

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Committee: Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee

Date: 27 April 2026

Report Title: Common Good consultation outcome: change of use proposal at Land at Stadium Road, East Longman, Inverness

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate
Assistant Chief Executive – Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the statutory public consultation undertaken in accordance with Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 in relation to the proposed change of use of the Common Good property known as the Land at Stadium Road, East Longman, Inverness. The proposal seeks to enable a broader range of development opportunities on the site in accordance with planning use classes 4, 5, and 6.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1
- i. **Note** the statutory consultation process and its outcome as detailed in Sections 6 - 8 and Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.
 - ii. **Consider** the representations received, together with the Council's responses as outlined in Appendix 2 and take these into account in the decision-making process, having due regard to the views of the inhabitants of the former Burgh of Inverness.
 - iii. **Recommend** to the City of Inverness Area Committee whether the proposal, having regard to the representations received and the best interests of the Inverness Common Good Fund, should be **approved, amended, or rejected**, and provide the reasons for the decision reached.
 - iv. **Recommend** to the City of Inverness Area Committee that it **approve** the publication of the Council's responses to the representations, as set out in Appendix 2, on the Council's website.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – The land is currently leased until 2094. Under the proposed revised arrangements, the Inverness Common Good Fund (ICGF) would benefit from increased rental income, reflecting the enhanced development potential of the site in accordance with the planning use classes. As reported to the City of Inverness Area Committee (CIAC) on the 2 February 2026, the proposed lease amendments, including

the revised rent, have been set at current market rates. The rent would be subject to a five-yearly review, ensuring the ICGF continues to achieve Best Value.

See 'Risk' in 3.3 (below) regarding potential financial implications.

- 3.2 **Legal** – There is a statutory requirement under Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to undertake public consultation before disposing of, or changing the use of, Common Good property. The outcome of that consultation must be taken into account when determining how to proceed with any proposal. In addition, Section 75 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires consent from the Sheriff Court where a proposal involves Common Good property that may be inalienable.

As the property subject to this proposal is owned by the Council in terms of the Royal Charter of James VI dated 1591, it may be inalienable Common Good and therefore Sheriff Court consent will be required should Members decide to approve the proposal.

- 3.3 **Risk** – This report relates specifically to the statutory requirement under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to consult prior to disposing of, or changing the use of, Common Good property. The consultation outcome demonstrates that the Council has complied with this obligation.

As the proposal requires Sheriff Court consent, any member of the public or organisation may lodge an objection to the application following Committee approval. If such an objection is upheld, the Council may incur additional legal costs. This presents a potential resource implication to the ICGF. The ICGF however holds sufficient reserves to meet any such costs if they arise.

- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - All common good properties are managed in accordance with existing Council policies regarding health and safety requirements.

- 3.5 **Gaelic** – No Gaelic implications have been identified as a result of this report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This report presents the outcome of the Common Good consultation. In line with the Integrated Impact Assessment guidance, an impact assessment is not required for this type of report.

5 Background

- 5.1 In 1994, a lease was granted to Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club (ICTFC) for land known as the 'Caledonian Thistle Football Ground Site'. The site lies to the East of the A9, adjacent to the Kessock Bridge, and forms part of the Inverness

Common Good Fund portfolio. Following the restructure of ICTFC in 2025, the majority of the land continues to be leased directly to the football club, however approximately 2.57 acres are leased to Inverness Caledonian Thistle Properties Ltd. This 2.57 acre section is now referred to as the 'Land at Stadium Road' and is the subject of this consultation. The land no longer forms part of the property known as the 'Caledonian Thistle Football Ground Site' as identified on the Inverness Common Good Asset Register.

ICTFC and Inverness Caledonian Thistle Properties Ltd are separate companies, and each leased area is held independently of the other.

6 The Proposal

- 6.1 A report was submitted to the CIAC on 2 February 2026 to inform Members of proposed changes to the leased area at Land at Stadium Road. The property is currently undeveloped however remains restricted due to previously forming part of the football club's lease.
- 6.2 The tenant wishes to assign the remainder of the lease, which runs until 2094, to a new occupier and to broaden the permitted uses of land so that it may be developed in accordance with Classes 4, 5 and 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997. This would bring the permitted uses of the property into line with other Common Good land leases within the Longman Industrial Estate. These use classes allow for the following categories of development:
- Class 4 – Business
 - Class 5 – General Industry
 - Class 6 – Storage and Distribution
- 6.3 While longer-term development options for the site continue to be considered, the property is expected to be used initially as laydown space for storage purposes.
- 6.4 Although the land previously formed part of the football club's lease, it has remained undeveloped and has not supported any community use. The proposed change of use would therefore have little impact on the public. Instead, the proposal offers an opportunity to generate additional income for the ICGF while bringing the land into productive use that supports wider economic benefits.
- 6.5 In deciding whether to accept, amend or reject the change of use proposal in principle, subject to Sheriff Court consent, the Council must have regard to the views of the inhabitants of the former Burgh of Inverness (Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015 Act).
- 6.6 The remainder of this report describes the process and results of the consultation, to facilitate the decision making of Members in relation to the proposal.
- 6.7 It should be noted that, although separate from the Common Good process, the proposal will also require planning permission before it can proceed.

7 Common Good Consultation

- 7.1 A statutory consultation period commenced on 5 February 2026 and concluded on 2 April 2026. The consultation document is included in Appendix 3 of this report.

7.2 The purpose of the consultation was to give Inverness residents, including the community council and local community groups, the opportunity to express their views on how the proposed change of use might affect or alter the current use and benefits of the Common Good property. As part of the consultation, respondents were invited to consider and comment on the following key questions:

1. What are your views on the proposal utilising common good property?
2. Do you have any views on potential benefits of the proposal?
3. Do you have any issues or concerns arising from the proposal?
4. Do you have any additional comments?

A copy of the representations is included in Appendix 2. The representations are reproduced verbatim (with personal information excluded/redacted) together with the Council's proposed responses to the consultation.

7.3 The consultation was publicised via the following methods:

- 22 community councils were informed directly.
- A notice of consultation was displayed at the property.
- A consultation notice poster and document was provided to those who were informed directly, requesting assistance to publicise within local vicinities and/or raise awareness via key community members and organisations.
- A consultation notice poster and document was provided to those who manage public buildings such as leisure centres, libraries, community halls and other community facilities throughout Inverness (via HLH).
- A press release and social media posts were issued on the Council's media accounts including website.
- The Council's press release and social media posts were published by the local press.
- Social media posts were repeated during the 8-week consultation period.
- Reminder emails were sent to community councils before the closing date.
- The consultation document was published on the [Council's website](#) at the beginning of the launch and continues to be accessible.
- Members were notified on the day of the launch that the consultation period had commenced.

A notice of consultation was not issued directly to community bodies because no organisation with a specific interest in, or that might reasonably be affected by, the proposal was identified.

8 Summary of representations received

8.1 A total of three representations were received.

- 2 respondents expressed they were supportive of the proposal.
- 1 respondent expressed they were against the proposal.

Respondents included individual Inverness residents (2) and non-resident (1). There were no submissions received from community councils and community-bodies.

8.2 The analysis document included in Appendix 1 details a summary of the comments, themes and concerns which have been distilled from the full representations contained in Appendix 2. Members are asked to review both documents while considering the proposal.

The comments have been grouped into themes:

Positive themes:

- Better use of land
- Economic benefit
- Improved visual appearance

Negative themes:

- Concern about further industrialisation
- Environmental and biodiversity loss
- Access/traffic considerations

- 8.3 The two respondents expressing support for the proposal, noted that the land is currently unused in its present form. They highlighted that the proposal represents a more productive and appropriate use of the land and would generate additional income for the ICGF. Respondents also commented that the proposal may improve the visual appearance of what they described as an area of waste or underutilised land. One respondent raised a practical matter relating to the need for suitable access and egress arrangements but otherwise indicated no concerns.

One respondent expressed strong opposition to the proposal. This representation emphasised the environmental value of the site in its existing condition, arguing that the scrubland supports biodiversity, contributes to air quality, assists with climate mitigation, and provides a softer visual edge to the industrial site. The respondent objected to further industrial development and requested that any future development be required to comply fully with relevant biodiversity policies, including nature enhancement principles.

In summary, the majority of representations were supportive of the proposal, recognising economic and visual benefits from bringing the land into productive use. While noting the concerns raised by the sole objector, matters relating to biodiversity, environment, and access issues will be assessed in detail through the separate planning application process. The public will be able to submit further representations at that stage.

The representations and Council's responses can be viewed fully in Appendix 2.

9. Decision making and outcome

- 9.1 Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, decisions relating to Common Good assets are delegated to the relevant Area Committee where the value of the asset or proposal is less than 10% of the respective Common Good Fund. Where the value exceeds this threshold, decision-making is reserved to Full Council. As Inverness is the only area with a Common Good Fund Sub-Committee, it has been agreed that proposals will be considered initially by this Sub-Committee, with recommendations referred to the CIAC for determination.
- 9.2 The proposed change of use and amended lease agreement referenced at paragraph 3.1 (above) and reported in detail to Members at the CIAC on 2 February 2026, does not exceed 10% of the value of the ICGF. Accordingly, the proposal falls within the delegated authority of the CIAC and does not require a decision of the Full Council.
- 9.3 Members are required to have regard to the representations received, as contained in Appendix 2, and to consider the Council's responses to these. In doing so, Members

should also reflect on their responsibilities in relation to the ICGF when determining how to proceed.

All representations submitted during the statutory consultation were relevant to the proposed change of use and its potential impacts. No comments were identified as being out of scope, and all therefore should be considered in full as part of the decision-making process.

Taking account of the concerns raised, supportive comments, and the overall impacts and benefits, officer recommendation is to approve the proposal. The main reasons are:

- Majority of responders are in favour of the proposal.
- The main concerns noted will be addressed and mitigated through the planning process.
- The proposal represents a substantial increase in income to the ICGF.
- The proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact, as the land has remained undeveloped and has not supported any community use.

9.4 Members are asked to recommend to the CIAC whether to:

- **Approve** the proposal, subject to Sheriff Court consent; or
- **Amend** the proposal (noting that substantive amendments may require a further statutory consultation); or
- **Reject** the proposal.

Members are asked to provide clear reasons for their recommendation, to be recorded as part of the decision-making process.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate
Assistant Chief Executive – Place

Date: 14 April 2026

Author: Paula Betts, Common Good Fund Officer

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Consultation Analysis
Appendix 2 – Representations and Responses
Appendix 3 – Consultation Document