

AGENDA ITEM 5

Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport Highland Council Update - August 2024

The following provides a brief update as to some of the activity relating the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport. The intention is to share this and other information in the next Community Newsletter to be issued at the beginning of August.

To help provide further clarity on the governance and aims of the Green Freeport a series of short videos have been created which can be viewed on [our website](#), where you will also find regular updates and further information about ICFGF.

We will be engaging more directly with communities as the project evolves. A reminder of the timeline is outlined below;

Timeline – Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport

- January 2023 – Inverness and the Cromarty Firth announced as one of Scotland’s two proposed Green Freeports
- October 2023 – Outline Business Case submitted to Scottish and UK governments
- February 2024 – formal approval of Outline Business Case confirmed
- March 2024 – Special Tax Sites statutory instrument laid before UK parliament
- March 2024 – Special Tax Site status extended from five to 10 years
- April 2024 – ICFGF Special Tax Sites confirmed
- June 2024 – Full Business Case endorsed by Highland Council and submitted to the Scottish and UK governments
- Aug 2024 – anticipate feedback from UK and Scottish Governments
- Nov 2024 - Sec of State / Cabinet Sec approval, MOU signed between Highland Council, Scottish Gov, UK Gov and ICF Green Freeport Board.

I look forward to updating Elected members on progress and gaining your view on next steps.

Calum MacPherson
Chief Executive, ICFGF

ICFGF Full Business Case submitted

In order to fully establish a Green Freeport, a Full Business Case (FBC) for the initiative has to be approved by ministers in the Scottish and UK governments.

ICFGF's Full Business Case was submitted to Holyrood and Westminster in June, after being endorsed by The Highland Council.

A huge amount of work went into the preparation of this detailed document, once again underlining the commitment and enthusiasm of all those involved, from the private and public sectors and academia. It is now being reviewed by the Scottish Government and the recently elected UK Government and we look forward to the outcome of that process in due course.

Further detail on the anticipated outcomes will be included in the upcoming Community Newsletter, with a quote from Councillor Ken Gowans, Chair of The Highland Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee on the potential long-term benefit for the region.

Ardersier Port Owner Secures £100m Credit Facility

In May, it was announced Haventus, the energy transition facilities provider, and owner of Ardersier Port, east of Inverness, had secured a £100million joint credit facility from the Scottish National Investment Bank (the Bank) and UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) with £50m million investment from each.

The financing follows a £300m capital commitment announced in 2023 by leading energy investment firm Quantum Capital Group, when Haventus began the redevelopment of Ardersier Port.

The facility will underpin the creation of a nationally significant infrastructure facility to support industrial-scale deployment of fixed and floating offshore wind. Haventus has taken a final investment decision and construction has now begun on the site, which includes the development of a new 650-metre quay wall and associated quayside.

Sumitomo manufacturing plant taking shape at Nigg

Sumitomo Electric's new £350m subsea cable manufacturing plant at Port of Nigg is now underway following a ground-breaking ceremony at the site in May.

The factory will supply critical elements for the reinforcement of the UK electricity transmission grid and for connecting offshore renewable energy production facilities.

More than 150 highly skilled jobs will be created at the plant, with maximum utilisation of the local supply chain for production of cables and construction of transmission cable systems.

New Board Members at ICGF

ICFGF has welcomed UHI Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Vicky Nairn, and recently appointed Port of Cromarty Firth (PoCF) Chief Executive, Alex Campbell, onto its board.

Vicky, who started her current role at the university in March, had been serving as UHI's Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor since October 2022, and initially joined the institution as Vice-Principal Operations in November 2021.

Alex, a business leader with extensive experience in the renewables, oil and gas, marine and environmental sectors, joined PoCF from environmental and geospatial consultancy APEM Ltd, where he was Managing Director, based in Aberdeen.

Proud to sign up to Buy Social Scotland Pledge

ICFGF is proud to be among the latest organisations to sign up to the Buy Social Scotland Pledge, a national initiative which aims to strengthen opportunities for social enterprises within the county's supply chain.

Launched earlier this year, the Pledge brings together corporate businesses, SME's, academic institutions and public sector bodies that are looking to make a commitment to use services offered by organisations in the third sector.

The [Buy Social Scotland Pledge](#), has five key commitments:

- Recognise Fair Work principles.
- Make a commitment towards a Net Zero Policy.

- Promote Social Enterprises within our own procurement and supply chain.
- Agree to prompt payment to its suppliers.
- Commit to reporting annual spend with Social Enterprises.

Bootcamp highlights opportunities for small businesses

As members of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), ICFGF were among the wide range of participants who took part in the organisation's Highlands, Islands and Moray Bootcamp, held at Inverness Caledonian Thistle Stadium in April.

As one of the keynote speakers, Chief Executive Calum MacPherson highlighted the range of supply chain opportunities that are likely to open up for local businesses as a result of the Green Freeport initiative.

Supporting our young sports stars and future leaders

ICFGF was delighted to support an initiative by the Camanachd Association that enabled 43 female pupils from Highland secondary schools to hone their shinty skills at the USA Girls Performance Camp in June.

The seven-day camp, held at Lawrenceville School, near New York, provides high quality shinty coaching, as well as a rich cultural experience for participants. Five Highland schools were represented there: Ardnamurchan High; Kingussie High; Kilchuimen High, Inverness Royal Academy and; Portree High.

New offices for ICFGF

Our existing small team of three will increase in number over the next year as the Green Freeport is established. So, after 12 months of being very well looked after by [The Green House](#), we have moved to offices where we will be able to accommodate more staff.

Our new address (as of August 1) is: [UHI House](#), (adjacent to Raigmore Hospital)
Old Perth Road, , Inverness, IV2 3JH

Our office phone number remains the same - 0333 091 1985