

Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council Response - Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club Car Park

Decision: Following discussions, Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council has voted to agree to support the planned Common Good Lease Disposal of the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club Car Park, as detailed in the Common Good disposal of lease document presented by Highland Council with the below comments noted.

Comments:

Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council agree to support the planned Common Good lease plans as proposed in the Common Good Consultation plans. The Fortrose Golf club requires the use of a car park by necessity and is a key facility for local and social functions which offers local employment and contributes to the local economy.

What are your views on the Proposal utilising common good land?

The proposal is missing key information regarding the maintenance, upkeep and long term benefit to the local community and as such, We advise that the long term length of the lease of 30 years has been the cause of serious debate and whilst aware of the potential commercial security this can bring, the length as proposed is only acceptable to the Community Council with the promise of 5 year reviews on the full annual rental amount and the conditions of the lease. This is in conjunction with the community to be provided the opportunity to present any concerns as part of the review process. We also propose the inclusion of Key Performance Indicators to allow for a defined measurement of success to be conducted at each five-year review.

Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council ask that the full lease and market rent details be published in full immediately and that the details regarding provisions to carry out upkeep and continued maintenance on the site are made available as soon as commercial sensitivities allow.

Do you have any views on potential benefits of the Proposal?

Regards the Highland Council's own responsibilities that are linked to the Common Good disposal lease for both sites, whilst the Campsite and Golf Course are long standing businesses that benefit the local economy, the increased traffic and access requirements for large vehicles, campervans and caravans does cause concern to residents, we request that in conjunction with the Local Place Plan, serious action is taken to ensure that tourism in the area is well managed and roads are viable for this traffic load along with traffic calming measures being installed on the main access routes to the two sites as part of the overarching proposal regarding the disposal of the lease. Alongside this, continued investment, protection and maintenance of footpaths, the public right of way across the sites and access must be continued and ensured over the total length of the lease. We expect the Highland Council will make a continued

long-term investment backed by funding to ensure the protection of the seafront and improved access for all, including disabled beach access.

Do you have any issues or concerns arising from the Proposal?

There has been extreme disappointment in the consultation process that has been put in place for this lease extension proposal and the manner in which it has been run by the Highland Council. The process in which the Common Good publication and administration has not been transparent and we would like to register our deep unhappiness with the process and raise grave concerns regarding the legality of the consultation process as it has been carried out. The lack of specific details, rental income amounts and detailed real benefits of the Common Good lease disposal for both sites from the initial publication of the proposal has led to distrust that the best interests for the Common Good fund and the local community were not taken into consideration, and it has taken numerous correspondence and discussions to alleviate only some of these concerns in the weeks since this was first published.

We thank the Black Isle Ward Councillors for their involvement and in their communications with Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council showing they have been open with the local community whilst being severely curtailed in what information could be presented due to supposed commercial sensitivities. The involvement of the officers involved in this process is noted and whilst we have received responses to certain information requested from certain officers in the Ward Management and Common Good teams, the issue with the lack of local publication at the affected sites and at the local library and town hall has been a negative note on this which has only hampered knowledge and publication of this issue locally. Again, due to the way in which the Highland Council has carried out this consultation, we believe that local residents have been failed by this consultation process. The lack of engagement and explanations as to why this lease was not put out to tender has also been raised as a concern.

Do you have any additional comments?

We would expect the Highland Council would support the request for the community to be involved in any future significant proposed changes to both sites to ensure these are protected for the benefit of the Common Good and local community. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council notes the diversity of opinion within the community over the Highland Council's approach to the statutory consultation, but notes the unity of purpose in seeking the best outcome for the community, and protection and maximisation of Common Good funds for use within the Black Isle and to the specific benefit of Fortrose and Rosemarkie residents, visitors and businesses alike. Given that the Common Good fund is expected to benefit from a financial gain following the Disposal of Lease, we would demand improved access for local organisations to apply

for use of these funds to the benefit of the local community and the way this fund is accessed and funds provided to be revised and improved. We expect action on this matter and for details on how this decision will benefit the local community to be published as soon as possible.