

**City and Area of Inverness Economic Recovery Sub-Group
Monday 18th October 2021 at 10:00am**

ACTION NOTE

Present:

Cllr Bet McAllister (BM); Cllr Bill Boyd (BB); Cllr Carolyn Caddick (CC); Cllr David Fraser (DF); Cllr Duncan Macpherson (DM); Cllr Helen Carmichael (HC); Cllr Isabelle Mackenzie (IM); Cllr Janet Campbell (JC); Cllr Jimmy Gray (JG); Cllr Ken Gowans (KG); Cllr Trish Robertson (TR); David Haas (DH), Inverness City and Area Manager; Craig Baxter (CB), Planner; Scott Dalgarno (SD), Development Plans Manager; Tracey Urry (TU), Head of Roads & Transport; Mike Smith (MS) BID; Michael Golding (MG), VILN; Allan Gunn (AG), ECO Transformation

Items	Note/Action Agreed	Action For	Action Undertaken
1. Appointment of Chair for the Meeting			
	<p>NOTED JG nominated CC as Chair. This was seconded by JC. CC nominated JG as Vice Chair and this was once again seconded by JC</p> <p>NOTED these appointments will remain for the rest of this Council term</p>		
2. Welcome/Apologies for Absence			
	<p>NOTED apologies were received from, Cllr Alex Graham, Cllr Emma Knox, Cllr Alasdair Christie and Allan Maguire</p>		
3. Update on Master Plan			
	<p>AG gave Members an insight into the wider ownership before SD and CB gave Members a brief refresher on the Master Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared ambition for the future – ambitious strategy role with intended approach to link City Centre Strategy to other opportunities that coincide • Rethinking Inverness – piece of work being done on branding for the City Centre • Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan – detail has been explained to Members at their local Ward Business Meetings. Looks at the transport strategy and the mix of urban and rural people • City Centre Recovery Masterplan – a private Member’s briefing has been arranged to discuss the document in detail • The aim is to join the pieces up in preparation for Committee on the 18th and start working together on the shared ambition. The intended approach is to get to the point with Partners where they understand what is trying to be delivered • ACTION: SD to provide Members with a copy of the slides presented <p>Members Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DM expressed disappointment that there were no green spaces in the slides for sports around Inverness Campus on the East side of Inverness. NOTED SD advised there was a very generous and well considered approach to green space in the Inverness East Area and would be willing to discuss this further offline if required • CC highlighted the importance of getting input at the right time so discussions are already happening prior to City Committee, this means something positive can then be presented • BM requested green area is a definite requirement with families requiring green space alongside visitors and 	SD	

		<p>workers. It was suggested Fairline Park was looked at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JC queried if Rose Street Parking facilities would be retained. NOTED CB advised this provides an important function at the moment, but an appropriate use will be determined in the future. The feasibility of a park and ride is being looked at for North Kessock • MD highlighted the importance of links with districts out of the town as concentration cannot just be on the City Centre as many live out with. MD continued on to say that footfall is still down, and people need to feel safe, at the moment there is a concern at the level of anti-social activity.. NOTED with these concerns it is believed public sector partners need to be involved moving forward • JG also encouraged the use of green space in and around Inverness and that this needs to be celebrated. Going forward would like to see a wide consultation and also the need to emphasise the Town Centre issues • IM advised Communities feel nothing is changing or progressing, so communication is key. Feedback is required from all ages and groups. IM also raised concerns regarding the Spectrum Centre as this facility is a key hub for older generations. IM highlighted talking with other cities would help and that the Riverside trail needs to be more joined up. Must see progress made sooner. NOTED CB advised information on the Spectrum Centre is included on the masterplan documentation page 50 • BB expressed that more engagement and involvement with constituents is required going forward • NOTED recognised the points raised around policing and joint agency work, because of the role for the region it is believed taking this to the Community Partnership would be the best approach. The partnership is currently paused but there are plans to actively get this going again in the coming months. It is recognised this is critical • NOTED Officers highlighted the City Centre plays a key role in supporting the rest of the wider region • NOTED DH advised quick measures are being taken. Operation Respect is taking place this year with pressures around the City Centre being addressed as best as can be. Discussions are ongoing with the business community and meetings are held fortnightly focused on the City Centre. There is ongoing work directly with the drug and alcohol team, work is also underway to establish a hub in the City Centre 		
4.	Key Strategic Projects			
		<p>DH gave Members an overview of the current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The projects previous referenced are moving at pace. There have been various challenges • Overcome hurdles with the Arnott's project. DH is in discussion with Allan Maguire on this as repurposing of building is a key success and will help attract more investment once open • Victorian Market is progressing well. A few challenges have been encountered. Marketing of units is going well, and detail will be reported on shortly <p>NOTED Members queried if the works to the Railway Station were any nearer. SD confirmed they are contributing to the work Network Rail are doing. It is expected to see the next stages over the coming weeks and Members will be provided with an update once information is received. SD also confirmed his understanding is that Network Rail are offering a Members briefing which can be arranged. Network Rail are currently going out for their second consultation</p> <p>NOTED JC queried the possibility of the unpleasant grey Bridge Street Buildings being tidied up with a coat of paint to match that of the Bank Street flatted development which would complement the upgraded Town House and Castle. This suggestion was supported by CC.</p> <p>It was highlighted the importance of encouraging businesses to take up offices in the city centre and give people a reason to comeback in</p>		

5.	Marketing			
		<p>Michael Golding gave an update from Visit Inverness Loch Ness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising of Great Glen reached 4 Million • Received £80K from Visit Scotland following a united collaborative application. This funding will allow the delivery of the high-profile Hero video for the city. Also allow VILN to bring influencers to the area with some PR and media activity • Next project is the City Marketing Project with BID and the ICGF. This is on schedule and the partnership collaboration is working well. Looking to launch in the next couple of weeks • It is hoped the influencers project will take place in the coming month • International events are still challenging as there are unknowns • Some virtual events are planned • Looking at hosting first event in December • In the process of hiring 2 new Destination Development Managers to work closely with communities. It is hoped these posts will be in place next month • Continuing to produce a number of digital opportunities and reaching over 1 Million on social media • Levy payment continues to be just above average • MG confirmed he is pleased where VILN are positionally but recognised there is still a lot of work to be done before April <p>Mike Smith gave an update from Inverness BID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levy was reduced to 80% it is now looking to be back at 96% for 2021/22 • Eastgate footfall is down 30% on 2019. Last week was busy with good returns likely relating to the school holidays. Number of businesses are positive looking towards Christmas • On Christmas week M&S retail sales move from 4% up to 16% • M&S will be opening from 6am – 10pm and looking to take on 25% more seasonal staff • Bigger businesses are continuing to market themselves in a positive way • BID plan to use same concept as recent years “Shop, Eat, Stay, Play” • Plans to initially start advertising through MFR, with revolving adverts starting on Friday 5th November. Adverts will be on the main footfall drivers, independents and the hospitality sector. Main focus of the campaign will be to promote the city centre • Work will also be done with Highland News Media and there will be a major social media campaign • Inverness City Centre BID is second in terms of social media reach and the largest of all Scotland BID’s • Discussions have been had with Amy Macleod at HLH on city centre experiences. Plans to tie this in with existing events such as elf on the shelf • Eastgate plan to run the Grotto with the hospice in a covid compliant way. There will be no events but random acts of kindness in partnership with MFR. Also plans for a late Thursday night car park offer <p>Members Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC highlighted that people are out of habit with coming into the city centre and they need to be encouraged back in • MD suggested encouraging hotels to do Christmas shopping offers. MD continued to encourage street events which believed would be well attended if the weather permitted. New festive lights were also encouraged, ones smaller that would be welcoming throughout the centre 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED MS advised the Mercure and some other hotels have a programme at reasonable prices so there are options out there. MG advised VILN are working closely with the Inverness Hotels Association to ensure there is an aligned approach with the product offering • NOTED DH advised discussions are ongoing with the Street Team regarding festive lighting. Work is also being done with HLH on longevity events. Also seeing the completion of the power bollard outside the Cathedral for the street food, this will be taken forward in early November • NOTED it was suggested all Members should have access to the E&F meeting notes, so they are aware of the programme. ACTION: DH to ensure this is circulate to Members for information • Members raised queries around the Street Pastors as it was thought they could help with some of the issues faced. NOTED it was confirmed the Pastors are back on patrols but there have been issues getting some volunteers. ACTION: DH to circulate Street Pastor schedule to Inverness Central Members for information as this is mainly their Ward. DH to also speak with the Area Commander to see if any more information can be provided to Members following concerns raised with County Line issues etc • NOTED BID Task Team are operational through to Christmas and the period has been extended to help police when some resources are at COP26. This is being proactively looked at and monitored 	<p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>	
6.	Communications Plan			
		<p>David Haas updated Members as followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reach has been strong due to the work done by Kevin Murray. Those from all across the spectrum have been spoken with. Further discussions have taken place through the BIDs and Chambers • Looking to emphasise on branding and values with the type of projects that give an edge. Need to deal with local challenges and understand the wider benefits. Need to emphasis the unique qualities as a whole area and not just the city itself • Discussions are currently ongoing on how to structure this. Trying to get to a place where community events and sessions can be held again. Discussions are ongoing with Ward Management Colleagues and the Community Support Coordinators to ensure opportunities aren't missed. DH is to meet with Stewart Nicol in the coming days to discuss ways forward • There are plans to come up with a proper engagement strategy once this is clear from Committee • AG highlighted the need for a clear communication strategy that will help make links with both city and rural customers. Recognised there is always the risk that people in rural parts will think this is for the city, but the scope needs to be clear as to not loose sigh of rural areas. A good communication strategy will help ensure this <p>Members Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC highlighted the need to encourage people from the Highlands to come to Inverness rather than other cities such as Glasgow or Edinburgh • Need to ensure this is aligned with the Councils Corporate Communications • MD highlighted the importance of marketing for small businesses in the winter and also that there are private markets with people who are wanting to invest so considerable steps are needed going forward • KG raised the issue about tourist retention and that many local tourist attractions are closed on a Sunday such as the museum and art gallery and pled for this to be taken up with HLH. It was also felt that Culloden Battlefield isn't widely publicised and could help benefit those businesses close by if publicised wider • DM highlighted the need to be mindful that if encouraging no events there is still the need to make people aware that Inverness is open 		

7.	Notes of Previous Meeting			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NOTED the previous note was agreed as an accurate record		
8.	Matters Arising from Previous Notes			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NOTED no matters were raised		
9.	Date of Next Meeting			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date for next meeting is to be set for w/c 29th November		

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