

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 2 February 2026 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr C Ballance	Dr M Gregson
Mr B Boyd (Remote)	Ms E Knox (Remote)
Mr I Brown	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr M Cameron (Remote)	Mr R MacKintosh
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr A Christie (am only)	Ms K MacLean (Remote)
Mr D Fraser	Mr D Macpherson (Remote am)
Mr K Gowans	Mr D McDonald
Mr A Graham	Mrs M Reid
Mr D Gregg	Mrs T Robertson

In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Senior Community Development Manager Inverness & South
Mr S Fraser, Chief officer – Legal and Corporate Governance
Mr D Mudie, Strategic Lead (Planning and Building Standards)
Ms N Wallace, Service Lead-Environment Development, Active Travel
Mr R Bartlett, Principal Traffic Officer
Mr K Forbes, Property Manager (Estates Management)
Mr S Grant, Roads Operations Manager
Mr M Greig, Community Development Manager
Ms E Linn, Legal Manager
Mr L MacDonald, Repairs Manager
Ms S Lamb, Project Officer, Community Regeneration
Mr H McHale, Senior Maintenance Officer
Mr A Brown, Senior Technician
Ms J MacLennan, Joint Democratic Services Manager
Mrs K Arnott, Committee Officer
Mrs G MacPherson, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector C Still, Police Scotland
Inspector, P Sutherland, Police Scotland
Mr F Roach, Partnership Manager, HITRANS
Mrs C Cameron, Inverness Town Twinning Committee
Ms C Barclay, Network Rail
Mr G Ross, Consultant

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

Mr I Brown in the Chair

Business

1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie (pm), Ms H Crawford, Mrs J Hendry and Mr A Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt/ Aithris Fhollaiseachd

The Committee **NOTED** the following Declaration of Interest:-

Mr A Graham – Item 16

And also, the following Transparency Statements:-

Mr M Cameron – Item 12

Mr A Christie – Items 7, 8, 10, 13 (a, b, c and d) and 14i

3. New Years Honours Urraman na Bliadhn' Ùire

The Committee **NOTED** that the following individuals had been recognised in the New Years Honors List:-

- Pamela Ann Clark (OBE)
- Professor Angus Watson (OBE)
- Dr Timothy Allison (MBE)

4. Police Scotland – Area Performance Report Poileas Alba – Aithisg Coileanaidh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/01/26 by the Area Commander (Inverness Area Command).

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the reassurance the report and the Chief Inspector's accompanying introduction provided to Members was welcomed;
- more detailed information was sought, and provided, on the support being provided to older and vulnerable people and wider public in relation to the complex issue of digital fraud in terms of interventions and prevention. The potential for more work to be undertaken to reduce the number of cases and the need for joint messaging with partners was also highlighted;
- a specific strategy on fraud should be brought forward within the Council to help tackle this issue through measures such as targeting older people in receipt of services with anti-fraud advice and including a leaflet in Council Tax bills issued to every household in Highland on this issue;
- concern was expressed at the increase in the number of drink/drug driving and drug (supply) offences and impact on the victims of those crimes;

- there was potential for the Council to promote the interventions that had contributed to the reduction in housebreaking offences such as ring/video doorbells;
- in relation to violent crimes, it should be borne in mind that the City of Inverness continued to be a safe environment in which to live compared to many other areas across the UK;
- Members commended the hard work of officers in the Community Beats Team in the area and, in conjunction with Council officers, significant improvements had been achieved in anti-social behaviour in the Raigmore Estate;
- the potential to include the year-to-date change in detection rates in future reports would be considered, noting that the North Division retained one of the highest crime detection rates of any Police Scotland divisions;
- more detailed information was sought, and provided, on the rise in reported cooking oil thefts and the prevention and intervention work being undertaken;
- in response to a query, confirmation that details of 'other miscellaneous offences' would be provided outwith the meeting;
- further information was sought, and provided, on the challenges in tackling driver behaviour around speeding and the focused strategies in response to this issue in terms of education, messaging and enforcement. The introduction of a graduated drivers licence however was a legislative matter for the Scottish Government;
- significant road safety concerns were expressed in relation to speeding on the B9006, being used by many drivers to avoid roadworks and delays on the A96, and a request for increased Police visibility on this route was requested. The Chief Inspector undertook to follow up on this matter in early course in conjunction with Roads policing colleagues, the Safety Camera Partnership and within available resources and to report back to the appropriate local community forums;
- in response to a spate of housebreakings in Ward 12: Aird and Loch Ness and surrounding area, an update was provided on the Police investigations in progress and the community were commended for their support in this regard. The Police would also seek to be as proactive as possible in terms of messaging around security and safety in rural areas;
- further information was sought, and provided, on food shoplifting and the potential to signpost those involved in lower-level crimes to sources of advice and support. The feedback from Police teams operating in the City Centre was that there was no reluctance by businesses to report crimes;
- in terms of attendance at community council meetings, it was confirmed the Police had attended the Inverness Area Community Council Forum and that this had proven to be an effective use of Police resources. If there was a specific issue a community council wished to raise then they be encouraged to advise the Police directly;
- further clarification was sought, and provided, on the host of ways in which the public could report concerns about drug and other offences to the Police and to statutory and third sector partners via the partners intelligence portal. The concerns around the national centralised 101 system were recognised but it was difficult to address this from a local policing perspective;
- clarification was sought, and provided, that the Police considered there was a strong CCTV network in the City. There would always be spots where there was no coverage, however officers were effective in scrutinising CCTV systems, both public and private, to track individuals who might be responsible for crimes such as graffiti; and
- Member briefings with the Police would continue and Members were encouraged to attend.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2023–2026 Year 1 attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2025 – 31 December 2025; and
- ii. the change in format necessitated by a reduction in back-office capacity to prepare additional area committee reports.

5. Visit Inverness Loch Ness Annual Report Tadhail air Inbhir Nis – Loch Nis

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/02/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

The Committee **NOTED** the annual report of Visit Inverness Loch Ness (VILN).

6. Inverness Town Twinning Committee Comataidh Càraideachadh Baile Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/03/26 by the Assistant Chief Officer – Place.

Mrs Christina Cameron, Secretary of the Inverness Town Twinning Committee, gave a presentation on this item during which she outlined her memories and experiences of the town twinning arrangements.

Members thanked Ms Cameron for her presentation and the Inverness Town Twinning Committee for its excellent work over many years and raised the following main points:-

- there were opportunities to expand town twinning to involve more individuals and groups in Inverness to maximise the benefits of visits in terms of experiences of other cities and cultures;
- confirmation was sought, and provided, that an annual report would be brought to the Committee providing an update on town twinning activities and as a way of providing support to the Town Twinning Committee;
- there was a focus on expanding involvement in the town twinning, for example through the reciprocal plan involving Inverness sports clubs as detailed in the report;
- the potential, in conjunction with Visit Inverness Loch Ness, to appoint tourism ambassadors was highlighted with a view to building relationships and promoting Inverness as a tourist destination;
- there was also potential to strengthen links with Augsburg as the place where the diesel engine was invented through the involvement of mechanics, apprentices, Inverness College, University of the Highlands & Islands and Highlands and Islands Enterprise;
- consideration was being given to inviting FC Augsburg to play Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC, Ross County FC and others in a pre-season tournament;
- it was important to further develop connections between young people and schools as part of the twinning arrangements and also the commercial opportunities;

- there was a need to better promote town twinning and to encourage new members with appropriate expertise to join the Committee to maximise the benefits of the twinning arrangements. In response, it was confirmed the Committee had organised for an open day to be held in Spring for this purpose; and
- the importance of town twinning in terms of its contribution to building friendships, having good relationships with other countries, travel and expanding people's horizons was emphasised. Members were therefore urged to support town twinning and the work of the Committee, including through the Common Good Fund.

The Committee **NOTED** the varied and dedicated work of the Town Twinning Committee supported by the civic leadership and thanked the City of Inverness Town Twinning Committee (ITTC) for all their hard work over many years in support of the well-founded principles of the City and Area's Twinning arrangements.

7. Community Regeneration Fund Assessment of Applications Measadh Iartasan Maoin Ath-bheothachadh Coimhearsnachd

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non-Executive Director on Inverness BID. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/04/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the Chair recorded thanks to the Chair of the Community Regeneration Fund Sub Committee and its Members for the considerable time and effort undertaken in reviewing the applications;
- disappointment was expressed that support had not been awarded for the application relating to Active Travel Regeneration in the Inverness area (CRF4185), which included the South Loch Ness Trail. It was highlighted that the route provided an important active travel corridor and that sections were currently in poor and unsafe condition. Assurance was sought that alternative means of supporting the route might be explored;
- it was emphasised that the Sub Committee had undertaken over two hours of detailed review of the applications and had previously examined expressions of interest in December 2025. The constraints of the budget were acknowledged, and it was observed that supporting an additional application would have required withdrawing funding from another. Approval of the recommendations as a complete package was therefore encouraged;
- clarification was sought on the position whereby two projects with lower scores on the scoring matrix received partial or full support, while another project with a higher score received no funding. In this regard, it was explained that concerns had been raised about the absence of firm cost estimates within the application in question. The figures provided were indicative only and it was felt that the proposal was not sufficiently developed to proceed at this stage;

- it was further indicated that scoring matrix acted as an indicator rather than a strict ranking mechanism. Each application had been assessed on its individual merits and issues relating to deliverability and completeness of information had guided the Sub Committee's conclusions;
- support was expressed for ensuring that the organisation concerned was assisted in strengthening its proposal. Reference was made to the wider network of long distance routes in the Loch Ness area and to the importance of signage and continuity along the trail; and
- attention was drawn to the possibility that other areas undertaking the same assessment process might have underspends. It was suggested that officers investigate the treatment of such underspends, including any year end restrictions, to ensure that no funding was lost.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the position in respect of applications that had not been progressed or had been withdrawn; and
- AGREED** the formal recommendation from the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee contained in paragraphs 5.8 & 5.9 of the report on final funding awards.

8. **Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study** **Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Ceann-rathaid Inbhir Nis**

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non-Executive Director on Inverness BID. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/05/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- appreciation was expressed for the opportunity created by the consolidation of land in public ownership, which enabled consideration of a comprehensive integrated transport hub and was regarded as a significant opportunity for the Station Quarter area;
- reference was made to the recent Members' briefing, which had been well attended and considered informative. The importance of progressing the work in collaboration with transport partners and in alignment with wider city aspirations was emphasised;
- support was expressed for the creation of an improved civic space and for enhancing the setting of existing buildings, while also addressing long-standing operational and accessibility issues in the area;
- Members highlighted that developing an integrated arrangement for transport services would bring benefits comparable to those seen in other UK and European cities;
- concern was raised regarding the proposed approach to consultation. It was suggested that, in light of previous experiences, early engagement with

- stakeholder organisations would help agree clear consultation protocols, timelines and expectations before wider engagement commenced;
- it was considered important that consultation be structured in stages, ensuring sufficient opportunities for public input and avoiding confusion over what each phase sought to achieve;
 - the inclusion of key user groups in the engagement process was encouraged, such as access panels, older people's groups, regular public transport users, groups supporting parents with prams and others with specific accessibility needs;
 - reference was made to the former Spectrum Centre as a valued community facility, recognising that the previous venue had been highly valued for its central location and accessibility and that the re-provision of comparable accessible public space should be considered as part of future development;
 - the need for urgency was stressed, highlighting the long history of proposals for Farraline Park and calling for clarity on timescales and financial requirements to ensure meaningful progress. In this regard, concerns were also voiced that earlier proposals for the area had not progressed beyond initial concept stages;
 - the process through which properties in the area had been brought into public ownership was acknowledged and it was emphasised that broad engagement should now take place with business organisations, accommodation providers, community groups, students, older people and regular bus users;
 - comments were made regarding the future treatment of the existing library building, including the view that retaining the façade could offer flexibility while accommodating modern requirements;
 - concerns were raised about the suitability of the current multi storey car park structure to accommodate heavier modern vehicles, including electric vehicles, and the need for any future provision to be designed accordingly. Reference was also made to the increased weight and width of modern vehicles, including EVs, which older structures were not designed to accommodate;
 - the importance of ensuring a clear and transparent consultation process was reiterated, with lessons from previous projects taken into account;
 - representatives of partner organisations advised that the forthcoming engagement would focus on initial options only, with further detailed consultation to follow in later phases;
 - Members suggested that potential funders should be engaged early in the process to avoid progressing proposals that might not secure financial support;
 - comments were also made on operational considerations for future design, including bus station layout, taxi and car drop-off arrangements, routing to the A82 and the need for improved cycle parking, which was confirmed as part of future planning; and
 - the initial period of engagement was expected to conclude at the end of the financial year, after which findings and next steps would be reported back.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the findings of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study;
- ii. **NOTED** and **AGREED** the proposed engagement plan and associated timelines; and
- iii. **NOTED** next steps as detailed in section 9 of the report.

9. Area Roads Capital Programme 2026/27 Prògram Calpa Rathaidean na Sgìre 2026/27

There had been circulated Report No CIA/06/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, Members raised the following general concerns, with many giving specific local examples, which the Chair advised should be raised at ward level:-

- drainage issues were causing water to repeatedly run across certain Council and Transport Scotland roads, damaging the longevity of the road surface and creating hazardous ice during cold weather;
- the footpath resurfacing programme was welcomed and it was requested that officers seek advice from local Members in relation to the prioritisation of projects for the footpaths, as well as for the overall Capital Programme;
- clarification was sought, and provided, that some works on the programme had already been started and, if completed early, might allow other projects to be undertaken from the prioritisation list;
- in response to a request from Mr Cameron for more information on the decision making process in relation to prioritisation of projects, a summary of the complex process was provided, and Mr Cameron invited to visit the Area Roads office for a demonstration;
- it was acknowledged that Ward 16's footpath budget allocation had been mistakenly missed off the report;
- various specific examples of roads with potholes, missing or obscured signage, faded or missing road marking, blocked gullies, overgrown vegetation, or drainage issues were raised and all specific locations could be further considered outwith the meeting;
- the distinction between projects that were funded through revenue versus those funded by the capital budget was explained;
- it was queried whether Members, in addition to officers, were able to issue template letters to residents whose foliage were overhanging public footpaths, and this would have to be checked with the Council's legal services;
- the Council's policy in relation to investing additional funds into resurfacing damaged roads rather than repairing and surface dressing them, which was cheaper but more temporary, was summarised in response to a query;
- it was disappointing that damage had been caused to roads by heavy construction vehicles, without contribution from the construction company;
- assurance was sought that the second gully-emptying machine that was ordered was due to be delivered by May 2026, and the benefits of its purchase were summarised. Procedures for gully-emptying including ensuring vehicles were not parked in the area, were queried and summarised;
- attention was drawn to the need to review road signage in the city centre and in rural areas;
- concern was expressed that heavy delivery vehicles for the Eastgate Centre were using the small roundabout in Crown to turn, risking damage to the road, and this should be raised with the shops in question;
- assurance was sought, and provided, that joined up working with utility and other organisations to undertake work on roads simultaneously was being coordinated;
- it was requested that repeated flooding on Ardersier High Street, and the use of a minor road between Daviot and Croy by heavy vehicles, be investigated; and

- the increase in the roads capital budget to £20m across Highland was highlighted, and officers in the roads team were thanked for their work, particularly during the winter months. Attention was drawn to innovative work practices being developed and the encouragement of community resilience.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the rolling programme of Capital schemes as listed in Appendix 2 of the report, which was to be a multi-year programme;
- ii. **NOTED** that the Area budget would be available after the February 2026 Economy and Infrastructure Committee;
- iii. **NOTED** that the rolling programme might require to be updated once results from the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey had been received and considered; and
- iv. **AGREED** in future officers should attend ward business meetings to seek input from local Members prior to presentation of the Capital Programme to the Committee.

**10. Housing Repairs and Capital Report – 1 April 2025 to 31 December 2025
Aithisg Chàraidhean is Calpa Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2025 gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2025**

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as the General Manager of Inverness Citizens Advice Bureau. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/07/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

In discussion, and in terms of section 8.3 of the report, it was asked how many houses in the Inverness area were considered energy efficient. A response would be provided to Committee Members through their respective Ward Business Meetings. It was hoped that there would be an increase in the number of better energy rated properties.

In terms of section 8.5 of the report, it was highlighted that Rowan Road was located within Ward 14 rather than Ward 13.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on Housing Performance for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 December 2025.

**11. Housing Revenue Account: Garage Rents 2026/27
Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais: Màil Gharaidsean 2026/27**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/08/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- a garage was considered an asset to a property and it was emphasised that when building new houses, garage provision should also be considered;
- it was asked if garage rent revenue was put towards repairing garages;

- there were no garages in Ward 19. Residents often travelled throughout Inverness to benefit from a garage and it was thought that sharing a list of available garages on the Council website might be helpful;
- the use of container units had increased in the area and it was felt that this was due to a lack of garages for rent; and
- in response to questions, it was confirmed that a review of garages in the Inverness area was being undertaken, which included their condition, and a report would be presented to this Committee in due course.

The Committee **AGREED** an increase of 10% to apply to Inverness garages.

12. Associated School Group Attainment Overview Foir-shealladh air Buileachadh Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a close family relative was employed as a teacher in one of the schools referred to. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/09/26, No CIA/10/26, No CIA/11/26, CIA/12/26, CIA/13/26 and CIA/14/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

The Committee **AGREED** that the reports relating to Millburn Academy, Glenurquhart High School, Charleston Academy, Kilchuimen Academy, Inverness Royal Academy and Inverness High School be deferred to allow the relative Service Supported Ward Business Meetings to consider them, for a Members' Seminar to be held and for them then to be resubmitted to the May City of Inverness Area Committee.

13. Inverness Common Good Fund (ICGF) Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non-Executive Director on Inverness BID. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

a) Inverness Common Good Fund - 2024/25 Annual Accounts and Final Monitoring Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis – 2024/25 Cunntasan Bliadhnail agus Sgrùdadh Deireannach

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/15/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:

- in response to concern about the significant overspend of £747k against the Victorian Market in 2025/26, and the forecast overspend in 2026/27 of £184k, it was explained that the 2025/26 budget had been set against the 2023 footfall, which had increased significantly in 2024 and had led to higher costs. These had been partly offset by increased service charge income, as

detailed. Other factors included void units, which were soon to be let, the provision of public toilets, as agreed earlier by the Committee;

- information was sought, and provided, on the reported changes to the heritable estate and the changes to the asset valuation. This was the result of periodic review and related to changes in the formal valuation of the Town House during the period of renovation;
- information was sought by Mrs Reid on the £15k overspend in relation to Victorian Market marketing, with specific reference to the external contractors, Spey Design, who had been appointed through a procurement process. She also asked for information on how the services were evaluated. It was explained that the additional costs had been agreed by tenants of the Market and further detail would be provided to the Committee outwith the meeting, along with detail on the evaluation process for the marketing services. It was clarified that £65k was the total figure, of which the Council (ICGF) paid half;
- it was queried, and explained, why ringfenced carried-forward budget was being reported in the following year's figures;
- it was requested that any Common Good Fund budget overspend be presented to the Committee prior to being agreed by officers;
- it would be preferable if the accounts for significant properties like the Town House or Victorian Market were reported individually, and assurance was provided that this was being worked on;
- information was sought, and provided, on progress with improving rental income for the Town House, noting the significant reduction following the withdrawal of the Council from the office space. Clarification was provided on the location of the 'town clerk's office'; and
- the reported £340k of debt was queried and while it was likely to be transient creditors or service charges in progress, this would be checked and confirmed to Dr Gregson outwith the meeting.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the final monitoring report (Appendix 1) and Statement of Accounts (Appendix 2) for the Inverness Common Good Fund for the year ended 31 March 2025;
- ii. **AGREED** that in future the Committee be informed of any Common Good Fund budget overspends prior to the money being spent; and
- iii. **AGREED** that in relation to Victorian Market marketing costs, further detail would be provided to Members on the additional costs which had been agreed by tenants of the Market and on the evaluation process for the marketing services.

b) **Financial Monitoring** **Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/16/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:

- clarification was sought, and provided, that staff costs for community events and revenue monitoring were recorded under events office; and
- with reference to the likelihood of ending the year with a surplus, it was hoped there might be capacity to run a further winter festival event. Attention was drawn to the ongoing work of the Events and Festivals Working Group.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 31 December 2025 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets excepting estimated outturns detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.

**c) Inverness Common Good Fund Budget Setting for 2026/2027
Suidheachadh Buidseit Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis airson
2026/27**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/17/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:

- it was queried whether a reserves policy should be developed, and a summary was provided of the role of the Pensions Committee Investment Sub-Committee which oversaw Common Good Fund investments, which were reviewed periodically. It was urged that Members should be consulted early in the development of any strategies for the Fund; and
- it was proposed to increase the Poverty and Inequality budget by £30,000 to £190,000 and to reduce the “Other” budget by £30,000 to £50,000, for one year only, with this to be reviewed in due course.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Common Good Fund budget for 2026/2027 as detailed within the report and appendices, subject to moving £30k from the ‘Other’ budget to the Poverty and Inequality budget.

**d) Grants Applications over £10,000
Iarrtasan Tabhartais thar £10,000**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/18/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- Inverness City Centre Gift Card project (paragraph 5.2 d of the report), was deferred, as requested by the applicant;
- concern was expressed that, for several projects, the Council contribution had increased, and the Inverness BID contribution had reduced. While the increase in non-domestic rates had caused financial issues for BID, it was also an issue for Common Good Fund properties. It was suggested that a strategy for allocation of funds was required, to ensure that projects being funded with the Common Good Fund goals. Encouragement of third-party funding bids was suggested;

- in response to queries about the Gull project, attention was drawn to the gull management plan that was being worked on in partnership with other agencies including NatureScot. A briefing was planned for Members at which all gull-related queries could be discussed. The budget for gull management was queried, with a suggestion that it should not be funded by the conference support budget. Assurance was sought, and provided, that gull-proof bins were being used in the city; and
- the wide-ranging benefits of the Inverness in Bloom project were highlighted, however it was thought the £69,428 detailed in the report was inaccurate and should read £67,000, as detailed in the budget. This would be checked out with the meeting.

The Committee:

- i. **APPROVED** the four applications for funding detailed in Appendix 2 relating to the 2026/27 budget
 - a. Operation Respect Easter/Summer/Autumn 2026 – **£24,328** –from the Operation Respect Campaigns Budget;
 - b. Safe Inverness Project 2026/27 - **£12,995** –from the Operation Respect Community Safety Budget;
 - c. Coach and Visitor Ambassador Project 2026 - **£28,500** –from City Destination Projects Budget; and
 - d. Inverness in Bloom – Community Grow Project – **£67,000** - from the City Flowering Budget
- ii. **APPROVED** the application for funding in support of the Inverness Gull Project 2025/26 Q4 - £9,763 – with £5,000 drawn from the Other Grants - 1k and Conference support – 4k,; and £4,763 being drawn from reserves; and
- iii. **NOTED** that Inverness City Centre Gift Card - **£9,500** - had been deferred at the request of the applicant in order for additional information to be provided in relation to wider benefits to the City. .

14. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of item 14i in his capacity as a Non-Executive Director on Inverness BID. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

The following Minutes had been circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 17 November 2025 - **NOTED**;
- ii. Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 12 January 2026 - **APPROVED**; and
- iii. Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 4 December 2025 and 15 January 2026 - **APPROVED**.

15. Exclusion of the Public
Às-dùnadh a' Phobail

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

URGENT ITEM

16. Inverness Common Good Fund – Longman Site
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis - Làrach an Longmain

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.

In terms of Standing Order 8.2, the Chair has agreed to take an additional item of Urgent Business in relation to the Longman Site on the grounds of the potential financial and legal implications.

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. CIA/19/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** the recommendations.

The meeting concluded at 3.15pm.