.

The Chair of the City and Area of Inverness Economic Recovery Group thanked the Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure and Environment, the Head of Development and Regeneration, and the Inverness City Area Manager for all the work they had put into the Recovery Group so far. This was evident from the report, which included a comprehensive list of projects, their status, the estimated cost and the range of partners involved. The amount of inward investment that had been secured was welcomed, and the Scottish Government was commended for its quick and positive response to grant applications, which was also testament to the quality of the applications. It was necessary to continue to have shovel-ready projects to take advantage of any further funding opportunities, and he was sure officers would ensure that was the case. The whole of Highland benefited when Inverness was busy and successful, and it was important to continue to build confidence in all aspects of life and industry and return to as normal a way of life as possible. The end of the furlough scheme would have a major impact and it was important to continue to work with partners to try to create opportunities and stimulate the jobs market. Many of the projects set out in the report would provide employment opportunities as well as increase footfall in the city.

He thanked the Members of the group for their positive contributions so far, including suggestions for projects and observations on practice as lockdown restrictions had eased. Officers were working with partners to ensure that the city and area was as safe as possible for residents, and he welcomed further suggestions from Members for consideration by the Recovery Group. It was vital though that the pace of work to aid recovery was maintained in what was a fast-changing landscape. He suggested that, in the future, the Recovery Group should become the City Development Group, but that was some time away. He

emphasised that officers were doing a remarkable job, beyond the call of duty, and would continue to provide regular updates on progress which he would ensure were circulated to all Members. He concluded by encouraging Members to raise any issues or suggestions through their political representatives on the Recovery Group, or to attend where possible. He would try to ensure that everyone was given the opportunity to contribute.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- affordable housing was in short supply and many people would be happy to reside in the city centre. In that regard, the need to expedite the Eastgate Hostel project was emphasised and information was sought, and provided, on whether there was any residual City-Region Deal funding that could be utilised and which Committee would approve any such funding. Similarly, Viewfield House had been derelict for a number of years and it was queried whether additional funding could be sought from the Scottish Government;
- it was necessary to make the city centre as safe as possible for residents and visitors as lockdown restrictions were lifted, and to address pinch points. In that regard, the funding that had been secured to implement measures to reduce bus traffic on Margaret Street and Academy Street was welcomed and information was sought, and provided, on the timescale for the works;
- it was essential to get recovery right so as not to end up in the same position as a few years ago, when there had been a significant number of vacant commercial premises throughout Highland and in the city centre in particular. Since then, many of those premises had been filled with businesses centred around the tourist industry which were now under the greatest threat from Covid;
- in the long-term, attractions such as the Inverness Castle Project were going to draw people to the city centre and offer something special. However, there was a lot to be done in the meantime to ensure that the city was vibrant and full of businesses in future years;
- localised lockdowns had become the norm across the UK, and it was not impossible that there would be a lockdown in Inverness in the event of an outbreak;
- it was necessary, through the Recovery Group, to discuss what could be done with Common Good Fund assets to support businesses and the broader city economy. It was not as simple as providing cash grants but what could be done with infrastructure, how the Spaces for People project could be bolstered, and what could be done in the city that would not only support the economy now but provide lasting benefits long after Covid. Such discussions needed to take place as a matter of urgency as, if monies were to be taken from Common Good Fund reserves, the market would largely dictate how much could be done. It was added that it was necessary to consult, not only with BID and the Chamber of Commerce but with the businesses themselves to ascertain what would help them, with a view to formulating a plan for success;
- concern was expressed that when budgets were tight, as they were at present, the Common Good Fund was often seen as a potential means of completing ambitious projects;
- whilst the report identified underspends that could be redirected to projects to support recovery, it did not address the potential for risks in the short term. There was a distinct possibility that a number of businesses – eg traders in the Victorian Market who had been paying full rent despite not trading – were

going to struggle to be viable, and information was sought on what had been done to consult with them and offer the support they would need to get through this period;

- in relation to welfare, the Leader of the Council emphasised the need for work to be done at pace. She referred to discussions taking place with the voluntary sector, commenting that there was scope to bring back the findings quickly and think about how to progress matters. She also referred to discussions regarding utilising Common Good Fund underspends and suggested that it was necessary to look at something recurring and sustainable to help the most vulnerable in the community. Concern was expressed regarding feedback from those who were struggling, such as those who were not eligible for business grants, and it was necessary to consider how to support them. There was a lot of inequality and potential for job losses in the city when furlough ended, and it was important that this was built into the recovery programme and that consideration was given to job creation opportunities. The provision of business grants had made a huge difference to people's lives but it was going to get harder, not easier, over the next six months;
- tribute was paid to officers in relation to the projects being taken forward, particular reference being made to the Chisholm's building on Castle Street, the former Farmfoods site, and the former Arnotts building on Union Street. These developments would make a huge difference to the city centre and there might be more opportunities to come;
- Nairn BID had reduced the levy paid by its members and it was queried whether Inverness BID had done likewise;
- it was suggested that consideration be given to a Special Meeting with Inverness Chamber of Commerce to give Members a better idea of how businesses were coping and what could be done to help;
- blue sky thinking was needed in terms of reimagining the city centre and it was suggested that it would be good to pedestrianise Union Street and Queensgate, with any available premises being solely for wine bars, restaurants, coffee shops etc, to surround the Victorian Market with a city centre environment;
- the Council was commended for the way in which it had administered business grants. However, it had been Scottish Government funding and appreciation was expressed in that regard;
- the influx of tourists from many different countries meant that it was necessary to be extra vigilant in terms of Covid;
- the more external funding that could be attracted the better;
- concern was expressed regarding the number of betting shops in Inverness and information was sought on what powers Members had to object and whether, as commercial rents became cheaper, the Council had a say as to the type of business properties were let to. The Executive Chief Officer undertook to look into the matter and respond to Councillor Macpherson;
- information was sought on the percentage of the £341k underspend to be targeted on activity aimed at addressing poverty and inequality;
- officers were commended for their rapid response in terms of bidding for and securing additional funding, and it was necessary to continue to try to attract as much external funding as possible; and
- it was necessary to be fair to all businesses, whether long-standing or new.

Detailed discussion took place on the issue of wild camping, during which reference was made to a previous suggestion that the potential for byelaws be

explored, and the need for action was emphasised. The Inverness area had not been particularly hard hit compared to the communities on the North Coast 500. However, there had been a number of reports of inconsiderate camping by all kinds of campers and it was suggested that it was necessary to look at the existing rules, regulations and legislation, including the management rules for cemeteries which were being promoted on some websites as wild camping sites. A list of the issues was required to inform discussions on the infrastructure investment needed so that the behaviour experienced this summer was not repeated next year. The discussions needed to include national government, and consultation was required with stakeholders in the hospitality industry. It would be interesting to hear views from across the region and it was suggested that the matter required consideration in a much more detailed way at a strategic committee or full Council.

Officers assured Members that the matter was being given urgent attention, a cross-service group having been established to prepare a report to the Tourism Committee, covering not only wild camping and campervans but related aspects such as waste collection, toilet provision etc, with the intention of having a visitor management plan in place for next year. Locally, action had been taken in terms of working with the landowners who had responsibility for much of the land, and officers would report back through the City and Area Recovery Group. In terms of byelaws, there were existing rules and regulations in place that could be used but it was necessary to look at how they would be monitored and enforced.

The Leader of the Council concurred regarding the need for action and undertook to liaise with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Tourism Committee, and relevant officers, about how soon the matter would be considered and in what manner. She referred to a briefing note by the Common Good Fund Officer on the potential to use byelaws and suggested that it be circulated to all Members of the Committee, and that they come back to her with any feedback. The influx of visitors was going to continue, and it was necessary to pull together a strategic plan as quickly as possible and to continue to seek additional funding from the Scottish Government. This was not wild camping in the true sense, where no trace was left, but unauthorised camping, and she praised waste collection teams and locals for their efforts in picking up the rubbish that had been left behind, adding that there was a need for a national campaign regarding the littering that was taking place. She referred to previous discussions regarding the possibility of having Community Wardens with some enforcement powers and suggested that be given further consideration. However, their first job would be to welcome visitors. Tourism was an important part of recovery and it was necessary to encourage as many people as possible to visit campsites in Highland, and to offer business opportunities for people to provide more camping availability. In conclusion, she suggested that, if consideration by the Tourism Committee did not happen soon enough, Inverness Members have a discussion and come up with a plan. In addition, she undertook to raise the matter at the COSLA Leaders Meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the summary of recovery discussions to date and the projects and areas identified, inclusive of the potential role of the Common Good Fund, as a focus for recovery of the City and Area going forward;
- ii. **NOTED** the Action Notes as circulated;

- iii. **AGREED** that the briefing note by the Common Good Fund Officer on the issue of wild camping and the potential to use byelaws be circulated to Committee Members;
- iv. **AGREED** that information be sought from Inverness BID in terms of whether consideration had been given to reducing the levy paid by its members, and Committee Members be advised accordingly; and
- v. **AGREED** that a representative of Inverness Chamber of Commerce be invited to attend the City and Area of Inverness Economic Recovery Sub-Group.

8. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020
Aithisg Dèanadais Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2020 gu 30 An t-Òg mhios 2020

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being 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 his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/17/20 dated 27 August 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer - Property and Housing.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Members commended officers for their work and it was noted that the lowest increase in rent arrears pertained to Central Ward with the highest increase being in Culloden and Ardersier. However, it was indicated that Ardersier had been identified as an area of deprivation and the ward also comprised of a significant number of both Council and social housing and it was felt that the statistics were reflective of current circumstances. Further information was sought and provided on the Council's policy in respect of evictions and in regard to addressing rent arrears;
- There was demand for additional housing stock, particularly with disability access, in the Millburn area and opportunities for regeneration to alleviate this were highlighted. In addition, further information was sought and provided in regard to the advertisement for housing support from the private sector and how homelessness and the potential increase in demand for this would be addressed as part of the recovery process; and
- Councillor J Campbell advised that she would provide the Committee with further information on the working poor within local wards.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

9. B9006/B9091 40mph Speed Limit at Croy

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/18/20 dated 31 July 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Members welcomed the report and highlighted that local communities had been campaigning for quite some time for speed limits to be reduced. It was

explained that the road, particularly from Cawdor to Inverness, was a busy and increasing commuter and tourist route. Although the speed restrictions were welcomed, they only applied to a small section of the road and requests were made for them to be extended. In particular, it was requested that the speed limit restrictions be extended for a further 100m to include Cantray crossroads; it was suggested that speed limit should be incrementally increased from 40mph as traffic progressed west to Inverness; and similarly when travelling from Cawdor the speed limit should be gradually reduced reaching a 40mph speed restriction upon reaching Croy;

- reference was made to a number of past incidents and antisocial behaviour from drivers and the need for action to be taken to reduce driving speeds to ensure public safety. In addition, a number of commitments had been given that additional road safety measures, such as high visibility markings, would be implemented but these had never come to fruition and it was requested that these be implemented;
- the need for driver compliance was noted but the importance of having appropriate road design and safety measures to mitigate risks was also emphasised. The road needed significant investment to upgrade it to the required safety standards; and
- it was noted that amending the proposals presented in the report would cause further delay but it was felt safety had to be paramount. In this regard, it was suggested that the cost of additional signage could be paid for through the relevant Ward Discretionary Budget. It was also proposed that the 40mph speed limit be extended to the southwest to include the Cantraybridge junction and this was supported.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the details of the proposed 40mph speed limit at Croy;
- ii. **AGREED** that it be delegated to the Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment, to:
 - a. proceed to advertise a proposed 40mph speed limit order covering the extent of the B9006 and B9091 (now a distance of 1300m) from Cantraybridge junction through to the eastern terminus shown on the plan submitted;
 - b. make the Order should there be no unresolved objection; and
 - c. bring back a further report to the Committee in the event of unresolved objection.

10. Inverness Common Good Fund: Discretionary Scheme for Winter Payments 2020/21
Maoin Mathas Coitcheann Inbhir Nis: Sgeama fo Ùghdarras airson Phàighidhean Geamhraidh 2020/21

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/19/20 dated 15 July 2020 by the Head of Revenues and Business Support and the Inverness City Area Manager.

During detailed discussion, it was suggested and subsequently agreed that £80,000 should be reallocated to the discretionary Inverness Winter Payments Scheme for 2020/21 from the Events & Festivals budget underspend and that the total Winter Payments Scheme budget should be increased to £200k year on year to accommodate the anticipated increase in demand arising from Covid-19, ongoing welfare reforms and fluctuations in energy costs.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to accept applications from 1 December 2020 to 28 February 2021 inclusive;
- ii. to increase the single tier payment for those applicants that satisfied the eligibility criteria for the Scheme for 2020/21 by 12-month (March 2020) Consumer Price Index (1.5%) to £86;
- iii. to reallocate £80,000 from the Events and Festivals underspend to the discretionary Inverness Winter Payments Scheme for 2020/21 and increase the total Winter Payments Scheme budget to £200k year on year to accommodate the anticipated increase in demand arising from Covid-19, ongoing welfare reforms and fluctuations in energy costs;
- iv. that where take-up of the Scheme was likely to exceed the available budget, a report would be provided at the earliest opportunity for Members of the Committee as enabled by the Committee timetable. If necessary, the timescale for applications could be extended to accommodate Committee consideration;
- v. that the criteria utilised for the 2019/20 scheme as set out in paragraphs 8.2 to 8.6 be used as the basis for the 2020/21 scheme with a minor but important change in paragraph 8.6. This change was to reflect the anticipated economic environment during the winter months and the ending of the furlough scheme at the end of October 2020. It was proposed to reduce the following criterion from 6 months to 1 month to enable those that had been recently unemployed to satisfy this element of the eligibility criteria:
 - a. no people in the household in receipt of a wage at the time of the application or in the previous calendar month;
- vi. this discretionary scheme was to be made available to residents in the City of Inverness and the Landward areas of the seven City Wards; and
- vii. to promote payment by BACS for this discretionary scheme as this was the most secure method of payment for recipients of the payment and the Council alike.

11. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

a) Financial Monitoring and Capital Project Report Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail agus Pròiseactan Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/20/20 dated 17 August 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer, Resources and Finance and the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 31 July 2020 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets; and
- ii. scrutinised and **NOTED** the current status of capital projects.

b) Grants Applications over £10,000 Iarrtasan Tabhartais thar £10,000

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/21/20 dated 10 August 2020 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

There had also been circulated separately, as Booklet A, a copy of supporting documentation.

During discussion, and in relation to the Wasps Trust, Mr J Gray, seconded by Mrs B McAllister, **MOVED** approval of the application.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, moved that the application should be refused.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 11 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 5 votes, with 4 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion – Mr I Brown, Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mrs M Davidson, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mrs B McAllister, Ms E Roddick and Mr G Ross.

For the Amendment – Mr B Boyd, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Jarvie, Mr R MacWilliam and Ms E Knox.

Abstentions – Mr R Balfour, Mr K Gowans, Mr D Macpherson and Mr C Smith.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** as follows:-

- i. Inshes Community Association: **AGREED** to defer the application for submission of further information.
- ii. Wasps Trust: **APPROVED** the application for funding of £65,000
- iii. Inverness Rotary Club: **APPROVED** the application for funding of £16,900.

c) Inverness Common Good Fund (ICGF) Sub-Committee – Annual Report 2019/20
Aithisg Bhliadhnail Fo-Chomataidh Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis 2019/20

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/22/20 dated 17 August 2020 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the work of the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee as described within the report.

12. Inverness Common Good Fund: Victorian Market, Inverness – Action Plan – Update
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis: Aithisg na Margaidh Bhictòrianaich

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/23/20 dated 17 August 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment and the Inverness City Area Manager.

Following private discussion, and in taking account of the success of the post but also the current circumstances as a result of the pandemic, it was suggested and

agreed to establish a Fixed Term post for the role of Victorian Market Manager for a period of three years commencing 20 November 2020 to be funded from the Common Good Fund, noting that the post would then be subject to approval through the Council's recruitment policies and procedures.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress in respect of the work agreed through the Action Plan since the reports presented to Committee on 29 August and 21 November 2019;
- ii. **NOTED** the progress of the works for the Transformation of the Market Hall and Fish Hall of the Victorian Market;
- iii. **NOTED** that all practicable steps continued to be taken to maximise third party funding opportunities. The allocation of £0.250m from the Town Centre Fund being added to the project budget;
- iv. **AGREED** to the establishment of a Fixed Term Post for the role of Victorian Market Manager for a period of 3 years commencing on 20 November 2020 to be funded from the Inverness Common Good Fund, noting that the post would then be subject to approval through the Council's recruitment policies and procedures; and
- v. **NOTED** that further reports would be made to the City of Inverness Area Committee on progress.

13. Inverness Common Good Fund: Events and Festivals Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis: Tachartasan agus Fèisean

Declarations of Interest: Mr K Gowans and Mr A Jarvie declared non-financial interests in this item as an employee of UHI and a Director of High Life Highland respectively 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/24/20 dated 17 August 2020 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** to defer consideration of this item to allow the submission of further and more detailed information on the proposals within the report, including business cases and economic impact assessments where necessary and also confirmation of what it was feasible to consider undertaking during a pandemic situation.

14. Inverness Local Holidays 2021/22 Saor-làithean Ionadail Inbhir Nis 2021/22

The Committee **AGREED** the following dates as Local Holidays for the City of Inverness for 2021 and 2022:-

2021

Friday, 1 January (New Year's Day)

Monday, 4 January

Monday, 1 February

Monday, 1 March

Monday, 5 April (Easter Monday)

Monday, 3 May (May Day)
Monday, 5 July
Monday, 4 October
Monday, 1 November
Monday, 27 December (Christmas Holiday)
Tuesday, 28 December (Boxing Day Holiday)

2022

Monday, 3 January (New Year's Day Holiday)
Tuesday, 4 January (2nd January Holiday)
Monday, 7 February
Monday, 7 March
Monday, 18 April (Easter Monday)
Monday, 2 March (May Day)
Monday, 4 July
Monday, 3 October
Monday, 7 November
Monday, 26 December (Christmas Holiday)
Tuesday, 27 December (Boxing Day Holiday)

15. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The following Minutes were dealt with as follows:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 27 July 2020 – **NOTED**;
- ii. Victorian Market Stakeholder Management Group held on 28 January 2020 – **NOTED**;
- iii. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 24 February 2020 – **APPROVED**;
- iv. Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 2 March 2020 - **APPROVED**; and
- v. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 9 July and 10 August 2020 – **APPROVED** – subject to a correction at Item 5 that a grant of £7,920 had been approved in respect of the application by the Partnerships for Wellbeing.

The meeting ended at 5.40pm.