

BOARD MINUTE

21 JANUARY 2025

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

APPROVED



BOARD MEETING
COINNEAMH BÙIRD

MINUTE OF THE EXTRA HIE BOARD MEETING HELD ONLINE ON TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2025, STARTING AT 11.00 AM

PRESENT

Alistair Dodds (*Chair*)
Angus Campbell (*Deputy Chair*)
Stuart Black (*Chief Executive*)
Allan Clow
Simon Cotton
Freda Newton
Keith Nicholson
Ailsa Raeburn
Calum Ross
Anna Salgado
David Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

Sandra Dunbar Director of Corporate Services
Martin Johnson Director of Strategy and Regional Economy
David Oxley Director of Strategic Projects
Chris Roberts Head of Communications
Andrew Carton Team Leader (HIE), Enterprise Agency Sponsorship, Scottish Government
Charlie Lawrence Head of Property and Infrastructure, item 2
Elaine Hanton Head of Energy Transition and Net Zero / Cairngorm Project Lead, items 3, 4
James Palmer Project Manager, Construction, item 4
[Name removed for data protection]
Audrey MacIver Area Manager, Inner Moray Firth, item 5
James Turner Head of Strengthening Communities, Inner Moray Firth, item 5

1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to this extra meeting which had been arranged to deal with time-critical matters. Apologies had been received from Board member Melanie Collett and HIE Directors Rachel Hunter, Karen Moncrieff and Joanna Peteranna.

Allan Clow declared an interest in item 5, Inverness Castle, due to previous business connections. Freda Newton declared an interest in item 5, Inverness Castle as a member of the Inverness Castle Delivery Group. It was agreed that both Board members would leave the meeting when this item was considered.

David Oxley made a transparency statement, noting that he is a board member of Wave Energy Scotland. This was not considered to present a conflict.

2 *[Item removed in the interests of the effective conduct of public affairs, and due to commercial sensitivity].*

3 *[Item removed in the interests of the effective conduct of public affairs, and due to commercial sensitivity].*

4 *[Item removed in the interests of the effective conduct of public affairs, and due to commercial sensitivity].*

5 Inverness Castle

Allan Clow and Freda Newton left the meeting.

Audrey MacIver and James Turner joined the meeting.

The Inner Moray Firth Area Manager presented a project amendment paper requesting that HIE increase its contribution to the development of Inverness Castle, which is the flagship project of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal, from £2m to £2.863m. The overall project costs were projected to rise *[part of sentence removed in the interests of the effective conduct of public affairs, and due to commercial sensitivity].*

The project was led by the Highland Council, which had requested additional support from HIE towards rising project costs *[part of sentence removed in the interests of the effective conduct of public affairs, and due to commercial sensitivity].* Increased HIE support would mitigate against any further delay to maintain a planned opening of this major national visitor attraction in summer 2025 and help avoid further cost escalation.

In response to a question, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that Inverness Castle had been profiled as a project in HIE's capital budget, which had capacity to support this request. The Chief Executive observed that HIE's initial approval represented a relatively modest proportion of total costs and provided assurance that HIE did not expect to be asked to contribute any further funding.

The Board approved the request to contribute a further £863,000 of top-sliced HIE capital funding to the Inverness Castle project, to be spent in financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Chris Roberts
Head of Communications
21 January 2025