**City Strategy Stakeholder Working Group – Inaugural Meeting**
**Thursday 9th October 9:30am**
**Chamber, Council HQ and via Microsoft Teams**
**ACTION NOTE**

**Members Present:** Cllr Ian Brown (IB), **Chair**; Cllr Kate MacLean (KM); Provost Glynis Sinclair (GS); Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie (IM); Cllr Jackie Hendry (JH); Cllr Bill Boyd (BB); Cllr Alasdair Christie (AC); Cllr Morven Reid; Cllr Alex Graham (AG)

**In Attendance:** David Haas (DH), HC; David Mudie (DM), HC; Alan McKinnie (AM), HC; Gregor McCormick (GM), HC; Steven Grant (SG), HC; Mark Greig (MG), HC; Ewen McIntosh (EM), HC; David Lamont (DL), HC; Katrina Taylor (KT), HC; Simon Swanson (SS), HLH; Lorraine Bremner McBride (LM), Inverness BID; Emma Harrison (EH), VILN; Becky Robertson (BR), Crown & City Community Council; Brian MacKenzie (BM), Inverness Access Panel; Liam Bean (LB), Inverness Access Panel; Donald McKenzie (DMK), Crown & City Community Council; Ewan MacKintosh (EMK), HLH; Emily Williams (EW), BYCS, Garry Marsden HLH (GM), Leah McBain (LMcB), HC

**Apologies:** Cllr Chris Ballance Cllr David Gregg Cllr David Fraser; Cllr Ken Gowans; Cllr Michael Gregson; Cllr Trish Robertson Cllr Duncan Macpherson Cllr Ryan MacKintosh; Lewis Hannah; James Martin Neil Fraser Nicole Wallace, Revd. Stuart Smith Church of Scotland Fiona Cameron Alan Yates; Julie Cromarty; Debbie Sutton

| Item | Summary / Action Required | By Whom | Status of Action |
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| **1** | **Welcome / Apologies** | | |
| | • IB opened the meeting by welcoming attendees to the first City Streetscape Stakeholders Working Group. He introduced himself as the Leader of the City of Inverness and Area and confirmed he would be chairing the meeting.<br>• IB encouraged concise contributions and highlighted the importance of hearing everyone's ideas. | **ALL** | Noted |
| **2** | Purpose of the Working Group | | |
| | <u>The City Strategy as a Framework</u><br>• The City Strategy is described as a framework for guiding Inverness's development, with a focus on:<br>  o Vibrancy<br>  o Sustainability<br>  o Community involvement<br>• It builds on a clear city vision and masterplan, which includes major projects like the castle redevelopment and transport interchange.<br>• The strategy is intended to reflect progress and evolving priorities.<br>• It consolidates over 120 potential projects, available online via the Inverness Strategy StoryMap.<br><br><u>Governance & Scope of the Group (as defined by City & Area Committee)</u><br>The City Area Committee: | | |

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| | • Established the City Streetscape Stakeholders Working Group.<br>• Endorsed a set of initial projects (outlined in paragraph 10 of the report).<br>• Delegated authority to the Common Good Fund Subcommittee to vet project applications.<br>The Working Group:<br>• Exists to support delivery of the strategy.<br>• Will meet again in January 2026 to review progress.<br>• Is open to broad participation—attendees of the workshop are considered members.<br>• Will help shape recommendations that go back to the City Area Committee for decision-making.<br><br><u>The role of partners</u><br>The Council recognises that it cannot deliver the strategy alone and is committed to collaborative working.<br>Partners include:<br>• Strategic service leads<br>• Community organisations<br>• Inverness BID<br>• Visit Inverness Loch Ness<br>• Community councils<br>• Youth and accessibility representatives<br><br>Partners are expected to:<br>• Contribute ideas and expertise<br>• Support project delivery<br>• Engage their networks and communities<br>• Help co-produce solutions<br><br><u>The Council's role</u><br>• Enable and support project delivery.<br>• Engage with communities and stakeholders.<br>• Be transparent and innovative.<br>• Provide governance and oversight through the City Area Committee and Subcommittees.<br>• Resource and coordinate delivery where appropriate, using both Council budgets and external funds (e.g. CRF).<br><br><u>Terms of Reference</u><br>• They will be shared and discussed in more detail at a later stage.<br>• They provide a broad brush approach to:<br>o Define the purpose and scope of the working group. | **ALL** | Noted |

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| | ○ Clarify roles and responsibilities.<br>○ Guide how recommendations are developed and submitted to the City Area Committee.<br>• The Terms of Reference are intended to ensure that all stakeholders understand the group's remit and decision-making process. | | |
| **3** | **Updates** | | |
| | <u>Key Themes</u><br>• Planning & Built Environment<br>• Green Space & Connectivity<br>• Cleanliness & Waste<br>• Streetscape & Infrastructure<br><br><u>Funding Overview</u><br>• Total Budget - £421,312 from Community Regeneration Fund (CRF).<br>• Capital vs Revenue Split – Approx £371K for capital projects. £50K for revenue (e.g. planning).<br>• Additional Source – Burial Grounds Commutation Fund (approx. £150K potential).<br><br><u>Planning & Built Environment</u><br>Issues Raised<br>• Derelict / dangerous buildings in city centre.<br>• Invasive vegetation (e.g. buddleia)<br>• Lack of enforcement powers for maintenance.<br>• Poor signage and inconsistent shopfront aesthetics.<br>Actions<br>• Explore use of amenity notices and enforcement powers.<br>• Investigate potential for a regeneration corridor (Victorian Market → Lombard Street → High Street)<br>• Consider uniform shopfront guidance and colour schemes.<br>• Investigate feasibility of a property maintenance strategy.<br><br><u>Green Space & Connectivity</u><br>Suggestions:<br>• Tree planting in city centre.<br>• Improve access to Chapel Yard and Old High Church graveyards.<br>• Enhance signage for green spaces and long-distance trails (e.g. Loch Ness 360).<br>• Increase hanging baskets and floral displays.<br>Actions<br>• Allocate funds from Burial Grounds Commutation Fund for cemetery upgrades. | **DM Planning & Building Standards**<br><br>**DH** | Update by 1st January |

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| | • Develop volunteer programme for green space maintenance.<br>• Scope signage improvements with Visit Inverness Loch Ness.<br>• Explore expansion of hanging basket infrastructure.<br><br><u>Cleanliness and Waste</u><br>• Night-time littering and takeaway waste.<br>• Gulls accessing open bins.<br>• Lack of bins in key areas (e.g. Falcon Square- NB. ownership and control lie with Eastgate Shopping Centre).<br>• Business non-compliance with waste storage.<br>Actions<br>• Review bin locations and designs (goal-proof, dual waste/recycling).<br>• Continue enforcement of trade waste policies.<br>• Investigate feasibility of underground bins (not viable within current budget).<br>• Maintain collaboration with BID and Environmental Health.<br><br><u>Streetscape and Infrastructure</u><br>Concerns:<br>• Trip hazards from cobbles and slabs (e.g. Academy Street, Lombard Street).<br>• High maintenance costs of granite features (e.g. Millennium Circle).<br>• Lack of accessible cycle parking.<br>• Cluttered street furniture.<br>Actions:<br>• Consider relocating Millennium Circle (e.g. Church Street or Lombard Street).<br>• Replace slabs with tarmac in high-traffic areas.<br>• Develop a cycle parking strategy (level access, more locations).<br>• Review café seating and pedestrian access conflicts.<br><br><u>Tourism & Signage</u><br>Suggestions:<br>• Improve visitor signage and noticeboards.<br>• Address loss of Tourist Information Centre.<br>• Develop digital and physical wayfinding (e.g. Love Inverness app).<br>Actions:<br>• Continue upgrading noticeboards and fingerposts.<br>• Explore volunteer ambassador programme.<br>• Support Visit Inverness Loch Ness signage proposals (£80k). | **CDM**<br>**EH**<br>**Env Hlth**<br><br>**AM**<br>**GM**<br>**Waste**<br>**LBM BID/**<br>**Env Hlth**<br><br>**SG**<br><br>**VILN**<br>**CDM's**<br>**VILN** | Update by 1st January<br><br>Update by 1st January<br><br>Update by 1st January<br><br>Update by 1st January |

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| | <u>Youth & Community Engagement</u><br>Concerns:<br>• Lack of youth space post-Spectrum Centre closure.<br>• Need for inclusive engagement methods.<br>Actions:<br>• Explore youth space options (e.g. Rose Street area).<br>• Develop inclusive engagement strategy (e.g. comment boxes, digital café, art of hosting methods).<br>• Involve young people and underrepresented groups in future planning. | **CDM's**<br>**CDM's**<br>**LB** | Update by 1st January<br><br>Update by 1st January |
| **4** | **Prioritisation** | | |
| | • DH acknowledged that the workshop was focused on identifying "quick wins" that could be delivered within the current financial year using the £421,312 Community Regeneration Fund.<br>• It was noted that the four thematic areas (Planning & Built Environment, Green Space & Connectivity, Cleanliness & Waste, Streetscape & Infrastructure) would each likely require a share of the funding.<br>• LBM Inverness BID raised a key point about the need to understand how the funding would be broadly allocated across these themes, especially since some proposals (e.g. moving the Millennium Circle or implementing new signage) could consume large portions of the budget.<br>• There was no formal prioritisation exercise (e.g. ranking or voting), but there was a general consensus that:<br>o Projects should focus on basic improvements and visible impact.<br>o Quick, deliverable projects should be prioritised.<br>o Partner-led proposals (e.g. from BID, Visit Inverness Loch Ness) should be considered alongside Council-led initiatives.<br>o Inclusivity and accessibility were recurring themes, suggesting these may be prioritised in project selection.<br>• Expressions of Interest will be submitted for proposed projects.<br>• These will be vetted by the Common Good Fund Subcommittee.<br>• Final decisions will be made by the City Area Committee in February 2026.<br>• The next working group meeting in January will likely revisit prioritisation with more clarity on project feasibility and costs. | **ALL** | Update by 1st January |
| **5.** | **Agreed Membership of the Working Group** | | |
| | • All attendees of the workshop are considered members of the working group.<br>• No formal vote or selection process was undertaken during the meeting.<br>• The group is open and inclusive, and participants were encouraged to suggest additional members who may have been missed.<br>• The next meeting is to be scheduled for January 2026, and the same invitation list will be used. | | |

| 6. | **Next Steps** | | |
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| | • Expressions of Interest – To be submitted for CRF projects.<br>• Governance – Projects to be vetted by ICGF Subcommittee and Inverness City Area Committee (Feb 2026).<br>• Next Workshop – January 2026 – progress review and further planning. | **DH** | Update by 1st January |