

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held **remotely** on **Thursday, 17 February 2022** at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr C Aitken	Mr K Gowans
Mr R Balfour	Mr A Graham
Mr B Boyd	Mr J Gray
Mr I Brown	Mr A Jarvie
Mrs C Caddick	Ms E Knox
Miss J Campbell	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr A Christie	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs M Davidson	Mrs T Robertson

Officials in Attendance:

Ms D Manson, Chief Executive
Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure, Economy & Environment
Mr A Gunn, Interim Executive Chief Officer- Communities and Place
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure
Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Fin & Commercialism
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads & Transport
Mr A Maguire, Head of Development & Regeneration
Ms A Clark, Head of Policy & Reform
Mr C Baxter, Planner, Planning & Environment
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr L MacDonald, Repairs Manager
Ms J Vivers, Housing Manager
Ms F McNally, ICATN Programme Manager
Mr J Kelman, Principal Project Manager
Mr M MacDonald, Corporate Improvement Project Manager
Ms D Sutton, Amenity Services Manager, Communities and Place
Mr J Taylor, Roads Operation Manager, Roads & Transport
Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, Roads & Transport
Mr G Munro, Policy & Assurance Officer
Mr A Webster, Principal Regeneration Officer
Mr G Smith, Principal Engineer 2
Mr S Grant, Senior Engineer
Miss K Andrews, Climate Change Coordinator
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator
Mrs O Bayon, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Ms J Hill, Chief Inspector, Area Commander (Inverness Area Command)

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 the formal business, the Provost was pleased to inform the Committee of the following:-

- Davina Mary MacInnes Gillies had been awarded the Medal of the Order of the British Empire for services to Marie Curie Cancer Care and the community in Inverness and Ross-shire.
- The Council had received the Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award for outstanding support to the Armed Forces community. Representing the highest badge of honour, Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Awards are awarded to organisations that employ and support those who have served, veterans and their families. Councillor Balfour, Highland Council's Armed Forces and Veterans' Champion, received the Council's Gold Award for the Defence Employers' Recognition Scheme at a reception held in Edinburgh Castle. Councillor Balfour and all partners involved through the Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership and the Military Liaison Group were thanked. The award received also reflected the work that had been done in recent years and was a well-deserved recognition.
- The Highland Council recently launched a competition, in partnership with Science Skills Academy, to name the new hydroelectric generator which was being built on the River Ness. The standard of entries had been impressive with over 100 poster and naming submissions received. The competition was won by Grace Mackenzie, a Primary 7 pupil at Milton of Leys Primary School who had suggested Hydro Ness. The prize was a 3D model of the scheme and Grace and her class would receive a complimentary class from High Life Highland at Inverness Leisure Centre where they could see the site benefit from the green energy supply.

The Committee **NOTED** these achievements.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Fraser.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED-**

Declarations of Interest

Item 8: Mrs C Caddick, Mrs M Davidson, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Gray, Mrs I Mackenzie.

Transparency Statements:

Item 8: Miss J Campbell, Mrs I Mackenzie, Mrs B McAllister

Item 13c: Mrs H Carmichael

3. Police – Area Performance Report Poileas – Geàrr-aithisg Coileanadh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/1/22 dated 3 February 2022 by Chief Inspector Judy Hill, Area Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Ms J Hill, Chief Inspector Area Commander was welcomed to her first meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee;
- Members commended the report which they felt was most helpful;
- thanks were expressed to local Police Officers in managing crime in the City of Inverness Area and supporting communities to feel safe. Good collaboration and communication between the Council, citizens, communities and the Police force was praised;
- in response to a query, it was confirmed that the report would be made public on the Highland Council website and could be shared with local community councils;
- it was requested that the Police reattend community council meetings as these started to recommence after COVID-19, so communities could engage directly with the Officers;
- whilst acknowledging that County Lines was an increasing issue, Members expressed their support to the Police for their efforts in tackling this so far, especially as vulnerable children were being exploited;
- reference was made to the Year to Date (YTD) crime figures in comparison to the 5 and 3 year average crime figures where it appeared that serious assault and rape were going to be higher. In this regard it was confirmed that the next Police report would publish full year figures up to the end of March 2022;
- it was a common complaint that motorists were not complying with residential 20mph speed restrictions. In this regard, it was queried if the Police could take a more proactive approach against this issue;
- Operation Respect was praised as a good initiative in tackling anti-social behaviour and violence in Inverness;
- local citizens had raised concern over lengthy delays in trying to communicate with the Police 101 Service. It was acknowledged that COVID had impacted on the availability of Officers and services. In this regard the Scottish Government were reviewing and addressing Police resource issues. It was also further queried if there was an alternative local Police telephone number that citizens could use to report local issues;
- it was questioned if there were further joined up working opportunities for the Council and the Police to work effectively together across services such as Council traffic officers and Police traffic officers;
- Local Police Roadshows were welcomed and the need to advertise these events well in advance was emphasised;
- it was suggested that local community hubs be considered which could provide a central location point for citizens to access multiple services;
- updated Member contact numbers would be published after the upcoming election process for citizens to contact them directly if required;
- thanks were conveyed to the Police for their vehicle anti-social behaviour work undertaken at Retail Parks within Inverness, however it was felt that ongoing focus on this issue was imperative;
- it was requested that the Police have an increased high visibility presence at Milton of Leys primary school in response to reports of speeding;
- further information was requested regarding the Driver Engagement North driving simulator initiative. It was confirmed that the Area Commander would

feed this request back to the Road Policing team and provide a list of dates and venues for the upcoming schedule;

- with regard to the increase in missing persons, it was queried if the Police could identify any interventions or programmes that the Council could assist them with in tackling this rise; and
- regular liaison between the Police Area Commander and the Inverness City Manager has proven successful. In this regard this channel of communication would continue and Members were encouraged to take local issues to the Inverness City Manager to be taken forward.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-2023 Year 2, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021.

4. Notices of Motion Brathan Glusaid

The Committee **NOTED** the following Notice of Motion had been withdrawn following the decision taken at Item 5 earlier in the meeting:-

- (i) “The City of Inverness Area Committee Winter Payment Scheme is designed to help people who are most in need. The scheme is not only aimed at people of pension age, but also to all those on low income.

Given the unprecedented rise in Energy costs with each individual household facing an average cost of £693 pa, and coupled with the increased rate of inflation, this Committee agrees to raise the value/rate of the one-off payment by at least 25% (from £88 to £110)”

The following Notices of Motion had also been received by the Head of Corporate Governance –

- (ii) “There are renewed calls for the City of Inverness Area Committee to transform or reimagine the retaining Crown Road Wall.

The Wall is a valuable space, and one of the gateways into the City. It previously featured mural panels depicting images of City Landmarks, and its people, including a well-known tramp – known as forty pockets. The Artwork fell into disrepair and was removed in 2016. Therefore, the City of Inverness Area Committee agrees to seek out appropriate funding, consult with the public and all stakeholders, and to consider all suggestions to improve and reimagine, one of the gateways into Inverness City Centre”.

During discussion, the following points were considered:-

- the Crown Road Wall was an uninspiring gateway to the City Centre. There had been previous attempts to re-invigorate it but, with new developments taking place in the City Centre, the time was now right to revisit it. There was an opportunity to involve WASPS Inverness Creative Art Group as a stakeholder. Although consultation would be needed it was thought this wall could be enhanced at low or zero cost.

There were many ideas which could be considered which would enhance this entry into the Eastgate Centre;

- this was a prime promotional site in Inverness lying empty and even some planting or advertising would enhance its appearance;
- when the mural had been removed, there had been discussion at that point about what might replace it;
- careful consideration had to be given to any art proposal as it might prove controversial and be subject to vandalism;
- it was contended that the wall along the Millburn Road, one of the main arterial routes into Inverness also needed to be enhanced to give a better impression to those arriving in the city;
- while some suggested simply repainting the wall or adding greenery, caution was expressed that this might have a detrimental effect on the masonry; and
- to encompass all such matters, the improvement of the Crown Road Wall could be included in discussions at meetings of the City Development Group.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the Notice of Motion as detailed.

- (iii) “The City of Inverness Area Committee is committed to regenerate the City of Inverness.

It is accepted that online shopping has had a detrimental effect on ‘the shopping experience’ within the City, which has had a knock-on effect for local businesses and traders. As part of the regeneration, our attention must return to the concept of ‘City Living’. Within the City of Inverness there are huge opportunities. Empty shops, accommodation above shops, which were formerly homes, and are now empty and neglected, properties which could all be converted to housing. The new accommodation in Union Street is a fine example of what can be done. The City of Inverness Area Committee agrees to continue, support and accelerate the concept of ‘City Living’ and to encourage property owners and developers to work alongside this Council to achieve a living breathing City - a vibrant, working and shopping experience within the City of Inverness”.

During discussion, the following points were considered:-

- calls were made for City Vision to be accelerated. Union Street was a prime example of what could be achieved but there were still areas in the City Centre which needed to be improved. Increasing footfall would regenerate the city;
- there was a degree of frustration at the lack of progress. It was recognised that some good work had been achieved but it was important to look at new ideas and concepts. It was important to make the City Centre experience as pleasurable and welcoming as possible;
- other Members argued that there was redevelopment taking place and highlighted the considerable number of projects completed in the last 5 years in the City Centre totalling £33m, Castle Street and Union Street being cited as particular examples . Looking forward too there were many exciting projects including the redevelopment of Inverness Castle and those being explored by the City Redevelopment Group;

- there had been a dramatic increase in the number of people living in the City Centre and there were now more flats being provided suitable for families;
- it would be important to set up a Residents' Group for the City Centre;
- Highland Council did not own all of the buildings, many owned by absentee landlords and large companies. It was vital that pressure was put on these landlords to make essential repairs to their properties. This could be done by drawing up a Landlord Register and "naming and shaming" those who failed to comply; and
- some simple cost-effective measures, such as snowcem, were already being adopted on buildings on Bridge Street to enhance their appearance.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the Notice of Motion as detailed.

- (vi) "20mph speed limits - this Committee recognises that increases in active travel, along with children and parents using safe routes to schools, and this Council's policy to develop 20-minute communities, will elevate the instances where motorised vehicles will come into conflict with those engaged in all forms of active travel.

In addition, this Committee also recognises the increased risks that may be associated with the changes to pedestrian and cyclist priorities that have been recently introduced.

The City of Inverness Area Committee supports the implementation of 20mph speed limits within existing and all new housing developments towards making our communities better, safer and more sustainable places to live".

During discussion, the following points were considered:-

- communities, parents and active travel users had raised concerns about road safety issues. With new developments coming on stream pedestrians and active travel users were more likely to come more into conflict with traffic users. The Motion was intended to make areas safer for everyone and, by reducing speed, even if one life was saved, it would be worthwhile;
- it was Council policy to develop 20-minute communities as part of its strategic plan;
- reducing speed limits would benefit everyone living in an area and improve quality of life;
- there were major developments taking place in the south of Inverness as well as other areas;
- parents who might have encouraged their children to walk to school were concerned at the speed of traffic along specific routes and, with more schemes coming on stream, this would only be exacerbated. In addition, parents too needed to encourage their children to walk and cycle to school simply than been driven there;
- 20 mph would make communities a safer environment;
- the variable speed limits, ranging from 20-30-40 mph, caused confusion and lower speed restrictions would make it safer. One rule would fit better;

- whilst new developments could engineer speed restrictions it would be more difficult to do so in existing housing schemes;
- it was hoped new car technology would reduce car speed to 20 mph in such zones automatically;
- it was suggested Police Scotland could intimate on Social Media that they would be patrolling 20mph speed zones in certain areas and any offenders would be charged;
- reference was made to the considerable work underway at national level with Transport Scotland and the move to a policy of 20 mph in residential areas. The acceleration of this was supported as it would remove the number of Traffic Orders Regulations required at a local level. It was hoped the collaborative work with officers would continue, both at a local and national level; and
- with a safe speed needing a change of culture, Police Scotland needed to be on board to enforce it.

Thereafter, the Committee: **AGREED** the Notice of Motion as detailed subject to the following addition that “Furthermore the Committee requests that Highland Council use its best endeavours to continue to work with Transport Scotland to ensure timeous delivery of the forthcoming national 20mph policy and that appropriate funding be provided to achieve the delivery and implementation of 20pmh limits in our communities”

5. Inverness Common Good Fund: Discretionary Scheme for Winter Payments 2021/22 extension

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/2/22 by the Interim Head of Revenues & Business Support and the Inverness City Manager.

In introducing the report, the Provost acknowledged the difficult financial circumstances many residents of Inverness City and Area find themselves in due to the exceptional increases in fuel bills. In view of this unprecedented cost increase, Members were invited to consider a one-off special winter fuel payment proposal which would give a reasonable increase in the winter payment to all recipients who were currently entitled.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- reference was made to the first Notice of Motion in item 4 of this Agenda and the signatories indicated that it would be withdrawn;
- in continued support of the community, it was suggested that as fuel prices would remain high and continue to rise, the one-off special winter payment plan should be considered as a permanent increase going forward;
- supporting vulnerable residents who were unable to access the one-off special winter payment via telephone or online methods was emphasised. In this regard it was confirmed that residents could also approach the Citizens Advice Bureau for further support;
- ongoing works to insulate homes to combat the rise in fuel costs was highlighted as essential;
- Members acknowledged their obligation to highlight concern regarding the super profits made by energy companies to MSPs or MPs in order to protect local residents, especially as Highland produced significant quantities of energy;

- a sustainable payment approach from the Common Good Fund should be implemented in tackling the increased fuel costs for residents. In addition, it was queried if the Scottish Government had any additional sources of funding which could be used;
- consideration should be given to residents who did not receive council tax relief, to make sure that they were not overlooked for any appropriate financial support; and
- it was confirmed that Highland Council and Highlands and Islands leaders had written to the Business Secretary to request support regarding the increase of fuel prices

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the following recommendations for the one-off extension of the 2021/22 Inverness Winter Payments Discretionary Scheme:-

- extend the deadline for applications to 30 April 2022 (the deadline was currently 28 February 2022);
- as a one-off for the 2021/22 Scheme, increase the single tier payment for those applicants that satisfy the eligibility criteria to £138 from the current £88 award level. For eligible households who have already received their £88 payment, a further one-off payment of £50 will be paid retrospectively; and
- provide an additional one-off budget of up to £100,000 to accommodate the continuing demand arising from the increased energy costs. This budget would provide for the retrospective payments to those who have already received payments, the increased amount for those who have not yet received payment/are still to apply and to ensure that there were sufficient funds available for increased demand.

6. Inverness Wards Repurposing COVID-19 Fund and Place Based Investment Fund Proposals

Molaidhean airson Maoin Ath-chleachdaidh COVID-19 agus Maoin Stèidhichte air Àite Uàrdan Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/3/22 dated 28 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

The report highlighted progress at Ward level in the delivery of the projects in the Place Based Investment Programme and the funding available to support Covid-19 recovery. All of the recommendations were in line with governance set by the terms of reference of the funding programme and the powers of the Committee to agree adjustments.

Following consideration, the Committee **AGREED** the repurposing of the following Covid-19 funds:-

i. Ward 13 – Inverness West

£9,055 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Amenity Services with repairs and improvements to play parks in their Ward.

ii. Ward 14 – Inverness Central

£10,000 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Amenity Services with improvements to play parks in their Ward.

iii. **Ward 15 – Inverness Ness-side**

£10,345 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Amenity Services with repairs and improvements to play parks in their Ward.

iv. **Ward 16 – Inverness Millburn**

£12,950 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Amenity Services with repairs and improvements to play parks in their Ward.

v. **Ward 19 – Inverness South**

- a) £1,411 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Amenity Services with repairs and improvements to play parks in their Ward; and
- b) the use of COVID-19 funds allocated to the Ward, in support of a project proposal at Millburn Academy to repurpose the library area into an art gallery and performance space combined with a café/restaurant, up to a maximum of £15,000. The final allocation to be determined on receipt of the detailed application.

The Committee also **AGREED** that the previously agreed Placed Based Investment Funding allocations for **Ward 13 – Inverness West**, be amended as follows:

Funding Heading	Previously agreed	Proposed amount
Play Provision	£50,000	£36,000
Residential Path Improvement	£20,000	£34,000
Total	£70,000	£70,000

7. **Play Park Funding – New Allocations**
Maoineachadh Phàircean Cluiche - Sònrachaidhean Ùra

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/4/22 dated 17 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

In discussion, it was highlighted that there was wider community engagement along with support from Community Support Co-ordinators and the Play Technician Team on Play Park funding available. A press release had been issued regarding the new website on play areas and how community groups could become involved in raising funds and developing play park areas and the link to the website would be shared with Members.

If decisions had been made to remove play park equipment and have an empty play space instead, then the relevant Community Councils would be informed and they would be provided with information on how they could be engaged in developing the play site in future.

Continuing, Whin Park, Inshes Park and some other sites were classed as destination play areas and separate consideration required to be given to funding for those sites as they were not specific to that Ward and this would be the subject of a future report to Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED:-**

- i. the funding available and the funding already committed to invest in play parks in the City Wards; and
- ii. a further £55m is to be awarded to Scottish Councils over the lifetime of the Parliament;

and **AGREED:-**

- iii. to split the allocation for the Inverness Area 2021/22 (£66,167) equally between the seven City Wards; and
- iv. to homologate the decisions taken by the Amenities Manager (South) as budget holder and in discussion and consultation with Members at Ward Business Meetings to commit the funds allocated to each Ward as detailed in Table 1 of the report.

8. Placed Based Investment Programme Prògram Tasgaidh Stèidhte air Àite

Declarations of Interest:-

Members declared an interest in this item as follows:-

Mrs C Caddick: Member of Inshes Park Community Association

Mrs M Davidson: Trustee of Glenurquhart Rural Community Association

Mr K Gowans: Employee of Inverness College, UHI

Mr J Gray: involved in the application by Crown Church

Mrs I Mackenzie: Member and Board Member of Crown Church

Having declared an interest, the above mentioned Members indicated they would leave the meeting for consideration of those applications for funding in which they had an interest.

Transparency Statements: Miss J Campbell, Mrs I Mackenzie and Mrs B McAllister made Transparency Statements in respect of this item in that they had a connection to this item by reason of their position on the Victorian Market Stakeholder Group. However, having applied the objective test they did not consider that they had an interest to declare. This was because it was a Council appointment and non-financial. Members requested that this Statement be recorded in the Minutes.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/5/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- when a decision would be taken in relation to any request by the Council to the Scottish Government to request permission to carry over the value of any uncommitted PBIP grant into 2022/23;
- the potential for next year's funding to be received in early course to provide more certainty around some of the projects being delivered next year;
- the need for discussions in relation to the Active Botanical Community Garden in terms of the use of concrete and associated carbon implications;

- whether there was any provision for delays in projects due to issues with the availability of building materials;
- welcoming the spend and investment within the local communities, reference being made to benefits of specific projects set out in the report; and
- it was understood that the issues around the land ownership permission in relation to the Ardersier Outdoor Gym proposal had been resolved.

Thereafter, Members indicated their support for all of the projects listed in the report.

The Principal Regeneration Officer explained there was insufficient funds to support all of the projects detailed in the report. The total funds available for investment in the projects was £225,934.

In response to a point of order, it was confirmed that on the basis of the clarification provided on the available funds and consideration of the assessment of funding to be awarded to each project, it would not be possible to separate the interests declared by Members. Therefore, all Members who had declared an interest in any one of the applications should leave the meeting.

At this point, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs Davidson, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Gray and Mrs I Campbell left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or determination of this item.

On hearing further from the Principal Regeneration Officer and in discussion it was suggested that this item be deferred to provide Members with the opportunity to give further consideration to the applications for funding.

The Committee **AGREED** to **DEFER** further consideration of this item to a Special Meeting of the Committee.

9. Riverside Way: One way with Cycle Contraflow Ness Walk and Bught Road Traffic Regulation Order and Concept Design Consultation
Slighe Taobh na h-Aibhne: Aon-slighe le Sruth Dà-shlighe Rothaireachd air Ceum Nis agus Rathad a' Bhucht Òrdugh Riaghladh Trafaig agus co-chomhairle Dealbhadh Bun-bheachd

There had been circulated Report No CIA/6/22 dated 1 February 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the Riverside Way was one of the most attractive assets in Inverness and formed part of the City's active travel strategy. The route was used by people from across the City and beyond and had positive benefits for health, the environment and tourism;
- the shift towards safer active travel would contribute to the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions and achieve lower carbon outcomes;
- in relation to the public consultation, the majority of respondents supported the proposal and reference to the many emails Members had received in support of the continuation of the scheme;
- data was sought, and provided, on the daily counts on the route by user type;

- the balance of opinion generated by the consultation between those for and against was marginal and concern was expressed at the number of unresolved objections to the Traffic Regulation Order;
- there would be an impact of the scheme on local residents due to the displacement of traffic and potential to create a rat-run at Ballifeary Lane;
- there was no evidence there had been the modal shift that this investment should reasonably be expected to deliver;
- there had been a failure to engage effectively with the public and residents had highlighted they had not been able to access the online consultation on the Council's website;
- whilst Members fully supported the principles of active travel, in this case the project and its application of those principles together with the engagement with residents, Members and community councils required to be strengthened;
- there were many other ways to promote active travel such as improving road surfaces and the need for a strategic approach in linking up active travel infrastructure across the City;
- the cycle contraflow was confusing for all users and there were many contradictory issues and interests such as vehicle access to stakeholder services and facilities;
- the legitimate concerns of local residents on the impact of traffic on Ballifeary Lane could be overcome through appropriate mitigation;
- rejecting the scheme would have serious consequences for future active travel funding and to the Council's commitment to active travel improvements across Inverness;
- the nature of active travel interventions was that there was no perfect fit and there would be some displacement and a degree of compromise was necessary to change the culture and behaviour in the way the road/shared surfaces were used;
- this was a popular route towards destinations and the proposal would enhance the area, promote safer active travel, improve health and wellbeing and be valued by the residents of Inverness;
- the Riverside Way had been used for walking and cycling for many years and concern that the project was being taken forward due to the fact Sustrans funding was available and concern at the advice to Members in their consideration of the scheme that this funding would be lost if the proposal was not supported; and
- a considerable level of consultation had taken place to date and if Members approved the making of the Traffic Regulation Order, there would be the opportunity for more consultation and consideration of further design improvements design and mitigation measures in regard to displacement.

Thereafter, the Provost seconded by Ms E Knox **MOVED** approval of the recommendations set out in the report.

As an **AMENDMENT** Mr B Boyd seconded by Mr A Graham moved to (i) reject the proposals; (ii) improve and increase political and community engagement in the project; (iii) revisit and restate the project objectives; and (iv) develop proposals to meet the objectives and positively engage with the community.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 12 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 7 votes, with 2 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion

C Aitken, I Brown, C Caddick, J Campbell, H Carmichael, M Davidson, J Gray, E Knox, D Macpherson, B McAllister, T Robertson and E Roddick..

For the Amendment

R Balfour, B Boyd, G Campbell-Sinclair, A Graham, A Jarvie, I MacKenzie, R MacWilliam.

Abstention

K Gowans, C Smith.

Decision

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the full analysis of the responses from the recent concept design consultation exercise as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the background to the proposed permanent One Way with Cycle Contraflow Traffic Regulation Order and the representations received; and
- iii. **APPROVED** the making of the Road Traffic Regulation Order.

10. Areas Roads Capital Programme 2022/23 Program Calpa Rathaidean na Sgìre 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No CIA/7/22 dated 25 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2022/2023 Area Roads Capital Programme for the City of Inverness and Area.

11. Housing Revenue Account: Garage Rents 2022/2023 Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais: Màil Gharaidsean 2022/2023

There had been circulated Report No CIA/8/22 dated 4 February 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

The Committee **AGREED** that a 1.5% rent increase be applied to Inverness Garages and Garage Sites.

12. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 31 December 2021 Aithisg Dèanadais Taigheadais – 1 Giblean gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2021

There had been circulated Report No CIA/9/22 dated 4 February 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- it would have been helpful to mention in the report the positive impact Council house repairs and upgrades had on climate change;
- in relation to the length of time taken to complete emergency repairs, whilst it was recognised that Highland was predominantly rural, the target of 14 hours appeared to be a little high given that the Scottish Housing Network

(SHN) benchmark was 4.8 hours. It was also commented that the Highland figures were above the SHN benchmark in all quarters. It having been queried whether the target could be reviewed, it was confirmed that this could be discussed. It was added that the target had previously been 24 hours and it was something that officers strove to improve upon. However, performance had been impacted by Covid;

- information was sought, and provided, on the snagging period for new Council houses, whether the Council was being put at a disadvantage by not being given the same terms as private householders, and whether the housing repairs team had sufficient resources to deal with the growing number of Council houses;
- further information was sought, and provided, on the rent arrears management work that had taken place during lockdown which had resulted in improved arrears figures, and whether more staff were needed on a daily basis; and
- thanks were expressed to the Housing Manager and the Repairs Manager for their diligence and support.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the information provided on Housing Performance for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021.

13. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

a) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/10/22 dated 31 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance and the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 31 December 2021 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets.

b) Capital Projects Pròiseactan Calpa

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/11/22 dated 31 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy and Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- there were a number of projects scheduled to come on stream this year and Members welcomed the progress that had been made; and
- in relation to the Victorian Market, Market Hall and Fish Market Refurbishment project, information was sought, and provided, as to how firm the potential tenancies that had been lined up were, when it would be known if there were any further delays to the project, whether all the units would be full when the market re-opened and, if not, whether there were any measures/incentives that could be put in place to ensure they were filled and that the market re-opened to some fanfare.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. scrutinised and **NOTED** the current status of capital projects; and
- ii. **NOTED** the adjustments being made to the allocations within the Victorian Market, Market Hall and Fish Market Refurbishment project.

**c) Grant Applications over £10,000
Iarrtasan Tabhartais thar £10,000**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/12/22 dated 31 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance. A copy of supporting documentation had also been circulated as Booklet A.

In relation to the application by LCC Live Event Services Ltd in respect of the European Pipe Band Championships in Inverness in June 2022, some Members expressed concern that granting the recommended sum to a private company would set a dangerous precedent and questioned whether supporting a commercial event was a good use of Common Good funding. Whilst the event would raise the profile of the city, it was a one-day event which was unlikely to lead to benefits such as an increase in bed nights. It was also questioned whether the event would go ahead if the application was not approved; if not, it was not commercially viable. On the point being raised, the Inverness City Area Manager confirmed that it was appropriate to use the Conference Support Budget.

Other Members spoke in support of the application, commenting that the European Pipe Band Championships was a prestigious event which could easily be lost to another local authority area. People travelled from all over the world to attend, and it would benefit shops and businesses in the city. Whilst £29,000 was a significant sum, it was highlighted that the total project cost was £174,542, £70,000 of which went to the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association. It was added that it was important that the Committee's support for the event was proportionate, and that figures were provided after the event for the purposes of scrutiny.

Thereafter, the Committee determined the current grant applications as follows:-

- 1) Kings Golf Club, Inverness – **APPROVED** a grant of £25,240;
- 2) LCC Live Event Services Ltd – **APPROVED** a grant of £29,000; and
- 3) Visit Inverness Loch Ness – **APPROVED** a grant of £30,000;

and **APPROVED** the following applications submitted by Inverness BID:-

- 1) The City of Inverness Annual Floral Displays 2022 - £64,150
- 2) Operation Respect Easter/Summer/Autumn 2022 – £10,795
- 3) Inverness Gull Project 2022 - £12,000
- 4) Inverness Community Safety Partnership 2022 - £9,700
- 5) Coach Friendly Project 2022 - £10,800

**d) Inverness Events and Festivals – Review of 2021/22 to date and proposals for 2022-23
Tachartasan agus Fèisean Inbhir Nis- Ath-sgrùdadh 2021/22 gu ruige seo agus molaidhean airson 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/13/22 dated 31 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks were expressed to everyone involved in the events that had taken place during what had been a difficult time due to the Covid restrictions that had been in place. The events had been a great success and the feedback from the public had been positive. Particular reference was made to the Christmas event in Bellfield Park which had attracted huge numbers of visitors, and the fireworks display which families had enjoyed from a distance;
- the partnership with High Life Highland was working well and it was anticipated that it would be even more fruitful going forward;
- the proposal to utilise the Events and Festivals budget underspend to provide decorative lighting in the City Centre was welcomed; and
- doing something different could be difficult but the challenges presented by Covid had also presented an opportunity to try something new and it had been really successful.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the previously agreed vision, values and objectives detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** that the governance arrangements with scrutiny through the Events and Festivals Working Group, with annual reports to CIAC, continued;
- iii. **NOTED** the spend profile and underspend, as highlighted in section 5.3 of the report, for 2021/22;
- iv. **NOTED** the review of the 2021/22 programme; and
- v. **AGREED** to preserve the current events and festivals budget in the sum of £0.303m for 2022/23 to support the development of a refreshed events and festivals programme.

**e) Inverness Common Good Fund – Annual Report 2020/21
Fo-Chomataidh Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis – Aithisg Bhliadhnail
2020/21**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/14/22 dated 31 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance and the Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

The Committee **AGREED** the final monitoring report and Statement of Accounts for the Inverness Common Good Fund for the year ended 31 March 2021.

**f) ICGF Budget Setting for 2022/23 and Capital Programme
Buidseat ICGF – 2022/23**

There is circulated Joint Report No. CIA/15/22 dated 31 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance and Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- support was expressed for the proposed budget which seemed to be well drafted, proportionate and reasonable. However, a caveat was proposed that the Common Good Fund Strategy be reviewed towards the end of 2022, once the new Council had had a few months to settle in;
- the continued project work on the Fund's assets was important in terms of sustainability;
- the Fund's reserves were there to be used when they were really needed and it was right to use them for additional winter fuel payments;
- it was important to reinvigorate the City Centre and Members reiterated their support for the proposed decorative lighting which would be in place all year and would make the City Centre feel more welcoming; and
- thanks were expressed to former Councillor Graham Ross who had done a significant amount of work in respect of the Inverness Common Good Fund.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the Common Good Fund budget for 2022/2023 detailed within the report and its appendices; and
- ii. that the Common Good Fund Strategy be reviewed towards the end of 2022.

14. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Minutes of the City of Inverness Area Committee held on 18 November 2021
- ii. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 15 November 2021, 20 December 2021 and 31 January 2022;
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the City and Area Recovery Group held on 1 December 2021 and City Area Development Group held on 24 January 2022;
- iv. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Inverness East Sports Facilities Working Group held on 16 December 2021 and 27 January 2022 subject to any reference to UHI Inverness College Campus being amended to HIE Inverness Campus; and
- v. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 31 January 2022.

At the conclusion of formal business, the Provost and Leader of Inverness and Area thanked the Head of Service (Community Support and Engagement), the Inverness City Area Manager, Democratic Services staff and support staff in the Town House for their assistance during her tenure. She also thanked her fellow Members, particularly her current and former Depute Provosts, wishing those standing for re-election every success and those not standing a long and happy retirement.

Members reciprocated, paying tribute to the manner in which the Provost and Leader, the first female Provost of Inverness since the 15th century, had carried out her role, latterly through very difficult times. Particular reference was made to her support of the business community in Inverness as well as her work with young people and their organisations. She had been an exemplary Provost and Members wished her well for her retirement.

The meeting ended at 4.30 pm.