# City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in the Committee Room 1, Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness on Thursday, 1 October 2026 at 10am.

**Present:**

**Members of the Working Group:**
Mr I Brown
Mr M Cameron
**Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair**
Mrs J Hendry

**Officials in Attendance:**
Mr D Haas – Senior Community Development Manager
Ms A McNeill – Senior Corporate Communications Officer
Ms R Ross – Committee Officer

**Also in Attendance:**
Ms M Laws, Inverness BID
Ms K Rait, Inverness Events Manager (Independent sub-contractor)

**Mrs Campbell-Sinclair in the Chair**

## 1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Ms K MacLean.

## 2. Exclusion of the Public

The Working Group **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items 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.

## 3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest or Transparency Statements.

## 4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 September 2026.

## 5. City Area Community Events Programme 26/27

The Senior Community Development Manager for Inverness and South and the Inverness Events Manager provided an update on the plans for the Community Events Programme for the period up until 31 March 2027 and beyond, including an update on Bonfire Night celebrations, and options for a family friendly Hogmanay Event.

During Discussion the following main points were raised:-

- the reputational risk to the Council from running a small-scale Hogmanay event; and the difficulty of running such an event without support from businesses were emphasised;
- on the point being raised, it was confirmed that any underspent budget would return to the Inverness Common Good Fund;
- the majority of the budget for a Hogmanay event would go towards infrastructure rather than entertainment; and it was suggested that this would not provide sufficient value for the level of risk;
- this was a busy time of year for businesses and that many would be running their own Hogmanay events;
- in response to a question, it was clarified that there would not be sufficient time to hold a Christmas Fair for 2026 and that considerable support from local businesses would be needed for this type of event;
- on the point being raised, it was confirmed that the Inverness Fringe Festival was launched at the Town House on Monday 28 September, with organisers reminded to publicise the Inverness Common Good Fund's contribution;
- it was acknowledged that, as a result of the success in previous years, requests had been made to purchase tickets for the 2027 Inverness Highland Games, and the Inverness Events Manager sought Member's permission to open ticket sales before Christmas;
- the Inverness Highland Games was a long running event and given the high level of income from the event in 2026, it was considered reasonable to open ticket sales early and to keep the ticket price the same as the previous year; and
- there was discussion around providing an additional, music based, event on the Friday evening prior to the Highland Games making use of the infrastructure that would already be on site for the Highland Games.

The Working Group:-

i. **NOTED** the updates and that no financial commitments could be made in respect of the 20272028 budget until agreed by the City of Inverness Area Committee;

ii. **AGREED** not to proceed with a Hogmanay event for 2026 Noting that this would result in a significant underspend and based on a cost benefit analysis would provide best value for the Inverness Common Good Fund;

iii. **AGREED** to open ticket sales for the 2027 Inverness Highland Games, before Christmas, with the ticket price remaining at £12.

## 6. Revenue Monitoring Statement 2026/27

There had been circulated a budget forecast spreadsheet showing programmed spend.

During discussion it was highlighted that the contingency budget as well as the underspend from the 2026 budget would be returned to the Inverness Common Good Fund.

The Working Group **NOTED** the information provided.

## 7. Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 3 December 2026 at 1.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 10.50am