

**The Highland Council**

**City of Inverness Area Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee** held in the Well of the Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 12 January 2026 at 9.30 am.

**Present:**

Mr C Ballance	Mrs I MacKenzie (remote)
Mr M Cameron (remote)	Ms K MacLean (remote)
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair (remote)	Mr D McDonald
Mr A Graham (Chair)	Mrs T Robertson (substitute)
Dr M Gregson	

**Non-Members also present:**

Mr K Gowans (remote)

**In attendance:**

Mr D Haas, Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South  
 Mr M Greig, Community Development Manager, Inverness and South  
 Ms F Cameron, Community Regeneration Fund Programme Manager (remote)  
 Ms S Lamb, Project Officer (remote)  
 Mr K Forbes, Property Manager (Estates Management)  
 Mrs H Tolmie, Administrative Assistant, Senior Community Development Manager's Office (remote)  
 Ms M Murray, Principal Committee Officer

**Mr A Graham in the Chair**

**Business**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie, Mr D Macpherson and Mrs M Reid.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements**

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following:-

Item 4: Mr A Graham (Transparency Statement)  
 Item 5: Mr A Graham (Declaration of Interest)

**3. Exclusion of the Public**

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** that under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of

items 4 to 13 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

#### **4. Community Regeneration Fund – Assessment of Applications**

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/01/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place. Copies of the applications and any supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint in Booklet A.

During a summary of the report, it was explained that the available funding was £400,762.97 comprising Place Based Investment Programme funding of £303,270.07 which could only be allocated towards capital expenditure, and Highland Coastal Communities funding of £97,492.90 which could be allocated to either capital or revenue expenditure.

Fifteen applications had been invited forward at the Expression of Interest stage. However, the following application had not been progressed:-

- Ref 4180 – The Highland Council - Sunnyside Playpark Lighting

In addition, three of the fourteen full applications received had since been withdrawn, as follows:-

- Ref 4015 – Glen Urquhart Men’s Shed – Community Kindling Exercise
- Ref 4187 - Inverness BID - Community and Visitor Information Point
- Ref 4204 - Inverness BID - Best Foot Forward – Phase 2

There were therefore eleven applications to be considered totalling approximately £520,000 which exceeded the funding available. The Project Officer summarised the applications and the RAG rating and score that had been applied, which had been provided as a guide only.

In response to questions, it was clarified that, given the Sub-Committee’s expertise in assessing funding applications, the City of Inverness Area Committee had delegated authority to the Sub-Committee to consider applications to the Community Regeneration Fund and make recommendations on the selection of projects for approval and the value of grants to be made. The Senior Community Development Manager undertook to circulate to Members details of the powers delegated to the Sub-Committee. It was further explained that the factors that required to be considered when assessing applications to the Inverness Common Good Fund, such as precedent and the benefit to the residents of the former Burgh of Inverness, did not apply, and it was necessary to assess the applications based on the key factors set out in the report.

Information was also sought, and provided, on the likelihood of further Community Regeneration Funding becoming available in the future.

Detailed discussion then took place on the merits or otherwise of each application, during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points.

Thereafter, the Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position in respect of the applications that had not been progressed or had been withdrawn; and
- ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 2 February 2026, that the applications for Community Regeneration Funding be determined as detailed below:-

Ref: 4022

Organisation: Highland Rugby Football Club

Project title: Installation of container seating at Highland Rugby Football Club

Grant requested: £34,050 (Capital)

Recommendation: **APPROVE**

Ref: 4090

Organisation: Abriachan Forest Trust

Project title: Compost Toilet Refurbishment

Grant requested: £72,000 (Capital)

Recommendation: **APPROVE** a partial award of £40,300 from the Coastal Communities Fund due to concerns regarding the deliverability of the project within the required timeframe given it was unclear whether planning permission was required.

**Transparency Statement:** Mr A Graham declared a connection to the following application on the basis that he had been involved in discussions and emails with officers regarding the project and had attended a site visit. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

Ref: 4172

Organisation: The Highland Council

Project title: Footpath Works

Grant requested: £30,000 (Capital)

Recommendation: **APPROVE**

Ref: 4173

Organisation: Hawthorn Allotments Association

Project title: Community Allotments Expansion

Grant requested: £61,370 (Capital)

Recommendation: **APPROVE**

Ref: 4174

Organisation: Hilton Milton Castle Heather Community Council

Project title: Hilton and Milton Play Parks

Grant requested: £77,808.46 (Capital)

Recommendation: **APPROVE**

Ref: 4177

Organisation: Free North Church

Project title: Restoration Project

Grant requested: £10,000 (Capital)

Mr C Ballance, seconded by Ms K MacLean, **MOVED** that the Sub-Committee agree to recommend to the City of Inverness Area Committee that the application be rejected on

the grounds it did not demonstrate that it sufficiently met the outcome of reducing poverty and inequality.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Graham, seconded by Dr M Gregson, moved that the Sub-Committee agree to recommend to the City of Inverness Area Committee that the application be approved.

On a vote being taken, there were two votes for the **MOTION** and six votes for the **AMENDMENT**, with one abstention. The **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr C Ballance, Ms K MacLean.

**For the Amendment:**

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Graham, Dr M Gregson, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D McDonald, Mrs T Robertson

**Abstention:**

Mr M Cameron

Recommendation: **APPROVE**

Ref: 4178

Organisation: Knocknagael Ltd

Project title: Knocknagael Green Hub

Grant requested: £89,456 (Capital)

Recommendation: **APPROVE**

Ref: 4182

Organisation: The Highland Council

Project title: Green Space Enhancements at Inverness Castle

Grant requested: £49,600 (Capital)

Recommendation: **APPROVE** a partial award of £35,000 for the reinstatement of the clock mechanism.

Ref: 4183

Organisation: The Highland Council

Project title: Cavell Gardens

Grant requested: £12,766 (Capital)

Recommendation: **APPROVE**

Ref: 4185

Organisation: Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Project title: Active Travel Regeneration in Inverness Area

Grant requested: £80,000 (£73,500 Capital and £6,500 Revenue)

Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mr A Graham, **MOVED** that the Sub-Committee agree to recommend to the City of Inverness Area Committee approval of a partial award of £35,312.25 to cover the proposed scoping exercise and path suitability consultation; surfacing and path repairs specifically in high-risk areas; and roadside safety improvements.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr M Cameron, seconded by Mrs T Robertson, moved that the Sub-Committee agree to recommend to the City of Inverness Area Committee that the application be rejected on the grounds the application was speculative and the works were not well scoped.

On a vote being taken, there were three votes for the **MOTION** and five votes for the **AMENDMENT**, with one abstention. The **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr C Ballance, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Graham

**For the Amendment:**

Mr M Cameron, Mrs I MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr D McDonald, Mrs T Robertson

**Abstention:**

Dr M Gregson

Recommendation: **REJECT** on the grounds the application was speculative and the works were not well scoped.

Ref: 4188

Organisation: Inverness BID

Project title: Community Improvement District Set Up

Grant requested: £10,000 (Revenue)

Recommendation: **APPROVE** subject to a condition that the structure of the proposed Community Improvement District Board of Directors be sufficiently wide-ranging, to the satisfaction of the Council.

**5. Inverness Common Good Fund – Inverness Caledonian Thistle Properties Ltd – Proposed Assignation and Lease Amendment**

**Declaration of Interest:** Mr A Graham declared an interest in this item due to his long-standing affinity with Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting for the duration of the item.

**Mr C Ballance took the Chair for this item.**

There had been circulated a briefing note by the Property Manager (Estates Management).

Following a detailed discussion, during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points, Mr D McDonald, seconded by Mr C Ballance, **MOVED** the recommendation that the Sub-Committee:-

- i. agree to the proposed terms and conditions of the assignation as outlined in the briefing note; and
- ii. note the requirement for a Community Consultation under the Community Empowerment Act.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Dr M Gregson, seconded by Mrs T Robertson, moved that it be recommended that officers investigate the possibility of buying the lease back for the Inverness Common Good Fund and report back to the May meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee.

On a vote being taken, there were three votes for the **MOTION** and five votes for the **AMENDMENT**, with no abstentions. The **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr C Ballance, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D McDonald.

**For the Amendment:**

Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Dr M Gregson, Ms K MacLean, Mrs T Robertson.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that officers investigate the possibility of buying the lease back for the Inverness Common Good Fund and report back to the May meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee.

**6. Inverness Common Good Fund – Events and Festivals Financial Monitoring**

The Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, provided an update on the current financial monitoring and an overview of the current spend for 2025/26 events. It was confirmed that all events had been delivered to budget, and the events programme continued to deliver value for money. Scrutiny took place at the Events and Festivals Working Group, a meeting of which was scheduled to take place on Thursday 15 January 2026, which Members were invited to attend.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the position.

**7. Inverness Common Good Fund – Budget Setting**

The Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, provided an overview of proposed financial reporting for 2026/27. It was explained he had been tasked with reviewing the format of the Inverness Common Good Fund budget monitoring statement and, to improve scrutiny and transparency, it was proposed to provide three appendices which would set out a detailed breakdown in respect of the Victorian Market, the Town House and Other Properties, respectively. Examples of the proposed appendices, which it was anticipated would be available for the August budget monitoring report, were shared on screen, and feedback was invited.

During discussion, Members welcomed the enhanced level of detail and understanding the proposed appendices would provide, and information was sought, and provided, on a number of points including the intended frequency of reporting and whether it would be possible to provide the spreadsheets as a live document or a protected Excel file. It was added that more regular reporting than the current quarterly reports to the City of Inverness Area Committee would be helpful. It was suggested a Members' Workshop be arranged early in the new financial year to discuss the proposed new reporting format in more detail.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position; and
- ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that a Members' Workshop on the proposed new reporting format be arranged early in the new financial year.

## **8. Inverness Common Good Fund – Request for Civic Hospitality**

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/02/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South. A copy of the application and any supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint in Booklet B.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that applicants remained responsible for their own costs and might be held liable for the whole costs of the event if it was cancelled due to their own act or omission;
- ii. **NOTED** that the cost of civic events continued to increase beyond expected levels and that decisions might need to be taken regarding the prioritisation of events to be supported; and
- iii. **AGREED** to determine the application set out in Appendix 2 of the report as detailed below:-

Organisation: Pipes and Drums of Canada

Event: Canada/Scotland Friendship Tour 2026

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet Lunch)

Cost: £2,855

Decision: **APPROVED**

## **9. Inverness Common Good Fund – Request for Financial Assistance**

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/03/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South. A copy of the application and supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint in Booklet C.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position in relation to current expenditure and existing grants; and
- ii. **AGREED** to determine the application for financial assistance as detailed below:-

Applicant: Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Project/activity: Taste of the Highlands

Amount requested: £1,000

Decision: **APPROVED**

## **10. Inverness Common Good Fund – Inverness BID Grant Applications 2026/27**

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/04/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South.

Detailed discussion took place on the applications from Inverness BID, as set out in the appendices to the report, during which Members commended the important work of Operation Respect and the SAFE Inverness project and emphasised the need to ensure their future viability. However, concern was expressed that the Inverness Common Good Fund was being asked to fund a greater proportion of the project costs than in previous years. Information was sought, and provided, in that regard, and it was suggested there was a need for a wider discussion regarding future funding.

In relation to the Inverness City Centre Gift Card, concerns were expressed regarding the sustainability of the initiative and that there was a lack of detail in the application regarding the benefits to the city and area.

In relation to the Q4 2025/26 Gull Management Programme, it was explained there was funding available within the Poverty and Inequality and Conference Funding budgets for 2025/26. However, should the Sub-Committee be minded to approve the application, the use of these funds would require to be agreed by the City of Inverness Area Committee. Members expressed support for the new approach being taken to gull management.

Thereafter, the Sub-Committee determined the applications as follows:-

**i. Operation Respect Spring/Summer/Autumn 2026**

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026 that the application for funding amounting to £24,327.90 be **APPROVED**.

**ii. SAFE Inverness 2026-27**

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026 that the application for funding amounting to £12,995 be **APPROVED**.

**iii. Coach and Visitor Ambassador Project 2026**

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026 that the application for funding amounting to £28,500 be **APPROVED**.

**iv. Inverness City Centre Gift Card**

Mr A Graham, seconded by Mrs I MacKenzie, **MOVED** that it be recommended to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026 that the application for funding amounting to £9,500 be approved subject to the provision of further information on the economic benefit of the Gift Card to the city and area.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr C Ballance, seconded by Ms K MacLean, moved that it be recommended to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026 that the application for funding amounting to £9,500 be refused on the grounds the initiative was not sustainable.

On a vote being taken, there were four votes for the **MOTION** and four votes for the **AMENDMENT**, with no abstentions. In terms of Standing Order 30, the Chair exercised his casting vote in favour of the **MOTION** which was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr A Graham (casting vote), Dr M Gregson, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D McDonald.

**For the Amendment:**

Mr C Ballance, Mr M Cameron, Mr K MacLean, Mrs T Robertson.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026 that the application for funding amounting to £9,500 be **APPROVED** subject to the provision of further information on the economic benefit of the Gift Card to the city and area.

**v. Q4 2025/26 Gull Management Programme**

The Sub-Committee **APPROVED**, in principle, the application for funding amounting to £9,763 subject to the source of funding being identified and agreed by the City of Inverness Area Committee.

**11. Inverness Common Good Fund – Internal Application**

There had been circulated an Internal Application in support of travel arrangements to and from Augsburg in relation to an invitation made by the City of Augsburg to the City of Inverness Pipe Band to accompany the Provost on the occasion of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the twinning arrangements.

The Sub-Committee **APPROVED** the application for a maximum of £8,000 to be drawn from the Civic Contingency and Civic Hospitality budgets.

**12. Inverness Common Good Fund – Inverness Tool Library**

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to homologate the decision to award a grant of £6,000 from the Poverty & Inequality budget towards the New Start Highland Tool Library Project; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the request to change the staff salary and costs element to paid contractor to assist with the project as per the email which had been circulated.

**13. Inverness Common Good Fund – Inverness Bowling Clubs**

There had been circulated Performance Monitoring Reports from the Inverness Bowling Clubs.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the position.

## **14. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants – Evaluation Forms**

There had been circulated, and were **NOTED**, Evaluation Forms submitted by applicants on completion of their projects.

## **15. Inverness Common Good Fund - Noting**

### **a. Civic Lighting**

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Civic Lighting requests for the period 1 November 2025 to 31 January 2026:-

#### **Inverness Town House and Ness Bridge**

- Light the World in Teal Alzheimer's
- Light up Red Scottish Poppy Appeal
- Pancreatic Awareness Month
- Orange the World
- Scottish Women's Aid
- International Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day

### **b. Free Hall Lets**

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** there had been no Free Hall Lets during the period 1 November 2025 to 31 January 2026.

## **16. Date of Next Meeting**

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 27 April 2026 at 9.30 am.

The meeting concluded at 3.20 pm.