

Highland Council Asset Transfer Request Approach Asset Transfer Request Form

This is an asset transfer request made under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Section 1: Information about the community transfer body (CTB) making the request

1.1 Name of the CTB making the asset transfer request

Invergordon Development Trust

1.2 CTB address. This should be the registered address, if you have one.

Postal address: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

1.3 Contact details. Please provide the name and contact address to which correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request should be sent.

Contact name: [REDACTED]

Postal address: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Telephone: [REDACTED]

X We agree that correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request may be sent by email to the email address given above. *(Please tick to indicate agreement)*

You can ask the relevant authority to stop sending correspondence by email, or change the email address, by telling them at any time, as long as 5 working days' notice is given.

1.4 Please mark an "X" in the relevant box to confirm the type of CTB and its official number, if it has one.

	Company, and its company number is	
X	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and its charity number is	SC049418
	Community Benefit Society (BenCom), and its registered number is	
	Unincorporated organisation (no number)	

Please attach a copy of the CTB's constitution, articles of association or registered rules.

1.5 Has the organisation been individually designated as a community transfer body by the Scottish Ministers?

No **X**

Yes

Please give the title and date of the designation order:

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1.6 Does the organisation fall within a class of bodies which has been designated as community transfer bodies by the Scottish Ministers?

No

Yes **X**

If yes what class of bodies does it fall within?

SCIO

Section 2: Information about the asset requested

2.1 Please identify the asset - land or building(s) - which this asset transfer request relates.

You should provide a street address or grid reference and any name by which the land or building is known. If you have identified the land on the relevant authority's register of land, please enter the details listed there.

It may be helpful to provide one or more maps or drawings to show the boundaries of the land requested. If you are requesting part of a piece of land, you must attach a map and full description of the boundaries of the area to which your request relates. If you are requesting part of a building, please make clear what area you require. a drawing may be helpful.

Invergordon Town Hall, 63-65 High Street, Invergordon, IV18 0AA

2.2 Please provide the UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number), if known.

This should be given in the relevant authority's register of land

UPRN: **130113876**

Section 3: Type of request, payment and conditions

3.1 Please tick what type of request is being made:

for ownership (under section 79(2)(a)) - go to section 3A

for lease (under section 79(2)(b)(i)) – go to section 3B

for other rights (section 79(2)(b)(ii)) - go to section 3C

3A – Request for ownership

What price are you prepared to pay for the asset requested? :

Proposed price: £1

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to apply to the request.

3B – Request for lease

What is the length of lease you are requesting?

How much rent are you prepared to pay? Please make clear whether this is per year or per month.

Proposed rent: £ per

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to be included in the lease, or to apply to the request in any other way.

3C – Request for other rights

What are the rights you are requesting?

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Do you propose to make any payment for these rights?

Yes

No

If yes, how much are you prepared to pay? Please make clear what period this would cover, for example per week, per month, per day?

Proposed payment: £		per
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Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to apply to the request.

Section 4: Community Proposal

4.1 Please set out the reasons for making the request and how the land or building will be used.

This should explain the objectives of your project, why there is a need for it, any development or changes you plan to make to the land or building, and any activities that will take place there.

The Invergordon Development Trust (IDT) is submitting this asset transfer request to take ownership of Invergordon Town Hall and restore it as a vibrant, multifunctional civic hub for community, culture, and enterprise.

The purpose of this project is to transform a landmark public building—currently underused and deteriorating—into a flexible, community-owned space that can support multiple activities and tenants under one roof.

Vision

Despite being home to major industrial employment and welcoming hundreds of thousands of cruise ship visitors each year, Invergordon's town centre remains in visible decline. Surveys and reports (Highland Council's *High Street Health Check 2022*, Architecture & Design Scotland's *Climate Action Towns* programme, and IDT's *2024 Community Consultation*) highlight a shared picture:

- A Lack of accessible, affordable indoor space
- Isolation and disconnection between residents
- A loss of civic pride and activity in the town centre
- A need for spaces where people can meet, eat, learn, and celebrate.

The Town Hall has always been the heart of civic life in Invergordon. Restoring it to public ownership and active use will symbolise - and enable - a wider renewal of the town's social and economic life.

Physical Transformation

Working with Blueprint Architecture and Design Ltd, the proposed renovation focuses on simplicity, flexibility, and phased delivery.

Total internal area: approx. **328 m² (165 m² per floor)**

Estimated primary renovation cost: **£878,712** (based on BCIS £2,679/m² conversion rate)

Additional allowances for façade repair (£68,000), roof and heating system upgrades, AV, and accessibility improvements.

Total indicative project cost: ~£2 million (subject to detailed QS analysis).

The renovation will:

- Fully restore the Category B listed façade
- Upgrade the building fabric for energy efficiency and accessibility
- Configure the interior as flexible, self-contained units suitable for multiple tenants or enterprises
- Equip the auditorium as a multi-use events space (retractable seating, AV infrastructure)
- Include modern WCs, lift access, kitchen/restaurant area, and shared amenities.

We envision **shutting the building for the full renovation process** lasting **approximately three years**.

Operational Transformation

Once reopened, the Town Hall will be operated as a social enterprise for public benefit — an organisation dedicated to revitalising Invergordon’s civic life and reinvesting any surplus into community wellbeing.

IDT will lead the establishment of a dedicated social-enterprise entity to manage the building’s day-to-day operations. This may take the form of a Community Interest Company (CIC) or a charitable company with a social-enterprise remit, depending on what offers the best long-term governance and funding flexibility.

The purpose of this organisation will be to act as a steward and facilitator, ensuring the Town Hall remains accessible, lively, and financially sustainable, while all activity contributes to community benefit.

Its core functions will include:

1 – Managing the ground floor as a multi-use civic hub

- The ground floor will provide Invergordon with an adaptable public venue, hosting events, exhibitions, performances, workshops, markets, meetings, and celebrations.
- With retractable seating, flexible staging, and basic bar facilities, the space can transform easily from a daytime civic and social space to an evening cultural venue.
- The entrance and foyer area will be designed as flexible shared-use space, capable of operating as:
 - a welcoming public threshold and gathering space;
 - an extension of the café during daytime service (adding approximately 20 to 26 additional covers); and
 - exhibition, reception, or overflow space during events and performances.
- The social-enterprise operator will coordinate bookings, community use, and programming, ensuring the space remains inclusive, affordable, and active throughout the year.

2 – Operating or leasing the café and restaurant (primarily first floor, with managed ground-floor integration)

- The first floor will house the primary café/restaurant seating area, kitchen, and associated back-of-house functions, along with small office space.
- While the café will be primarily first-floor based, its operation will be intentionally designed to integrate with the ground-floor entrance space during café opening hours, supporting commercial viability and activating the building at street level.
- This arrangement allows the café to function either:
 - as a self-contained leased unit operated by an independent provider; or
 - as a directly operated social-enterprise café, depending on future capacity and funding decisions.
- In both cases, community benefit is retained: rental income or trading surplus will be reinvested into the operation of the Town Hall and its wider civic programme.
- If operated directly, the café will prioritise affordable, locally sourced, low-carbon food and create supported employment and training opportunities, including partnerships with organisations such as For You Training in Tain.

Servicing and operational efficiency

- To support safe, efficient food service across both floors, the refurbishment will include the installation of a small goods lift / dumb waiter, allowing hot food and supplies to be transferred between kitchen and service areas without reliance on public stairs or lifts.
- This approach improves accessibility, reduces operational risk, and ensures compliance with food-safety and accessibility requirements while maintaining a positive experience for building users.

This approach maintains clarity of function between the civic hub and café while allowing for practical operational overlap where it strengthens viability and public use. The result is a coherent, flexible, and community-owned model that balances civic purpose with long-term financial sustainability.

Business Planning and Phasing

Given the scale of the project and the anticipated three-year renovation and development period, Invergordon Development Trust has not produced a fixed, detailed business plan for the future social-enterprise operator at this stage.

This is a deliberate and proportionate approach. Over the lifetime of the refurbishment, a range of variables are likely to change, including:

- Capital funding routes and phasing
- Construction scope and sequencing
- Energy systems and operating costs
- Local demand, partnerships, and operator capacity
- The most appropriate governance and trading structure for the operating body
- The cost of construction, fit-out, energy, staffing, and food inputs, all of which are subject to significant price volatility over the medium term

Producing a detailed business plan at this early stage would therefore risk being premature and potentially misleading, rather than a useful decision-making tool.

Instead, IDT is focusing at this stage on:

- Securing long-term community ownership of the asset
- Establishing a clear, viable use framework for the building
- Designing in flexibility so that future operators can adapt to changing economic and market conditions
- Committing to develop a full business plan at the appropriate point, once capital funding, build phasing, and operational parameters are clearer

A detailed business plan will be developed prior to operation, and in advance of any final decisions on whether the café and wider building are run directly by the social enterprise or leased to an independent operator.

This phased approach aligns with good practice in community asset transfer, particularly for listed buildings requiring significant capital works and where long-term financial sustainability depends on responding to changing cost environments.

Sectoral Needs Addressed

This proposed project addresses multiple, interconnected sectoral needs in Invergordon and the wider area:

- **Economic need:** by creating dignified, locally rooted employment; keeping value circulating in the local economy; and providing affordable, flexible space for events, enterprise, and culture.
- **Regeneration need:** by restoring a prominent civic landmark, anchoring footfall and activity in the town centre, and reversing visible and psychological decline.
- **Health need:** by reducing isolation and loneliness through a welcoming civic space for gathering, activity, and participation, and by supporting access to nutritious, affordable food through the first-floor café.
- **Environmental need:** by retrofitting and reusing an existing building; embedding energy efficiency and renewable design; shortening supply chains; and modelling low-carbon, community-centred living.
- **Social wellbeing need:** by rebuilding pride, purpose, and connection — creating a place for the tending of relationships that underpin a healthy, resilient society.

This transformation draws inspiration from successful community-led regeneration projects across Scotland, including:

- **The Fraser Centre (Tranent):** a restored cinema and civic venue that anchors town-centre vitality.
- **The Muir Hub (Muir of Ord):** for its integration of coworking, events, and café under one community-owned roof.
- **The Pyramid (Anderston):** for its grassroots-led model of inclusive regeneration and mixed use in a repurposed church.
- **MacArts (Galashiels):** demonstrating how a reimagined historic space can become a thriving cultural and performance venue.
- **Timespan (Helmsdale):** for its fusion of contemporary art, heritage, food, and local storytelling in defining place identity.

Each of these examples shows how adaptable, locally owned spaces can serve as engines of renewal, combining culture, community, and commerce in ways that build belonging and resilience.

This is a place-making and relationship-building project, not simply a facilities upgrade. It is about reclaiming Invergordon's town centre as a living, nourishing, and imaginative civic space, a place where culture, enterprise, and everyday life converge. Through community ownership and shared purpose, the Town Hall can once again become a beacon of renewal in Invergordon's social, cultural, and ecological life.

Benefits of the proposal

4.2 Please set out the benefits to the community that you consider will arise if the request is agreed to. This should include:- economic, regeneration, health, social wellbeing, environmental benefits; or how this will tackle inequalities.

This section should explain how the project will benefit your community, and others. Please refer to the guidance on how the relevant authority will consider the benefits of a request.

Benefits of the Proposal

The regeneration of Invergordon Town Hall and the establishment of a social enterprise to operate it will bring wide-ranging benefits across every dimension of community life: economic, cultural, social, environmental, and civic. These benefits are rooted in an inclusive, place-based vision of regeneration that tackles structural inequities and builds long-term resilience.

Economic Benefits

This project will bring a sustainable, community-rooted enterprise into the heart of the town centre — one that is non-extractive, offers meaningful work, and reinvests value locally.

By combining a flexible civic events venue with lettable café and workspace areas, the building will create a mixed economy that supports both community activity and local enterprise.

It will:

- Create jobs, training, and placement opportunities within the building's operations and tenant businesses
- Strengthen local procurement and supply chains
- Reanimate the High Street with footfall and spending — keeping money circulating in Invergordon
- Offer affordable space for local traders, artists, and service providers

Regeneration Benefits

The project restores an iconic but underused civic asset and reconfigures it to meet the community's future needs. Its impact will:

- Rebalance investment toward the town centre, not only its industrial edges
- Generate visible momentum after years of stalled or fragmented regeneration
- Build on the aspirations identified in the *Climate Action Towns* process for vibrant, accessible, everyday infrastructure

The Town Hall will act as a catalyst for wider renewal demonstrating what locally led, low-carbon regeneration can look like in practice.

Health Benefits

The Town Hall will operate as a preventative public health asset, embedding wellbeing in everyday life. The building's spaces — from the civic hall to the café — will:

- Provide warm, welcoming, and inclusive places to gather
- Reduce isolation and loneliness by creating opportunities for social contact and belonging
- Support mental health and recovery through structure, meaning, and routine
- Host activities that promote physical movement, creativity, and celebration
- Take pressure off formal services by addressing upstream determinants of health

If operated directly, the café will also provide affordable, nutritious meals and training opportunities; if leased, it will remain an accessible public space contributing to the same goals.

Social Wellbeing Benefits

At its heart, this project is about rebuilding public life: giving people places to gather, express, and belong. The Town Hall will:

- Provide a non-stigmatising, universally accessible space at the centre of civic life
- Reweave the town's social fabric through events, shared meals, and informal encounters
- Offer a platform for local creativity, storytelling, and cultural expression
- Restore civic pride and dignity by returning a landmark building to vibrant use
- Encourage grassroots organising and shared ownership of public initiatives

This is not a service but a setting. A space in which community life can unfold with more joy, meaning, and mutual support.

Environmental Benefits

This project takes a practical, holistic approach to the climate emergency by:

- Reusing and retrofitting an existing building, dramatically reducing embodied carbon
- Embedding energy efficiency, renewable design, and sustainable materials
- Supporting low-carbon food systems and shorter supply chains through the café tenancy
- Acting as a hub for climate literacy, hosting events and modelling sustainable practice

- Encouraging active travel and reducing car dependency by anchoring activity in the walkable town centre

It brings climate action into everyday life — not as an abstract concept, but as a lived community practice.

Tackling Inequality and Promoting Equality

From its governance to its pricing and programming, the project will centre equity and inclusion. It will:

- Design for universal access, while actively benefitting those most often excluded
- Offer training and employment opportunities for people marginalised from traditional job pathways
- Keep food, events, and space affordable and welcoming
- Reflect the diversity of Invergordon's population and foster cultural inclusion
- Embed community voice and power-sharing through cooperative, charitable, or social-enterprise governance
- Address place-based inequality by reinvesting in the heart of a town too often bypassed

It does not treat inequality as a box to tick but as a condition to be transformed through care, structure, and imagination.

Restrictions on use of the land

4.3 If there are any restrictions on the use or development of the land, please explain how your project will comply with these.

Restrictions might include, amongst others, environmental designations such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI), heritage designations such as listed building status, controls on contaminated land or planning restrictions.

The primary restriction on the property arises from its designation as a **Category B Listed Building**, which applies principally to the historic façade and principal architectural features.

Invergordon Development Trust fully recognises the responsibility that comes with this designation. Far from being a constraint, it is viewed as a cornerstone of the project's value and identity. The careful restoration of the building and the preservation of key heritage elements are central to the vision of returning the Town Hall to active civic use.

Our approach is conservation-led, with distinct but complementary roles for professional partners.

- Macleod & Jerram, a respected firm of traditional stonemasons, will undertake the conservation and restoration of the front stone façade. They have provided a preliminary cost estimate of £68,000 based on a visual inspection of the existing stonework. A grant application to the Beinn Tharsuinn

Community Fund is currently in progress to commission Macleod & Jerram to carry out a comprehensive condition survey and detailed quotation, producing an accurate, costed specification for the façade works.

- Blueprint Architecture and Design Ltd has supported the Trust at the early feasibility and concept stage, helping to explore options for layout, accessibility, energy efficiency, and heritage-sensitive reuse.

Once the project proceeds to the detailed design and delivery phase, full architectural and design services will be procured through an open and competitive tender process, appropriate to the scale and value of the works. This will ensure best value, transparency, and access to specialist expertise in the refurbishment and adaptation of listed buildings.

The appointed design team will be required to demonstrate experience in:

- Conservation-led refurbishment of listed buildings
- Inclusive and accessible design compliant with Building Standards
- Integration of energy-efficiency and low-carbon measures within historic fabric
- Collaborative working with planning and conservation officers

The proposed internal layout — comprising a ground-floor civic hub and a primarily first-floor café and offices — has been developed to respect the listed fabric and minimise structural intervention. Any accessibility, servicing, and energy-efficiency improvements will be introduced sensitively and in full consultation with Highland Council’s planning and conservation officers.

Planning permission and Listed Building Consent will be sought in due course, and all works will comply fully with heritage, planning, and building-standards requirements.

No additional environmental or planning restrictions have been identified at this stage. Should any arise, IDT will work proactively and collaboratively with the relevant authorities to address them, maintaining an appropriate balance between heritage preservation and contemporary community use.

In summary, the project treats heritage not as an obstacle but as an asset — a visible and meaningful link between Invergordon’s civic past and its future as a community-owned, low-carbon town-centre landmark.

Negative consequences

- 4.4 What negative consequences (if any) may occur if your request is agreed to?
How would you propose to minimise these?

You should consider any potential negative consequences for the local economy, environment, or any group of people, and explain how you could reduce these.

Negative Consequences

While this project is designed to deliver long-term community benefit, Invergordon Development Trust recognises that a number of potential risks and challenges may

arise, particularly during the transition and early implementation stages. These risks have been identified and mitigation measures are built into the project's staged delivery model.

1. Interim running costs

The current cost of heating and maintaining the unrenovated building is estimated at approximately **£4,000 per month**, which would be unsustainable for IDT to carry over a prolonged period.

To mitigate this risk:

- IDT will seek to time the asset transfer to coincide as closely as possible with the commencement of capital works, minimising any prolonged "empty period" between transfer and renovation.
- If any interim period is unavoidable, options such as partial mothballing or phased occupation will be explored to reduce costs while maintaining the building's integrity.
- Professional advice will be sought on managing risks to the building fabric if heating is reduced or temporarily suspended.
- Short-term grant support or bridging funding will be pursued where necessary to cover unavoidable interim costs.

This approach ensures responsible stewardship without jeopardising the Trust's financial viability.

2. Enterprise and tenancy viability

Under the proposed layout, the café and restaurant form one of several income-generating elements within the building. While this diversification strengthens overall resilience, there is a risk that an individual tenant business may struggle or withdraw.

To mitigate this:

- The social enterprise managing the building will retain flexibility to either re-let the café space or operate it directly if required.
- Lease arrangements will include clauses protecting continuity of community benefit and the long-term sustainability of the building.
- The wider income model — combining events, hires, and lettings — ensures that no single tenant determines overall financial viability.

This mixed-economy approach reduces exposure to market volatility and supports long-term sustainability.

3. Project management, procurement, and capital risk

IDT recognises that delivering a capital refurbishment project of this scale presents challenges for a small organisation.

To mitigate this:

- A **dedicated Project Manager** will be appointed for the delivery phase, reporting to the IDT Board.

- The Board will focus on governance, financial oversight, and accountability rather than day-to-day project delivery.
- Early-stage feasibility and concept support has been provided by professional advisers, including Blueprint Architecture and Design Ltd, and specialist conservation advice has been secured from Macleod & Jerram (stonemasons) in relation to the listed façade.
- Full architectural and design services for the delivery phase will be procured through an open and competitive tender process, appropriate to the scale and value of the works, ensuring access to the most suitable expertise and best value.
- A Quantity Surveyor (QS) will be appointed prior to tender to support cost planning, risk management, and financial transparency.
- Risk management will be embedded at each project stage, with engagement from Highland Council officers where appropriate.

This structured procurement and governance approach reduces delivery risk and ensures compliance with best practice.

4. Disruption to existing users

The local pipe band currently uses part of the Town Hall for storage. IDT will work closely with the group to identify an appropriate interim solution during the renovation period and will actively plan for their reintegration into the building once works are complete.

5. External factors

Construction cost inflation, and regulatory changes present potential risks to budget and timeline.

To mitigate these:

- Early and ongoing engagement with a QS and funders will support realistic cost forecasting.
- A phased delivery model will allow works to proceed in manageable stages as funding becomes available, avoiding overextension.
- Strong working relationships will be maintained with Highland Council, HIE, and relevant funding bodies to support adaptive management as circumstances change.

Overall, these risks are recognised as significant but manageable. IDT's staged, professionally supported approach — combined with flexible design, diversified income streams, and robust governance — ensures that challenges can be addressed pragmatically. Even in a worst-case scenario, community ownership will result in an improved, restored civic asset of lasting value to Invergordon.

Capacity to deliver

- 4.5 Please show how your organisation will be able to manage the project and achieve your objectives.

This could include the skills and experience of members of the organisation, any track record of previous projects, whether you intend to use professional advisers, etc.

Capacity to Deliver

Invergordon Development Trust (IDT) was formed in 2019 and registered with OSCR as a charity with a founding purpose: to save and restore the Invergordon Town Hall as a community asset. This proposal represents the fulfilment of that original mission.

IDT recognises that this is an ambitious undertaking, but one that has been designed to match the organisation's stage of development and local partnerships. Our approach is phased, realistic, and grounded in professional support.

1. Organisational structure and governance

IDT will remain the accountable owner and custodian of the Town Hall once the asset transfer is complete. The Trust's role will focus on governance, oversight, and stewardship, ensuring transparency, compliance, and alignment with charitable purposes.

To manage the day-to-day running of the building, IDT will establish a dedicated social enterprise — most likely a Community Interest Company (CIC) or a charitable company with a social-enterprise remit. This entity will:

- Operate the building and coordinate tenants, events, and programming;
- Ensure all activities generate social and community benefit;
- Manage leases and bookings for the ground-floor civic hub and first-floor café;
- Reinvest any surplus into the building's maintenance and community outcomes.

The social enterprise will be governed by its own board but remain closely aligned with IDT through shared strategic aims and overlapping trustees/directors.

2. Building organisational capacity

To support this project, IDT is pursuing funding for a full-time Development Officer post. This role will be crucial in bridging strategic governance and operational delivery.

The Development Officer will:

- Coordinate the capital project, working closely with professional partners;
- Develop and incorporate the new social enterprise;
- Lead on fundraising, communications, and stakeholder engagement;
- Prepare operating systems, policies, and financial modelling in advance of reopening.

Without this position, the Trust's volunteer board would not have sufficient capacity to deliver the project. Securing this role is therefore an essential first step in the project plan.

3. Professional expertise and project delivery

IDT is supported by a growing network of professional advisers and delivery partners, including:

- Blueprint Architecture and Design Ltd, which has provided early-stage feasibility and concept support to explore layout, accessibility, energy efficiency, and heritage-sensitive reuse;
- Macleod & Jerram (stonemasons), providing specialist conservation expertise for the listed façade;
- A Quantity Surveyor (QS) to be appointed for cost planning, risk management, and tendering;
- A dedicated Project Manager to oversee the capital works phase;
- Partnerships with local training and employability organisations such as For You Training in Tain.

Once the project moves into detailed design and delivery, full architectural and lead consultant services will be procured through an open and competitive tender process, appropriate to the scale and value of the works.

This combination of professional and community capacity ensures the project will be delivered to high technical standards within a robust governance and procurement framework.

4. Phased delivery approach

The project will be structured in clear, achievable stages:

Phase 1 – Capacity building and governance

- Expand IDT's charitable remit (to the IV18 area) to broaden community representation and strengthen eligibility for funding.
- Recruit a Development Officer and consolidate the partnership network.

Phase 2 – Capital development

- Appoint Project Manager and QS; procure architectural services and finalise detailed design and listed building consents.
- Commission detailed façade survey and conservation plan through the Beinn Tharsuinn Community Fund.
- Begin phased capital works once funding packages are secured.

Phase 3 – Operational launch

- Incorporate and establish the social-enterprise operator.
- Finalise lease or management arrangements for the café/restaurant.
- Pilot initial programming and events, building community participation and revenue ahead of full reopening.

5. Track record and local knowledge

Although this is IDT's most significant project to date, the Trust has demonstrated consistent progress and reliability since its formation. Achievements include:

- Organising town-centre Market Days to support local producers and increase footfall;
- Convening a local network of civic and voluntary organisations to coordinate regeneration activity;
- Developing a virtual-reality visitor experience of the Inchindown wartime tunnels with external partners.

Several trustees also have direct experience in heritage restoration, hospitality, community consultation, cultural production, corporate governance, business management and project management, bringing valuable practical insight to the board.

Summary

IDT's capacity to deliver rests on a strong governance foundation, a clear social-enterprise operating model, and a robust professional support structure. The project has been deliberately designed to grow the organisation's capacity as it progresses, ensuring that ownership, stewardship, and community benefit remain locally rooted and sustainable over the long term.

Section 5: Level and nature of support

- 5.1 Please provide details of the level and nature of support for the request, from your community and, if relevant, from others.

This could include information on the proportion of your community who are involved with the request, how you have engaged with your community beyond the members of your organisation and what their response has been. You should also show how you have engaged with any other communities that may be affected by your proposals.

Invergordon Development Trust recognises the importance of demonstrating community support for a Community Asset Transfer request. In this case, the Trust is building on an unusually extensive and well-documented body of existing consultation and engagement, rather than duplicating work that has already been undertaken multiple times for the same asset.

This application represents the third Community Asset Transfer request for Invergordon Town Hall within the past six years. During that period, the future of the Town Hall has been the subject of sustained public discussion, surveys, feasibility studies, and formal representations involving a wide cross-section of the Invergordon community and local stakeholders.

IDT Community Consultation and Feasibility Work (2019)

As part of its original asset transfer proposal, IDT commissioned a comprehensive feasibility study and community consultation programme in 2019. This included:

- A town-wide community survey completed by 339 residents (approximately 8% of the town's population);
- A public community event held at the Town Hall to present findings and gather feedback;
- Detailed analysis of potential uses, governance models, and community priorities.

Key findings included:

- Over 96% of respondents supported the Town Hall being retained in community ownership;
- Strong demand for a multi-use civic building combining cultural events, meetings, food, and social activity;
- Clear opposition to the sale of the building on the open market.

This work established a strong and explicit community mandate for the Town Hall to be restored and reused as a community-led civic asset.

Invergordon Museum Consultation and Letters of Support

Following IDT's initial work, Invergordon Museum undertook further community engagement as part of its own Community Asset Transfer bid for the Town Hall. This included additional surveys and the gathering of formal letters of support from a wide range of local organisations and stakeholders, including schools, community councils, faith groups, cultural organisations, businesses, and elected representatives.

Although led by a different organisation, this work demonstrated continued and consistent community support for the same core outcomes:

- Retention of the Town Hall in public or community ownership;
- Restoration of the building as a shared civic, cultural, and learning space;
- Recognition of the Town Hall as a central element of Invergordon's identity and town-centre life.

The survey data and letters of support gathered by Invergordon Museum were submitted to Highland Council as part of their previous application for the Town hall and act as further evidence of long-standing, cross-organisational community backing.

Recent Community Survey Evidence (2024)

More recently, IDT carried out the Invergordon, Saltburn and Westwood Community Survey (2024), completed by 317 residents across the local area. While not focused solely on the Town Hall, the findings strongly reinforce the case for its proposed reuse:

- Only 48% of respondents felt there were suitable local places to meet socially, indicating a clear shortage of accessible indoor community space;
- There was strong appetite for cultural and civic activity, with:

- 271 respondents expressing interest in live music, theatre, or similar events;
- 211 respondents wanting local cinema provision;
- 195 respondents interested in live music events;
- Respondents highlighted a lack of evening venues not centred on alcohol, and limited family-friendly, intergenerational spaces;
- 85 respondents stated they would be willing to become more involved in community groups or activities to help improve the area, indicating strong potential for participation and volunteering;
- The survey explicitly references local interest in the asset transfer of the Town Hall as part of wider community-led activity.

These findings demonstrate that the needs identified in earlier Town Hall-specific consultations remain current and, in some respects, have become more acute.

Climate Action Towns Programme Engagement

Invergordon has also been the focus of extensive whole-place engagement through the Architecture and Design Scotland-led Climate Action Towns programme (2021–2023), supported by the Scottish Government. This involved a series of workshops, public events, systems-mapping exercises, and facilitated discussions with residents, community organisations, local businesses, and statutory partners.

Within this work, the reuse of Invergordon Town Hall was repeatedly identified by participants as a priority, “*low-hanging fruit*” project — a visible, deliverable intervention that could provide a much-needed warm, accessible civic space and help rebuild community agency and momentum. The absence of a shared indoor hub was identified as a barrier to participation, collaboration, and sustained community action, while the presence of such a space was seen as foundational to wider regeneration and climate resilience activity.

The Climate Action Towns programme also supported the formation and strengthening of the Invergordon Umbrella Group, bringing together IDT, Invergordon Museum, Community Councils, local businesses, and other anchor organisations. This process improved coordination, trust, and shared strategic direction in the town, reinforcing the broad, cross-community support for retaining the Town Hall in community ownership and returning it to active civic use.

Approach Taken for This Application

Given the volume, consistency, and recency of existing consultation, IDT did not consider it proportionate or constructive to undertake a further standalone consultation exercise specifically for this application. Repeating large-scale surveys would risk consultation fatigue and unnecessary duplication without materially strengthening the evidence base.

Instead, this proposal has been deliberately shaped to:

- Align with clearly expressed community priorities over multiple years;
- Build on existing feasibility and engagement work rather than disregarding it;
- Respond directly to current gaps in provision identified through recent survey evidence.

A range of supporting documents — including feasibility studies, survey results, community action plans, Climate Action Towns reports, and letters of support — are submitted alongside this application.

Ongoing and Future Engagement

IDT views community engagement as an ongoing process. Should the asset transfer be approved, further targeted engagement will take place during the design development and operational planning stages, including:

- Engagement with existing and prospective user groups;
- Consultation on detailed layouts, access, and programming;
- Involvement of community stakeholders in shaping the governance and operation of the future social-enterprise operator.

This staged approach ensures engagement is meaningful, timely, and connected to real decisions, rather than repetitive or abstract.

Summary

In summary, this application is underpinned by:

- Strong Town Hall–specific consultation undertaken by IDT in 2019;
- Further surveys and formal letters of support gathered by Invergordon Museum;
- Recent, town-wide survey evidence confirming ongoing need and demand;
- Extensive independent engagement through the Climate Action Towns programme;
- Clear continuity of community priorities across time, organisations, and methods.

IDT believes this represents a robust, proportionate, and well-evidenced demonstration of community support, appropriate to the history, scale, and current stage of the project, and provides a solid foundation for moving from consultation into delivery.

Section 6: Funding

6.1 Please outline how you propose to fund the price or rent you are prepared to pay for the asset, and your proposed use of the asset.

You should show your calculations of the costs associated with the transfer of the land or building and your future use of it, including any redevelopment, ongoing maintenance and the costs of your activities. All proposed income and investment should be identified, including volunteering and donations. If you intend to apply for grants or loans you should demonstrate that your proposals are eligible for the relevant scheme, according to the guidance available for applicants.

Price for the Asset

Invergordon Development Trust (IDT) is seeking transfer of ownership of Invergordon Town Hall at a nominal value of £1.

The Town Hall is a Common Good asset belonging to the Invergordon Common Good Fund, historically held for the benefit of the local community. In this context, it would not be appropriate or proportionate for a community body such as IDT — acting solely in the public interest — to purchase a Common Good asset at market value in order to continue delivering benefit for the common good.

A nominal transfer reflects:

- the Town Hall's Common Good status;
- the building's current condition and backlog of repair;
- the scale of capital investment required to bring it back into safe, accessible use;
- the long-term public benefit of community ownership; and
- the transfer of ongoing maintenance, risk, and liability from Highland Council.

This approach ensures the asset continues to serve Common Good purposes while enabling the necessary investment to secure its future.

Overview of Costs

Based on early feasibility work and benchmark data, IDT estimates:

- Primary renovation and conversion works: approx. £878,712 (BCIS benchmark £2,679/m²)
- Façade conservation works (Category B listed frontage): approx. £68,000, subject to detailed survey
- Additional allowances for roof and fabric repairs, low-carbon heating, accessibility (including lift), fit-out, professional fees, contingency, and inflation.

The total indicative project cost is estimated at circa £2 million, to be refined through detailed surveys, appointment of a Quantity Surveyor, and phased design development.

Funding Strategy

The project will be funded through a phased, blended approach, aligning funding sources to the maturity of the project and managing risk in a volatile construction environment.

- Early stages will focus on development, design, surveys, and capacity-building, funded through heritage, community, and place-based development grants.
- Capital works will be supported through a package of heritage, regeneration, energy-efficiency, and trust funding, delivered in phases as funding is secured.
- IDT does not propose to rely on unsecured borrowing or speculative income to fund capital works.

- Operational sustainability will be supported through a mix of earned income (café, events, hires, workspace), programme funding, volunteering, and in-kind support.

A detailed overview of potential funding routes and eligibility is provided in the accompanying **Funding Routes** document.

Eligibility and Long-Term Sustainability

The proposed use of the Town Hall — as a civic venue, cultural and performance space, community café, and hub for local enterprise — aligns strongly with the eligibility criteria of heritage, community, regeneration, and climate-focused funders.

IDT is a registered Scottish charity and will establish an appropriate social-enterprise operating vehicle, ensuring eligibility across relevant funding streams. Any surplus generated will be reinvested into building maintenance, affordable access, and community benefit.

Summary

In summary:

- IDT is seeking ownership of the Town Hall at £1, reflecting its status as a Common Good asset and the scale of investment required;
- The Trust has a clear understanding of capital and operational costs;
- Funding will be assembled through a phased, realistic, and eligible approach;
- Long-term sustainability will be supported by diversified income and community stewardship.

This approach provides a financially responsible pathway to restoring the Town Hall as a thriving Common Good asset for Invergordon.

Signature

Two office-bearers (board members, charity trustees or committee members) of the community transfer body must sign the form. They must provide their full names and home addresses for the purposes of prevention and detection of fraud.

This form and supporting documents will be made available online for any interested person to read and comment on. Personal information will be redacted before the form is made available.

We, the undersigned on behalf of the community transfer body as noted at section 1, make an asset transfer request as specified in this form.

We declare that the information provided in this form and any accompanying documents is accurate to the best of our knowledge.

Name Donna Smith

Address 14 Saltburn, Invergordon, IV18 0JX

Date 08/03/2026

Position Chair

Signature



Name



Address



Date 8/03/2026

Position Treasurer



Signature

Checklist of accompanying documents

To check that nothing is missed, please list any documents which you are submitting to accompany this form.

Section 1 – you must attach your organisation’s constitution, articles of association or registered rules

Title of document attached: IDT Consitution.pdf

Section 2 – any maps, drawings or description of the land requested

Documents attached:

401479 – Invergordon Town Hall – Structural Report.pdf

401479 – Pc001 – Ground Gloor Layouts – A1LV.pdf

410479 – Pc002 – First Floor Layouts = A1LV.pdf

Timber Report – Invergordon Town Hall.pdf

Section 3 – note of any terms and conditions that are to apply to the request

Documents attached:

Section 4 – about your proposals, their benefits, any restrictions on the asset or potential negative consequences, and your organisation’s capacity to deliver.

Documents attached:

Invergordon town hall proposal report.pdf

Invergordon Town Hall Provisional Business Plan.doc

Section 5 – evidence of community support

Documents attached:

Letter of Support – Edward Mountain MSP

Letter of Support – Invergordon Distillery

Letter of Support – Jamie Stone MP

Letter of Support – Maree Todd MSP

Letter of Support – Museum

Letter of Support – Off the Wall

Letter of Support – Saltburn and Westwood CC

(more letters to follow)

Community Survey 2025

Draft_Invergordon Climate Action Towns report

Business plan for IDT December 2019 (2)

Section 6 – funding

Documents attached:

Invergordon Town Hall Potential Funding Routes

Search “Privacy Notices” on the Highland Council website to read our Privacy Statement in regards to Asset Transfer Request forms.