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| HIGH LIFE HIGHLAND  REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS  23 JUNE 2021 | AGENDA ITEM REPORT No HLH/ /21 |

## **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** |
| **2.** | **Partnerships – The Highland Council** |
| 2.1 | Engagement between HLH and schools has been positive. Most shared school and community facilities have now re-opened and HLH has access to most facilities with music tuition, youth work, active schools and library teams working collaboratively to deliver services. |
| 2.2 | HLH was able to react quickly to several requests from THC, on a cost recovery basis, to assist with pressures around business grants administration and election work providing 7 staff for grants from the beginning of March to 16 April, 5 staff to work with the Service Centre on election queries from early March to 9 May and 2 staff assisted the Assessors Department in the pre-election period. This support was appreciated by the Council staff responsible for the Business Grants: *“it’s made a significant difference to how quickly and effectively we’ve got through the applications received and many of the queries etc. that have arisen from them.”* |
| 2.3 | HLH continues to make facilities available as vaccination centres on a cost recovery only basis as required. This has included stewarding support and there has been positive feedback from communities on the HLH staff involved. |
| **3.** | **Partnerships - Inverness City Events and Festivals** |
| 3.1 | As indicated in the HLH Board papers in March, the City of Inverness Area Committee invited High Life Highland to act as Managing Agent for the Inverness City Events and Festivals Programme at its meeting on 27 May. The paper was extremely well received by the City Committee and the recommendations therein were approved thus:  **AGREED** the new operating model and for High Life Highland (HLH) to be invited to act as managing agent for a refreshed ICGF Events Programme;  **NOTED** HLH's involvement in the potential transfer of the Events and Festivals Programme;  **NOTED** that HLH Officers had been instructed to respond positively to any formal requests to adopt the management and operations of Events and Festivals in the City of Inverness;  **NOTED** that the 2021/22 Events Budget would be allocated to HLH for delivery of the ICGF Events Programme;  **AGREED** the governance structure as detailed in the report; and  **NOTED** that the operating model fell within the scope of existing operational agreements in place between the Council and HLH. |
| 3.2 | Following discussions within the Executive Team, it has been agreed that the Events and Festivals remit will be positioned within the Director of Inverness Castle’s portfolio, due to the obvious synergies with the high-profile projects. |
| 3.3 | The next steps will be to set up discussions around the governance structure between the HLH and the City of Inverness Area Committee and recruit to the position of Events Development Manager. |
| **4.** | **Levelling Up Fund** |
| 4.1  4.1.2  4.1.3  4.2  4.2.1 | **Bid for the Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey Constituency**  HLH staff are working with officers within the Council to develop a number of projects within this constituency which could lead to significant economic benefits. Council staff have focused on the criteria relating to regeneration and on the maintenance and regeneration of cultural, heritage and civic assets and have identified a potential bid comprising Inverness Castle, Northern Meeting Park and Bught Park facilities.  The Council believes that the development of a compelling case can be made for these three significant venues in the City, which taken together could lead to major improvements to attract local residents back to the city centre, to increase visitor numbers, to improve facilities that are in great need of investment and which are in danger of further deterioration, and to establish community facilities that have a close link to Camanachd heritage and the Inverness Highland Games.  **Bid for Lochaber Constituency**  THC have adopted the ongoing feasibility study on a new build Ben Nevis Visitor Centre and this project could form part of their future application to the Levelling Up Fund. |
| **5.** | **Inverness Castle Project** |
| 5.1  5.2  5.3 | The project remains on schedule to issue the tender for the main construction contract at the end of May. All statutory planning consents that have been submitted have been approved. The submissions for the tender to appoint an Exhibition Content Design Partner for the project have been reviewed, with the top three companies due to attend selection interviews on 16th June.  The main contractor is scheduled to start on site in November of this year, at which point most of Castlehill be closed off behind the hoardings. A comprehensive period of stakeholder engagement will begin in July to keep the public, Members, the media and neighbours of the Castle appraised of the plans to develop the new visitor attraction and the timescale for doing so.  A programme of scheduled site visits and public tours will be organised from July onwards and Directors are asked to advise if they would wish a site visit to be organised for members of the Board and Trading Company. |
| **6.** | **Projects –** |
| 6.1 | Bellfield Park |
| 6.1.1 | Bellfield Park is currently going through the early stages of development, the paddling pool has been cleaned, de-weeded and filled, staff are currently being trained on the pool pant to run a safe operation, the paddling pool is now open in the good weather. Other park areas being worked on now are the kiosk, pathways throughout the park, tennis court signage and park signage. The plan is to open the Kiosk/Shop and tennis court bookings by the middle of June. |
| 6.2 | School’s Out |
| 6.2.1  6.2.2  6.2.3 | The “School’s Out” (SO) summer activity programme was launched on 17 May and bookings went live on 7, 8 and 9 June. This year, there are 1,050 activities on the programme across the Highlands with capacity for a total of 42,000 participant places. At the time of writing this update, the SO bookings system had just opened to the public. This resulted in an uptake of 24,283 activity places booked generating £39.6K in income over the first two days of booking.  To recognise the support of those members who continued to pay their highlife membership throughout the COVID-19 lockdown, the booking system was developed to afford those members a 24 hour early access to make School’s Out bookings. Of the 24.3K bookings made in the first two days, 5.2K of these were made during the advance booking period.  In addition to HLH’s School’s Out programme, this year, THC has received Scottish Government funding to support children and young people over the school summer holidays and it has called the programme the “Summer of Hope”. It has commissioned a number of other providers to deliver the “Summer of Hope” and is providing 6.5K vouchers with a £30 value to targeted children and young people across the Highlands, believed to have been most impacted by COVID-19. The intention of the voucher is to enable them/the family to purchase places in the HLH summer programme as part of this. |
| **7.** | **Projects - Highland Future Sports Provision Prioritisation (Infrastructure)** |
| 7.1 | The work being led by THC with HLH, **sport**scotland, HIE and UHI has progressed with the partners having drafted a project scoring framework. The framework is intended to inform a strategic, Highland wide approach to sports facility investment. |
| **8.** | **Work with the CPP Mental Health Delivery Group** |
| 8.1 | During February and March 2021, on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership’s (CPP) Mental Health Delivery Group, HLH led an online survey which asked young people about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to help the partners with planning and implementing initiatives and services for young people. |
| 8.2 | The survey was completed by 777 young people from across the Highland area who were reached via schools, youth groups, sports and music tuition activities.  The information from the survey will be used along with other work being undertaken as part of the whole systems approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing and the Mental Health Delivery Group is exploring options for support which young people have requested.  Leading the process has enabled HLH to demonstrate another example of being a trusted and effective partner. |
| **10.** | **Transformation** |
| 10.1 | Discussions continue with THC with respect to resourcing. Analysis is well underway with respect to new ways of working in order to establish the requirement for office space as the Corporate teams return to work. |
| 10.2 | Discussion has been ongoing with THC with respect to carbon reduction programmes.  HLH has made  significant progress with carbon reduction through utilisation of SALIX funding, delivering over £58k in savings to date with the SALIX fund also agreeing to replace 3 pool covers at a cost of £14,446 which will further support the ongoing reduction in energy costs and carbon reduction. |
| **11.** | **Business Planning – Review of 2019-24 Business Plan** |
| 11.1 | Work undertaken to date was presented to the December 2020 Board, continuing to progress in lieu of a facilitated session with Directors. The current aim is to secure a date in late October 2021 to conduct a facilitated session and allow the Board to consider the revised business plan for presentation to the HLH Board at the end of the calendar year. |
| **12.** | **Implications** |
| 12.1 | Resource Implications – there are no additional resource implications arising from this report. |
| 12.2 | Legal Implications - there are no new legal implications arising from this report. |
| 12.3 | Equality Implications – there are no new equality implications arising from this report. |
| 12.4 | 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: 10 June 2021