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FOCUS ON IMPROVING VIEWS AT INVERNESS CASTLE

Plans have been drawn up to significantly improve the grounds around Inverness Castle – and provide much better views of the city landmark as well as from it. The proposed environmental improvements – costing an estimated £10,000 - are part of a programme of works earmarked by the City of Inverness and Area Committee of The Highland Council, in association with the City Partnership.

A recent independent tree survey identified a number of trees as being in a poor condition, many of which are targeted in the proposed removal of 25 trees from the banks of the castle, overlooking River Ness. Also planned is ground reinstatement works and replacement planting. Shrub areas will also be selectively cut back.

A consultation exercise is shortly to be undertaken and will involve organisations such as the Inverness Civic Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Courts Service. A bat survey is shortly to be undertaken to establish any site interest and recommend any mitigation measures.

A public display of the proposals will also be available at the new Inverness City Partnership offices, located on Bank Street (previously Art TM Gallery). The display will run for one week commencing on Monday 27 September. In addition, ‘drop-in’ sessions will be available on the afternoons of both Monday and Tuesday (27 and 28 September), between 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm, when the project’s Arboricultural Assistant, Mary MacPherson, will be available to answer any questions.

It is anticipated that the environmental improvements, including the removal of the trees, will be carried out during December/January. Due to the location and difficulty of site working, temporary closure of Castle Road may be required. Any such measure will be kept to a minimum as far as possible.

Provost William Smith, Chairman of the City of Inverness and Area Committee of The Highland Council, said: "The Castle is a prominent feature in the city and is a natural location from which to enjoy the river and the wider views of Inverness. Our project will greatly improve views of the castle and from the castle and is consistent with the ambitions of both Inverness City Vision and greenINverness, who share the aim of improving the Castle environs for future generations to enjoy."

Further proposals for the castle grounds are expected as part of a rolling programme of environmental improvements.

Anyone requiring additional information or with queries should contact The Highland Council’s Arboricultural Assistant, Ms Mary MacPherson on 01463 702525 or mary.macpherson@highland.gov.uk

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