Agenda Item	**7c**
Report No	**BIER/33/25**

The Highland Council

Committee:	**Black Isle and Easter Ross**
Date:	**10 November 2025**
Report Title:	**Common Good Consultation on the proposal to dispose and change the use of East Church Hall, Cromarty**
Report By:	**Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate** **Assistant Chief Executive – Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on the outcome of a public consultation under section 104 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 in respect of the proposal to:-

- dispose (by lease) of East Church Hall which is common good property with the intention of a future disposal (by sale) via a Community Asset Transfer process; and
- change the use of the property to an enterprising community hub.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

i. **Note** the process and outcome of the consultation as contained in section 6 and 7 and Appendix 1 of this report.
ii. **Consider** the representations and responses as set out in Appendix 2, taking them into account whilst having regard to the views of the inhabitants of the former Burgh of Cromarty during the decision-making process;
iii. **Recommend** to Full Council (see section 8) that the proposal should be either:-
   a) Approved subject to Sheriff Court consent;
   b) Amended and a new consultation may be required, or
   c) Rejected; and
iv. **Approve** the responses to the representations in Appendix 2 for publication on the Council's website.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** – The proposal, subject to court consent, would result in the granting of an initial 25-year lease, incorporating break options, to the Cromarty Community Development Trust (CCDT). During the lease term, the Cromarty Common Good Fund would receive rental income, while CCDT would assume full responsibility for the repairs and maintenance of the property. The rent would be reviewed every five years in line with CPI inflation.

A lease and rental assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) standards, ensuring that the proposed terms reflect current market conditions and deliver Best Value for the Cromarty Common Good Fund.

The intention of the lease however is to provide an interim transition period for CCDT to pilot the business model outlined in their business plan. Should the venture prove successful, CCDT intends to apply for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) to acquire full ownership of East Church Hall during the 25-year lease period.

Should CCDT proceed successfully with a CAT application, this would result in the last remaining capital asset held on the Cromarty Common Good Fund being legally discharged meaning that it will no longer be a common good asset. This would also be a loss of income to the fund.

3.2 **Legal** – There is a statutory requirement under section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to consult prior to disposing and/or changing the use of common good property. The outcome of the consultation must be considered during the decision-making process on how to proceed with a proposal.

There is an additional requirement under section 75 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to seek Sheriff Court consent prior to proceeding with a proposal where a common good asset is inalienable property.

The property subjected to this proposal is owned by the Council in terms of the title deed**:** Trustees for the Congregation of Cromarty Parish Church in favour of the Provost, Magistrates and Councillors of the Burgh of Cromarty together with a Minute of Waiver by Colonel George Duncan Noel Ross (superior) both recorded 8 November 1962. Extracts from the minute of waiver suggest that the property may be inalienable common good and therefore court consent will be required should Members decide to accept the proposal.

3.3 **Risk** – This report is specifically in relation to the statutory requirement to consult as per the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 prior to disposing and/or changing the use of common good property. Should the proposal proceed, Sheriff Court approval is also required.

As a result of complying with relevant legislations, there are no risks identified within this report.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - All common good properties are managed in accordance with existing Council policies regarding health and safety requirements.

3.5 **Gaelic** – There are no Gaelic implications resulting from this report.

4 Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening impact assessment for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children’s Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified and as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 This report is the outcome of a common good consultation process and therefore an impact assessment is not required as guided by the Integrated Impact Assessment guidance i.e., a report on a survey or stating the results of research does not require an assessment.

5 The Proposal

5.1 The Cromarty Community Development Trust (CCDT) wish to take on a lease of East Church Hall which is common good property. The property is a Category C listed building built in the 1900s as a church hall but was subsequently used as a youth club and childcare centre more recently. It has lain empty for some time however CCDT would like to revitalise the property to provide a much-needed community facility.

5.2 It is proposed to transform the property into a multi-functional community hub with the aim of generating enough income to pay towards running costs and maintenance of the building. A business plan has been prepared, and the potential uses of the building include:-

- offices, rental space and community meeting rooms;
- community café, garden, pop-up and thrift shop; and
- cycling infrastructure to support active travel and to provide electric vehicle charging points.

Those who will benefit from the proposal may include local community groups, organisations and other social enterprises; small businesses, start-ups or entrepreneurs; families, individuals and visitors to Cromarty.

5.3 The arrangement would see an income to the Cromarty Common Good Fund which has been set at market rates - a summary of the proposed lease terms is noted in 3.1.

CCDT’s intention is to acquire full ownership of the asset via a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) application if the venture proves a success.

5.4 In deciding whether to accept, amend or reject the proposal, the Council must have regard to the views of the inhabitants of the former Burgh of Cromarty (Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015 Act).

5.5 The remainder of this report describes the process and results of the consultation, to facilitate the decision making of Members in relation to the proposal.

6 Common Good Consultation

6.1 A statutory consultation on the proposal outlined in 5.1 – 5.3 commenced on 4 August and concluded on 29 September 2025.

The consultation document is included within **Appendix 3** of this report.

6.2 The purpose of the consultation was to allow Cromarty residents, including the community council and community groups to have their say on the proposal affecting common good property whilst considering the following key questions:-

1. What are your views on the proposal utilising common good property?
2. Do you have any views on potential benefits of the proposal?
3. Do you have any issues or concerns arising from the proposal?
4. What are your views on a future disposal (by sale) of the property via a Community Asset Transfer request?
5. Do you have any additional comments?

A copy of the representations are included within **Appendix 2**. The representations are reproduced verbatim (with personal information excluded/redacted) together with the Council's proposed responses to the consultation.

6.3 The consultation was publicised via the following methods:-

- The Cromarty Community Council was informed directly.
- 16 community groups were also informed directly.
- A notice of consultation was displayed at the property.
- A consultation notice poster and document was provided to those who were informed directly, requesting assistance to publicise within the local community and raise awareness via key contacts.
- A consultation notice poster and document was provided to those who manage public buildings such as the library (via HLH).
- A press release and social media posts were issued on the Council's media accounts including website – during the launch and 2-weeks before the closing date.
- The Council's press release and social media posts were reported by local press outlets.
- Social media posts were repeated during the 8-week consultation period.
- Reminder emails were sent to all those who were informed directly before the closing date.
- The consultation document was published on the Council's website at the beginning of the launch and continues to be accessible.
- Members were notified on the day of the launch that the consultation period had commenced.

7 Summary of representations received

7.1 13 representations were received from individuals during the consultation period. Of those, 12 responses were received from residents within Cromarty and 1 resident out-with.

The population of Cromarty aged 18+ is approximately 547 (2021 census).

7.2 The analysis document included within in **Appendix 1** details a summary of the comments, themes and concerns which have been distilled from the full representations contained within **Appendix 2.**

Summary of themes include:-

- economic benefit;
- significant community benefit;
- conserving the building;
- business model needs to be robust before selling;
- commercial uses justified to generate income for the common good; and
- asset secured if it remains as common good.

7.4 All 13 representations are fully supportive of the building being utilised as a community-hub however some noted concerns with regards to a possible future sale of the property. This is summarised as follows:

- 11 – Supportive of a future sale;
- 1 – Supportive but with concern; and
- 1 – Not supportive

One responder noted that a robust business model is required to ensure sustainability prior to selling the property.

One responder strongly oppose the property being sold and that it should remain as a common good asset as it secures its future. The rental income benefits the fund. They are fully supportive of leasing the property.

Eleven individuals are supportive of selling the property where it was felt that the building would be well looked after for example.

A couple of individuals noted concerns with possible parking issues.

As noted in 3.1, it is important to highlight that selling the property will result in the last remaining capital asset held on the Cromarty Common Good Fund being legally discharged meaning that it will no longer be a common good asset.

The proposal is still at a very early stage and if it is to proceed, it is subjected to regulatory permissions where planning related issues will be scrutinised.

8 Decision making and outcome

8.1 Decision making on common good proposals is delegated to the appropriate Area Committee if the value is less than 10% of the relevant common good fund. Decisions must be taken to Full Council if the value is greater than this.

8.2 If Members agree to proceed with the proposal terms outlined in 3.1, this exceeds 10% of the value of Cromarty Common Good Fund and therefore requires Full Council decision.

8.3 Members must have regard to the views of the representations received as contained in **Appendix 2** and consider the responses, whilst also reflecting on responsibilities for the Cromarty Good Fund, in reaching a decision on how to proceed.

8.4 Members are asked to consider the proposal and recommend to Full Council to:-

- Approve subject to Sheriff Court consent;
- Amend and a new consultation may be required; or
- Reject

In reaching a decision, Members are asked to provide reasons for their decision.

It is important to note that if Members agree to proceed with the proposal, specifically in relation to a disposal by sale via a CAT process, this does not mean that the CAT application will be successful. The CAT application, although also managed under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, requires a separate process to determine the outcome. Prior to a CAT application where the asset is common good, there is a requirement to first consult to determine the common good outcome. Selling the asset also requires Sheriff Court consent.

In the event Members decide to amend the proposal or that it should not go ahead, it may not be necessary to make recommendations to Full Council as the decision may fall within the delegated responsibilities of the Area Committee - for example, the value of the lease term does not exceed 10% of the value of the Cromarty Common Good Fund.

If Members approve the proposal, the recommendation will be put forward as a starred item at the next appropriate Full Council meeting.

Designation:	Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Assistant Chief Executive – Place
Date:	6 October 2025
Author:	Paula Betts, Common Good Fund Officer
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Analysis of Consultation Appendix 2 – Representations and Response Appendix 3 – Consultation Document

Appendix 1

CROMARTY COMMON GOOD FUND

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ANALYSIS ON THE PROPOSAL TO DISPOSE AND CHANGE THE USE OF EAST CHURCH HALL FOR AN ENTERPRISING COMMUNITY HUB.

1. Purpose of the consultation

As per section 104 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the consultation is in relation to a proposal to:

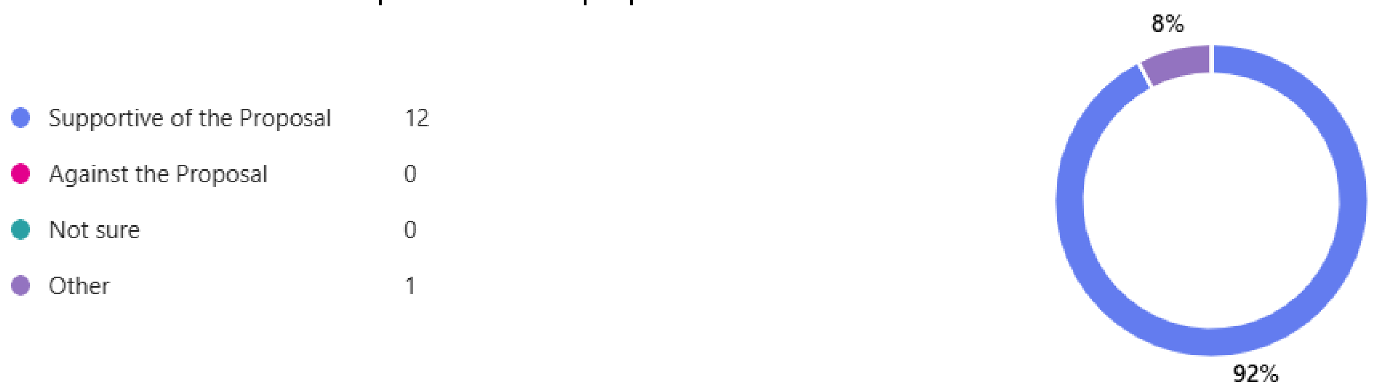
- Dispose (by lease) of East Church Hall which is common good property with the intention of a future disposal (by sale) via a Community Asset Transfer process.
- Change the use of the property to an enterprising community hub.

2. Responses received

The public consultation period commenced on the 4 August 2025 and concluded on 29 September 2025.

13 responses were received from individual residents. No responses were received from the community council nor community groups. 12 responses were received from residents within Cromarty and 1 out-with.

The general view of those who responded to the proposal can be summarised as follows:



The ‘other’ relates to being supportive of the change of use and lease element, but not to the future sale of the property.

Although it is not clearly demonstrated in the graph above, after analysing the comments with regards to the question about a possible future disposal, by sale, the views can be summarised as follows:

- **11 - Supportive**
- **1 – Supportive but with concern**
- **1 – Not supportive**

3. Summary of the representations received

The analysis presented in Table 1 below, provides a summary of the themes and comments raised during the consultation period. It is split into two sections to highlight comments with regards to disposing the asset via (1) lease and (2) selling the asset. **Appendix 2** within the main Committee Report contains full verbatim reproductions of all representations received together with the proposed responses. In compliance with the Council’s data protection policy and the common good consultation guidance, personal information has been removed/redacted.

TABLE1: Summary of the comments			
Supportive to lease (13)	**Supportive of the disposal by sale (11)**	**Supportive of the disposal by sale but with concern (1)**	**Oppose the sale of the property (1)**
• Excellent use of the site • Building has not contributed to the common good for many years now so leasing it to a body that can use it for community benefit will be a significant improvement. • Shame to see it lie dormant for a while. • Economic benefits for locals and tourists. • Significant community benefit. • Fully supportive of the proposal to lease the property to the Trust for the purposes stated. But strongly opposed to the longer-term aim of removing it from the Cromarty Common Good.	• The building will be well looked after. • Good idea otherwise the building would be left to rot. • Should be affordable as possible for the Development Trust. • After a period of successful rental then that would be a positive thing.	• As long as the business model has been robust enough to demonstrate that the enterprise can be self-sustaining, then full control and ownership should be considered as an option.	• Strongly opposed to the longer-term aim of removing it from the Cromarty Common Good. As part of the Common Good the asset is secured for the long-term benefit of the community, and any change will weaken this. The proposed commercial uses of the property are also justified if this generates income

• Conserving the building and providing a valuable community asset • Keen to see this in community use for the health and wellbeing of our community. • Cromarty Community Trust ate very good at project management and fund raising. • The building is providing no benefit now and, presumably, will be deteriorating structurally.			through rent which goes to the Common Good.

Summary of themes

- Economic benefit.
- Significant community benefit.
- Conserving the building.
- Business model needs to be robust before selling.
- Commercial uses justified to generate income for the common good.
- Asset secured if it remains as common good.

Members must have regard to the views of the former inhabitants of Cromarty during the decision-making process and give reasons why for the outcome they wish to proceed with.

Appendix 2

REPRESENTATIONS AND RESPONSES ON THE PROPOSAL TO DISPOSE AND CHANGE THE USE OF EAST CHURCH HALL FOR AN ENTERPRISING COMMUNITY HUB							
Id	**What are your views on the Proposal utilising common good property?**	**Do you have any views on potential benefits of the Proposal?**	**Do you have any issues or concerns arising from the Proposal?**	**What are your views on a future disposal (by sale) of the property via a Community Asset Transfer?**	**Do you have any additional comments?**	**Please confirm if you are**	**Responses**
1	Excellent use of the site The town is the better if it being used not just degrading as it is The proposed use is a great idea and I utterly support it	An empty building is hopeless for the town It should be used	No concern	I approve of this, the building will be well looked after	No thanks	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considerd during the decision-making process.
2	I strongly support the proposal to lease the building to the Cromarty Development Trust. The building has not contributed to the common good for many years now so leasing it to a body that can use it for community benefit will be a significant improvement to community activity in Cromarty.	See above	No. I hope this prolonged process can be completed soon.	I would support that proposal.	No	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considerd during the decision-making process.
3	I support the proposals and the Cromarty Community Development Trust in their plans with the East Church	The potential of the East Church is both positive for those who live in Cromarty and those who visit. Currently we need to encourage visitors to the East side of the town and in turn support the visitors. There are also potential benefits for residents too. Increase in business footfall, possible office space / cafe / community development	No	I would support thist	No	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considerd during the decision-making process.
4	I think this is such a fantastic building it has been a shame to see it lie dormant for a while. Changing the use of the building could open up so many different possibilities	I think it would be an exciting opportunity for the community to develop a new space in whatever form this takes	My issues in opening the building would be parking	Would support the project	No	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considerd during the decision-making process. With regards to parking concerns, if the proposal goes ahead, other regulatory permissions such as planning are required. Traffic management issues are likely to be considered during the planning application.
5	Strong support. Thus is an asset that is deteriorating, the proposal is to achieve significant community benefit in a scheme that will benefit residents and visitors.	Obviously economic, social and boosting community confidence.	Parking is an obvious concern but require a joined up approach rather than focusing on simply this development. And in providing facilities in Primary will reduce travel and parking pressure elsewhere.	This should be in a way that is as affordable as possible for the Development Trust.	Make haste!	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process. With regards to parking concerns, if the proposal goes ahead, other regulatory permissions such as planning are required. Traffic management issues are likely to be considered during the planning application. With regards to your comment about the building deteriorating, the Trust would be responsible for full repair and maintenance as part of the lease agreement. Your comment about making it affordable for the Trust if the asset was sold at a later date, the Community Asset Transfer process will consider the market value of the asset during the application assessment.

6	I think it will be an excellent idea for the town of Cromarty for this to happen.	If it goes ahead and the building is made a hub for the town where people can access various groups I.e Citizens advice etc and a meeting place for coffees etc it will benefit a lot of people instead of having to travel to Inverness etc for advice.	As long as those who are in charge ensure that any ideas are of a firm footing and won't fold quickly I think that it will be an asset to Cromarty.	I think it's a good idea otherwise the building would be left to rot .	No	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process. With regards to your comment about the sustainability of the proposal, the initial lease arrangement will allow the Trust to pilot the business plan. The lease will also have break option clauses. If the venture proves a success, the intention of the Trust is to aquire full ownership of the asset by submitting a Community Asset Transfer application. Sustainability and the viability of the business plan for example will be assessed during this process to determine the request.
7	Very much in favour	Good use of a currently unused building, with considerable community benefits.	None	In favour	No	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process.
8	I am supportive	It would be great to have this property contributing positively to the Cromarty community and to wider population.	No	I think this is a good idea	Looking forward to hearing about the future use and proposals	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process.
9	I am fully supportive of the proposal to lease the East Church Hall to the Development Trust for the purposes stated. But I am strongly opposed to the longer term aim of removing it from the Cromarty Common Good.	The proposal includes uses which are clearly of benefit to the wider community. The proposed commercial uses of the property are also justified if this generates income through rent which goes to the Common Good and so also provides wider community benefit.	I think the consultation is framed in an unhelpful way making it difficult to respond. The issues around change of use and disposal are different. I think this consultation should be only on the change of use.	I am strongly opposed to the longer term aim of removing it from the Cromarty Common Good. As part of the Common Good the asset is secured for the long term benefit of the community and any change will weaken this security. If the model proposed in the business plan is viable, then there is no reason why it should not continue indefinitely as a Common Good asset leased for these purposes.	The first charge on the Common Good is the maintenance of the Common Good assets and so I think consideration should be given to meeting some of the longer term maintenance (or improvements) from this source. I am not sure how this would be phrased in a lease but it seems unreasonable to expect the Development Trust to cover all the costs of, say, a structural problem if it arose.	For change of use and against disposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process. During the lease period, the Cromarty Common Good Fund will receive rental income which has been set at market rates. This will be reviewed every 5-years. If the asset was to be sold, this will no longer be the case. With regards to your comment about 'disposal', lease arrangements over 10+ years are also classed as a disposal. The lease arrangement means that the Trust would be responsible for full repair and maintenance of the building which already has been discussed with the group. The Trust would also be liabile for building insurance.
10	This is an excellent, positive and constructive use of the building, conserving the building and providing a valuable community asset, appealing to a wide demographic within the town. A hub can provide community cohesion, useful facilities and a central information point for visitors too.	As above: community cohesion, information dissemination, bringing a liveliness to the town, as well as providing much-needed facilities, eg a cafe/meeting point. Investing in the future of the building.	None.	As long as the business model has been robust enough to demonstrate that the enterprise can be self-sustaining, then full control and ownership should be considered as an option.	N/A	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process. If the venture proves a success, the intention of the Trust is to aquire full ownership of the asset by submitting a Community Asset Transfer application. Sustainability and the viability of the business plan for example will be assessed during this process to determine the request.
11	It's a fantastic proposal that will help realise an underused asset.	All the potential benefits sound immensely positive for Cromarty, the people of the town and visitors to Cromarty.	No, I do not.	This sounds positive.	No, I do not.	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process
12	As the first Project Leader of the East Hall when it was Cromarty Action for Young People, i am keen to see this in community use for the health and wellbeing of our community.	If the Hall is run by and for the community, it can be multipurpose and flexible, depending on local need at any given time	No, I am keen to see this go ahead. I realise much work will be needed to get the building towards net zero, but the Cromarty Community Trust ate very good at project management and fund raising.	I am in favour if it.	No	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process

13	Generally positive - the building is providing no benefit now and, presumably, will be deteriorating structurally.	Good opportunities for the community and one less responsibility for the Council	Not sure that there has been enough consultation with residents about future uses, so far. As a resident I don't think I have had an opportunity to contribute. Some of the ideas are not good - do we really need another community garden, for example. Is this really a suitable site for electric car charging - parking for the Old Brewery, local residents, visiting trades and visitors is already very tricky in this area.	After a period of successful rental then that would be a positive thing.	No	Supportive of the Proposal	Your comments are noted and will be considered during the decision-making process. The proposal is still at an early stage and the intention of the Trust is to pilot the business plan to determine the success of the venture.

THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015

NOTICE OF CONSULTATION ON THE DISPOSAL AND CHANGE OF USE OF COMMON GOOD PROPERTY.

East Church Hall, Burnside Place, Cromarty IV11 8XQ

The Highland Council ('the Council') has received a request to dispose and change the use of East Church Hall in Cromarty which is considered to be common good property. Before reaching a decision, the Council must have regard to the views of Cromarty residents via a consultation in terms of Section 104 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. If following the consultation, the Council wish to agree to the request they must seek the consent of the Sheriff Court.

What is being proposed?

The Cromarty Community Development Trust ('CCDT') has approached the Council, expressing an interest in taking on a lease of the former East Church Hall ('the Property) with the intention of acquiring full ownership of the asset in the future. The Property is a category C Listed Building built in the 1900s as a church hall but was subsequently used as a youth club and childcare centre more recently. Since 2021/22, when the childcare service moved into the Primary School, it has lain empty with no clear future uses identified. For some time, CCDT have seen the possibilities of revitalising the Property to provide a much-needed community facility.

It is proposed to transform the Property and associated grounds into a multi-functional community hub ('the Proposal') with the aim of generating enough income to pay towards running costs and maintenance of the building. A business plan has been prepared, and the potential uses of the building include –

- offices, rental space and community meeting rooms;
- community café, garden, pop-up and thrift shop;
- cycling infrastructure to support active travel and to provide electric vehicle charging points.

Those who will benefit from the Proposal may include local community groups, organisations and other social enterprises; small businesses, start-ups or entrepreneurs; families, individuals and visitors to Cromarty.

The intention of the lease is to provide an interim transition period for CCDT to pilot the business model outlined in their business plan. Should the Proposal prove successful, CCDT intends to apply for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) to acquire full ownership of the Property.

For the duration that the Property is leased to CCDT, the Cromarty Common Good Fund would receive an income representing current market rates and achieving Best Value for the fund. The lease arrangement would be for a 25-year period and rent would be reviewed every 5 years. The group will take all responsibilities for the repairs and maintenance of the building.

Should CCDT proceed successfully with a CAT application to acquire full ownership of the Property at a later stage, this would result in the last remaining capital asset held on the Cromarty Common Good Fund being legally discharged as a common good asset. This would also be a loss of income to the Fund.

Which property is affected?

The Property (outlined in green below) is located on Burnside Place, Cromarty. The gardens surrounding the Property are not owned by the Council and therefore do not form part of the common good.

Representations

This consultation seeks the views of the Cromarty inhabitants to inform the Council's decision in respect of the Proposal as described above to -

- Dispose (by lease) of common good Property with the intention of a future disposal (by sale) via a Community Asset Transfer process;
- Change the use of common good Property to an enterprising community hub.

This consultation is specifically in relation to the statutory requirements relating to common good. Should the Proposal proceed, further statutory consents will be required, including those related to Planning.

Key questions:

1. What are your views on the Proposal utilising common good Property?
2. Do you have any views on potential benefits of the Proposal?
3. Do you have any issues or concerns arising from the Proposal?

4. What are your views on a future disposal (by sale) of the Property via a Community Asset Transfer request?
5. Do you have any additional comments?

The Council will take all representations received into account in reaching a decision. A report of the outcome of the consultation will be presented at the Black Isle and Easter Ross Area Committee and a copy of the representations and responses will be published on the Council's website.

The possible outcomes are:

a. The proposal goes ahead subject to consent by the Sheriff Court.
b. The proposal is amended significantly, and a fresh consultation takes place.
c. The proposal does not go ahead.

Please submit written representations either online, by email or post:

- Online - https://forms.office.com/e/eQW4GmYDZm
- Email: common.good@highland.gov.uk
- Post: Common Good Fund Officer, Highland Council, Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX.

Timescales

The consultation period will be open for **8-weeks** commencing from **4 August 2025**. Final written representations must be received by close of play **29 September 2025.**

It is anticipated that a report will be presented at the Black Isle and Easter Ross Area Committee on 10 November 2025.

Additional Information

All Common Good property falls into one of two categories – alienable or inalienable. Alienable property can be sold, leased or have its use changed in a way that reduces public use (subject to statutory consultation). Inalienable property is also subject to statutory consultation with the additional requirement to gain court consent in terms of Section 75 Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The subjects of this consultation, i.e. the Property, is owned by the Council in terms of the title deed**: Trustees for the Congregation of Cromarty Parish Church in favour of the Provost, Magistrates & Councillors of the Burgh of Cromarty together with a Minute of Waiver by Colonel George Duncan Noel Ross (superior) both recorded 8 November 1962.** The Minute of Waiver varied the restriction of religious or education use to provide that the hall should be used *"in all time coming for social and community purposes in connection with the town of Cromarty".* In addition*, "the owners and successors are specifically prohibited from using the said subjects for commercial or industrial purposes or for use as domestic living quarters".*

It is believed that the property may be inalienable common good. Therefore, if following the consultation, the Council wish to agree to the request they must apply to the Sheriff Court for consent. The court process will provide a further opportunity for the public to make representations on the proposal. A statutory advertisement will be placed in the local press to inform the public that a court process has commenced.