

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2012

Agenda Item	9
Report No	PED 7/12

INNER MORAY FIRTH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Report by Director of Planning and Development

SUMMARY

This report sets out the content of the first, statutory draft of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan - the Main Issues Report. Members are asked to approve this content as a basis for public consultation.

1. Context

- 1.1 At its November 2011 meeting, Committee examined and noted progress towards producing the Main Issues Report (MIR) of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (hereinafter referred to as the "Plan"). This MIR is essentially a development site options draft. It must contain the Council's initial preferences and reasonable alternatives.
- 1.2 Members will recall the Plan's complementary relationship with the Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), which sets out the strategic context, vision and general planning policies for the area. The Plan provides the local detail for large towns and villages by providing site-specific boundaries and (at a later stage) developer requirements.
- 1.3 The preceding HwLDP agenda item explains that this **strategic context has now been set**. Pleasingly, very few significant changes have been made by the Reporters and therefore the "knock-on" effects for the Plan are limited. Perhaps most importantly the population projections, housing targets, vision and spatial strategy for the Inner Moray Firth have been reaffirmed. Many of the changes were commended by the Council and/or offer better clarity and consistency. The recommended preferences in Appendix 1 accord with this finalised strategic context.
- 1.4 Certain Inner Moray Firth headlines are worthy of note:

Retention of: the Council's housing in the countryside policy and Hinterland boundary around the Inner Moray Firth towns; the prospect of food retail at Inverness College/Longman Core, and; the West Link dependency for any further development at Ness-side and Charleston.

Deletion/Rejection of: a large housing site at Culloden Moor; major expansion at Tore; the Vision Map's reference to a waste facility at Invergordon and; the Council's 25% settlement expansion policy.

Amendments to: expansion sites at Sandown and Delnies making them more interdependent in terms of design, servicing and timing; Ardersier including the East of Milton of Connage site; Nairn South adding more explicit requirements for a rail overbridge, link road and sawmill expansion safeguard/buffer areas; Cawdor offering less specific support for development (housing numbers and phasing deleted), and; Nigg defining a more focussed boundary.

2. Main Issues Report Content

- 2.1 Appendix 1 contains the recommended MIR text and mapping. More legible mapping is available via the "zoomable" online agenda papers and via paper copies in the Members' Library. Further non-material graphics, formatting and explanatory improvements will be added prior to publication to make the document more readable and attractive. Technical language has been kept to a minimum or explained. Members will recall that a MIR is to be a streamlined, map based document.
- 2.2 The strategic content - vision, spatial strategy, housing requirement targets and general policies - is copied or linked directly from the HwLDP as amended post Examination.
- 2.3 The local detail is in the form of main settlement maps which show development site options, areas to be safeguarded from development, and a recommended settlement boundary. Recommended site preferences are shown hatched.
- 2.4 All community and landowner site suggestions have been included where these lie within or close to a main settlement (as defined and listed in the Plan).

The site options have been sourced from:

- communities, developers and landowners through the Call for Sites consultation process;
- incomplete sites "rolled forward" from adopted local plans and the HwLDP;
- sites suggested by officers (where there is an inadequate land supply and no suggestions have come forward).

The only suggested site that has been rejected at this stage is a 1,000 house new village proposal at Clephanton which is of such a strategic scale that it should have been considered through the HwLDP process and has been assessed as having severe sustainability disadvantages given the lack of community and servicing infrastructure at this location. A few adopted local plan sites have not been "rolled forward" where there is evidence that they cannot be delivered - e.g. a ransom issue has existed for several years.

- 2.5 The Council's initial recommended preferences are based upon:
 - the views of local Ward members;
 - key agency comments and those of Council officers (based on constraint and infrastructure capacity information);

- the likely environmental effects of each development (see Strategic Environmental Assessment section below).

Appendix 1 contains a brief, textual summary of the principal advantages and disadvantages of each site and of the key development issues for the settlement. These provide some justification for the Council's preferences but are also intended to stimulate debate during the public consultation process - i.e. at this stage the community will be encouraged to compare and contrast options rather than simply oppose or support a single site.

- 2.6 The site and policy options have also been informed by a *Monitoring Statement*, which assesses changes in the characteristics of an area and the success or otherwise of previous planning policies. The headline trends and implications for policy were reported to November Committee and the full Monitoring Report has been available to Members in their library and via the Council's web site. It will be published at the same time as the MIR.
- 2.7 Although many sites are already allocated or have a permission, there are several **totally "new", recommended as preferred, allocations**.

Nairn area

Auldearn, West of Meadowfield, housing; Nairn, Kingsteps housing; Nairn, Househill, community / mixed use; Nairn, Achareidh, housing.

Inverness area (outwith City and City Fringe)

Beauly, Wellhouse Farm, housing; Beauly, Croyard Road, housing; Kirkhill, Wardlaw Road, housing; Kirkhill, Groam Farm East, mixed use; Tomatin, North of Railway Viaduct, Housing; Tomatin, Between Distillery and A9, community and industry; Inchmore, West of Inn, housing; Inchmore, West of Former Hall, housing; Foyers, Mains Farm, housing; Foyers, Above Park Terrace, housing; Fort Augustus, Caravan Site, housing; Dores, North of Mill Croft, housing; Dores, South of Hall, housing; Dores, North of Playing Field, community; Ardersier, Milton of Connage, mixed use; Ardersier, North of Cromal Terrace, mixed use; Drumnadrochit, Pitkerrald Road, housing; Drumnadrochit, South of Fire Station, mixed use; Drumnadrochit, South of Coiltie Crescent, mixed use; Drumnadrochit, North of Shinty Pitch, community; Castle Stuart, mixed use.

Inverness City and City Fringe

Scottish Agricultural College, housing; Knocknagael, housing, community; North of Gaelic School, community; Balloan Road, mixed use; Prison, housing; Harbour, industry; Burnett Road, community; Cameron Barracks, mixed use; Longman landfill, mixed use (largely industry); Welltown of Easter Leys (housing); North of Culloden Academy, community; Murray Road, housing.

Further to the Council's Housing and Social Work Committee's decision, temporary stop sites for travellers have also been indicated at the sites of existing unauthorised encampments at: Auchnahillin (Daviot), Old A96 (below Stratton), Torvean Quarry and Dalcross Industrial Estate (two sites).

Ross and Cromarty area

Tain, Burgage Farm, mixed use; Tain, Land South of cemetery, community; Portmahomack, Land North of Knockshortie, housing; Kildary, Land at Logie Quarry, business/tourism; Barbaraville, Land to South of B817, business/tourism; Invergordon, Land to North of Invergordon Academy, mixed use; Land to North of Inverbreckie Industrial Estate, mixed use; Invergordon, Land North of High Street, mixed use; Invergordon, Land South of High Street; Alness, Land at Achnagarron, community; Alness, Land at Achnagarron, business; Alness Land at Achnagarron, housing; Dingwall, Land West of Dingwall Business Park, business; Dingwall, Land South of Macrae Crescent, housing; Dingwall, Land West of Mill Street, housing; Maryburgh, Brahan Estate, mixed use; Conon Bridge, Land South of School Road, mixed use; Tore, Land North of A832, mixed use; Munloch, Land South of Millbank Road Car Park, mixed use; Avoch, Land South of A832, housing; North Kessock, Bellfield Farm, business/tourism; Muir of Ord, Land South of The Cairns, mixed use; Muir of Ord, Land South of Corrie Road, housing; Muir of Ord, Land to East of Mansfield Showground, industrial.

- 2.8 Other local detail is included. A new general policy, *Other Settlements* is suggested to provide criteria against which to judge development proposals in the smaller villages which don't benefit from a village map and detailed consideration. The housing in the countryside, *Hinterland* around the Inner Moray Firth towns boundary is also to be debated through the Plan process. Appendix 1 recommends that the existing boundary is preferred within the MIR but that suggestions to both expand and contract it are tabled to encourage discussion. Similarly, the Plan process will allow an opportunity to fine tune the boundaries of the Council's *Special Landscape Areas*. Appendix 1 recommends one change and alternative boundaries are included to prompt debate and comment.
- 2.9 Members will also appreciate that there is an important interdependency between programmed *transport improvements* and the Plan's allocations. Options for the West Link, East Link and the A96 improvements have all been considered in assessing the site options. The road alignment options (as best known at the time of publication of the MIR) will be shown (greyed out) on the MIR mapping to provide context. However, these road proposals are subject to separate consultation and decision making processes and therefore the MIR will not invite comment on them.

3 Proposed Consultation Arrangements

- 3.1 It is suggested that one public, drop-in exhibition and workshop be held for each of the main settlements listed in Appendix 1. Proposed consultation events, times and venues are listed in Appendix 2. Dates are to be confirmed.
- 3.2 Part of the proposed consultation, which is provisionally scheduled from late February to at least the end of April, will overlap with the election purdah period. Accordingly, it is suggested that the workshops are officer led but attendees are determined by open invite.

4. Future Stages

- 4.1 Comments received from the consultation will be reported back to Committee in late summer / autumn for a final Council decision on which site and policy options to keep or reject. Thereafter, the Plan is re-issued for formal objections and Scottish Government amendment via the Examination process.

5. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 5.1 All local development plans must be subject to SEA. The Plan has completed its scoping stage and the Environmental Report has been prepared (available in the Members' Library in Committee draft form) and will be published alongside the MIR. The consultation authorities' comments have been considered in assessing the environmental effects of the Plan and in shaping the Council's initial preferences.

6. Resource Implications

- 6.1 The proposed consultation process above, given the scale of the Plan area, will involve costs in terms of venue hire and consultation document production. However, the concise format will reduce the cost per plan produced compared to previous local plans. An allowance for the process has been made within the existing Planning and Development Service budget.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening report has been undertaken which has found that a full Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not required. The report will be submitted to the Council's Equalities Monitoring Group and will be available on the Council's website.

8. Climate Change Implications

- 8.1 The Plan requires a full SEA which addresses climate change implications.

9. Legal and Risk Implications

- 9.1 All local development plans are subject to potential challenge in the courts but on matters of procedure rather than policy. The correct legislative procedures will be followed to progress the Plan which will minimise the risk and implications of any challenge.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 (i) Committee is asked to approve Appendix 1 as the material content of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan: Main Issues Report.
(ii) Committee is asked to note the proposed consultation arrangements as outlined in the report and Appendix 2.

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Date: 10 January 2012
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Background papers:

1. Highland wide Local Development Plan: Reporters' Report: via
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/HWLDPExamination.htm>

Appendix 1: MAIN ISSUES REPORT (see separate document)

Appendix 2: PROPOSED CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

No.	Settlement / Urban District:	PUBLIC EXHIBITION Venue (2-6.30pm)	EVENING MEETING / WORKSHOP Venue (7.30-9.30pm)	Date (TBC)
<u>Urban Districts</u>				
1	Inverness City Centre & Longman	Eastgate Shopping Centre	Town Hall, Town House	Late February to April 2012
2	Inverness West of River	James Cameron Community Centre, Dalneigh	Charleston Academy	
3	Inverness River to A9	Inshes Church, Inshes Retail Park, Sir Walter Scott Drive, Inverness, IV2 3TW	Inverness Royal Academy	
4	Inverness East of A9 (including City Fringe)	Smithton Hall	Cullooden Academy	
5	Nairn Including Auldearn	Community Centre	Court House	
<u>Main Towns / Villages / Major Allocations Outwith Settlements</u>				
6	Ardersier / Whiteness	Ardersier Old School Hall	Ardersier Old School Hall	Late February to April 2012
7	Beauly	Phipps Hall	Phipps Hall	
8	Croy, Tornagrain, Inverness Airport, Morayhill, Castle Stuart	Croy Public Hall	Croy Public Hall	
9	Dores	Dores Village Hall	Dores Village Hall	
10	Drumnadrochit	Craigmonie Centre, Glen Urquhart High School	Craigmonie Centre, Glen Urquhart High School	
11	Fort Augustus	Fort Augustus Memorial Hall	Fort Augustus Memorial Hall	
12	Foyers	Primary School	Primary School	

13	Kiltarlity	Kiltarlity Community Hall, Broomhill, Kiltarlity, Beauly, Inverness, IV4 7JH	Kiltarlity Community Hall, Broomhill, Kiltarlity, Beauly, Inverness, IV4 7JH	Late February to April 2012
14	Kirkhill	Kirkhill Community Centre	Kirkhill Community Centre	
15	Tomatin	Strathdearn Village Hall. Tomatin	Strathdearn Village Hall. Tomatin	
16	Alness	Averon Centre	Averon Centre	
17	Avoch	Avoch Community Centre	Avoch Community Centre	
18	Conon Bridge	Primary School Community Room	Sports Hall Next to Primary School	
19	Contin	Contin Community Centre	Contin Community Centre	
20	Cromarty	Victoria Hall	Victoria Hall	
21	Culbokie	Findon Hall	Findon Hall	
22	Dingwall	Dingwall Town Hall	Dingwall Town Hall	
23	Evanton	Evanton Sports Hall	Evanton Sports Hall	
24	Fortrose / Rosemarkie / Ness	Black Isle Leisure Centre, Fortrose	Black Isle Leisure Centre	
25	Invergordon	Invergordon Arts Centre/Town Hall	Invergordon Arts Centre/Town Hall	
26	Milton / Kildary	Primary School (Community Room)	Primary School (Community Room)	
27	Maryburgh	Maryburgh Amenities Centre	Maryburgh Amenities Centre	

28	Muir of Ord	Muir of Ord Hall, Seaforth Road, Muir of Ord	Muir of Ord Hall, Seaforth Road, Muir of Ord	Late February to April 2012
29	Munlochy	Munlochy Village Hall	Munlochy Village Hall	
30	North Kessock	North Kessock Community Centre	North Kessock Community Centre	
31	Portmahomack	Carnegie Hall	Carnegie Hall	
32	Seaboard Villages (Balintore)	Seaboard Memorial Hall, IV1 3XW	Seaboard Memorial Hall, IV1 3XW	
33	Strathpeffer	Strathpeffer Community Centre	Strathpeffer Community Centre	
34	Tain	Duthac Centre Shandwick Street, Tain, IV19 1BQ	Duthac Centre Shandwick Street, Tain, IV19 1BQ	
35	Tore	Tore Hall	Tore Hall	
36	Cawdor	Cawdor Hall	Cawdor Hall	
<u>Other Major Allocations Outwith Settlements</u>				
37	Nigg	Nigg Hall	Nigg Hall	Late February to April 2012