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| HIGH LIFE HIGHLAND REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS10 December 2020 | AGENDA ITEM REPORT No HLH /20 |

## **CHair/chIEF EXECUTIVE’S UPDATES - Report by Chief Executive**

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| **Summary**The purpose of this report is to provide Directors with information and the opportunity to discuss issues affecting HLH and its work at an early stage.It is recommended Directors comment on and note the updates. |
| **1.** | **Business Plan Contribution** |
| 1.1 | This report supports the highlighted Business Outcomes from the High Life Highland (HLH) Business Plan:1. Sustain a high standard of health and safety, and environmental performance
2. **Implement the Service Delivery Contract with THC**
3. **Improving customer engagement and satisfaction**
4. **Improving staff engagement and satisfaction**
5. **Enhance the positive charity image**
6. Be a trusted and effective partner
7. Achieve sustainable growth across the organisation
8. **Develop health and wellbeing across Highland communities**
9. **Develop and promote the High Life brand**
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| **2.** | **Regular Report to THC Education Committee** |
| 2.1 | Six monthly reporting to THC recommenced with a report to the Education Committee on 18 November 2020. Links to the report and the webcast of the meeting are provided in the performance report elsewhere in this agenda.  |
| 2.2 | The report provided an update on governance, including HLH’s financial position, the actions which HLH took to improve its in-year performance and the challenges expected next year.  |
| 2.3 | The contribution that HLH staff made to THC’s welfare resilience as volunteers was positively received, as were the efforts made to continue the targeted work to support vulnerable adults and young people through the adult learning and youth work teams. The switch to and growth of on-line services to support schools through the music tuition and sports teams, as well as services to the wider public through the on-line activities and services provided by the archives, leisure, libraries, museums, and sport teams was highlighted.   |
| 2.4 | Summaries of the recovery work of all of the HLH services were provided and well received. An area of work is highlighted in more detail in each progress report and this time round the focus was the partnership with **sport**scotland as reported to the HLH Board at its August 2020 meeting. The committee noted the discussions taking place between **sport**scotland and HLH on potential capital investment. |
| **3.**3.1 | **Projects**Inverness Leisure |
| 3.1.13.1.2 | After a number of delays spanning more than a year, the Inverness Leisure Floodlighting project completed in October 2020. The new development is a significant improvement that provides year-round athletics provision, with the full track available into the dark evenings, weather permitting. The work to expand and re-equip the Inverness Leisure strength and conditioning suite is currently underway and will be complete at the time of this report going to print. The new suite is fitted out with state-of-the-art equipment, supplied by **sport**scotland. The facility will expand usage to concurrently accommodate club groups and the Institute of Sport, whilst retaining continuous access for HLH customers. This improvement is expected to draw significant additional memberships. HLH will also use the facility to promote strength and conditioning training opportunities, with classes being planned for families, girls and women.  |
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| 3.23.2.13.2.23.3 | Caithness HorizonsThe HLH Board in June 2019 agreed that it would adopt responsibility for the operation of Caithness Horizons on THC’s behalf. THC are funding the capital works required and these are now being finalised in preparation for operational handover with a provisional HLH entry date of 1 March 2020 subject to completion of works. THC and Dounreay Site Restoration Limited (DSRL) have confirmed that the 3-year funding agreement (£75K per annum) will commence from HLH date of entry with an annual business review scheduled.The HLH team have been working in the background to facilitate opening to the public at the earliest opportunity. On opening, the facility will be relaunched as the *North Coast Visitor Centre* and will feature a catering offering in line with the new HLH catering strategy.Alness Academy Community Facility |
| 3.3.1 | The new Alness Academy Community Facility is planned to open on 5th January 2021. This facility has been planned and is on track from HLH perspective. However, there are a number of maintenance issues that could lead to a deferral of the opening. The facility is of a very high specification and should prove popular once opened.  |
| **4.** | **Investments**  |
| 4.1**5.**5.1 | The investment mentioned at paragraph 3.1 of this report is the first of a number of infrastructure initiatives that are currently being scoped. **sport**scotland is keen to invest in a number of Highland-based projects. The strong covenant that HLH brings to the sustainability of developments is a key factor in securing **sport**scotland investment. However, the importance of partnership collaboration cannot be underestimated, with THC, HIE and UHI all having a major role to play in achieving consensus with respect to priorities. Initial meetings have been held and the signs are encouraging. **Partnerships**Sport and Leisure |
| 5.1.15.25.2.15.2.2 | Our Director of Sport and Leisure has been working hard to establish strategic partnerships with successful organisations that share values with HLH. The relationship with Inverness Harriers is on a strong footing, as is the close relationships with swimming clubs, with a smooth transition to re-opening particularly noteworthy. Recent alterations to pitch layouts at the Bught Park, coupled to potential investment from the **sport**scotland Covid-19 recovery fund to improve changing facilities has led to a significant improvement in relationships with the Camanachd Association. Next steps will be to enter into strategic partnerships with some of these organisations in order to promote participation and elite athlete development.Events and Festivals Discussions are ongoing with THC officers with respect to the Inverness Common Good Events and Festivals Programme. Recent turnover of key personnel has put future programming at risk, given this, a project has been set up to determine a way forward, with both HLH and Eden Court engaged with THC as key partners. Although leading such a high-profile series of public events is in many ways an exciting prospect, there is however, in the post-pandemic environment, a number of risks associated with the future of events and festivals, not least the lack of time to put in place any arrangements for the 21/22 events season. HLH has been asked to present draft proposals to Inverness Councillors in early December. Given the context and level of potential financial exposure associated with any service level agreement, no commitment will be made without first seeking formal approval from the HLH Board.  |
| **6.** | **Job Retention Scheme Update**  |
| 6.16.2 | The removal of the Job Support Scheme and re-introduction of the Job Retention Scheme at the start of November led to a fairly frantic period of re-adjustment of service delivery. The main issue was the removal of the JRS Bonus, removing a projected circa £600k from HLH financial projections. The updated financial year-end position is contained in the Finance Report elsewhere in this agenda. Given the prospect of reduced footfall due to government restrictions, the following opening times will be adopted for the festive holiday season, with staff placed on furlough leave for the period of closure:

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| **Service** | **Close** | **Re-open** |
| Culture Services: Libraries, Museums  | 21 December | 11 January |
| Corporate Services | 21 December | 11 January |
| Senior Management Team  | 21 December | 11 January |
| Leisure[[1]](#footnote-1)  | 23 December  |  4 January |
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| **7.** | **Implications** |
| 7.1 | Resource Implications – there are no additional resource implications arising from this report. |
| 7.2 | Legal Implications - there are no new legal implications arising from this report. |
| 7.3 | Equality Implications – there are no new equality implications arising from this report. |
| 7.4 | Risk Implications – there are no new risk implications arising from this report.  |

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|  **Recommendations**It is recommended Directors comment on and note the updates. |

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 29 November 2020

1. The largest Leisure centres will likely open on 30/31 December [↑](#footnote-ref-1)