

**Highland wide Local Development Plan - Main Issues Report
Consultation Summary and Actions Sheet**

Reference Number:	HWLDP-MIR-210
Organisation/Individual:	Philip Hodges

Action:

Immediate Response Required	
Meeting required with Respondent	
Issue for Area Local Development Plan	
Further Information Required	
Other (Please Specify)	

If no box ticked - issues raised will be dealt with in preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Issues Raised in Response:

Purpose of Main Issues Report	
NPF2 for Scotland	
Vision for the Highlands	
Inverness and A96	
The A96 Corridor	
Phasing of Development	
Developer Contributions	
East Inverness	
Nairn	
Tornagrain	
Smaller Settlements in A96	
Caithness and North Sutherland	
Easter Ross and Nigg	
Development of Local Centres	
Wider Countryside and Fragile Areas	
Population and Housing	
Housing in the Countryside	
Affordable Housing	
Planning for an Ageing Population	
Gypsies/Travellers	
Retailing	
Developer Contributions	
Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	

Previously used Land	
Wild Land	
Water Environment	
Renewable Energy	
Flooding	
Waste Management	
Air Quality	
Sustainable Design	
Business and Industrial Land	
Accessibility and Transport	x
Agricultural Land	x
Subdivision of Existing Crofts	
Allocation of Inbye Land	
New Crofting Township	
Small Scale New Crofts	
Coastal Development	
Forestry and Woodland	
Minerals	
Open Space and Physical Activity	
Access to the Outdoors	
Comments on Consultation Process (+ve)	
Comments on Consultation Process (-ve)	

Key:

Background	Spatial Strategy	Policy Options	Consultation
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Notes:

Encourage rail expansion, especially for freight
 Light railway system for Inverness
 Policy needed for supplying electrical charge points for cars

Action Sheet Completed by:	SH
Date:	10/12/09

Simon Hindson

From: Philip Hodges [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 November 2009 11:32
To: devplans
Subject: Highland Wide Development Plan

I am responding to the consultation document posted on your website, responses due by tomorrow 1700, Monday 9 November.

Whilst I appreciate that not many towns and settlements in the Highlands are connected to rail, the major ones, Inverness, Nairn, Fort William, Dingwall, Golspie, Brora and Helmsdale, Wick and Thurso, are connected. Indeed it may be that their success has been assured by the existence of rail links.

I regret the lack of any over-arching planning policy by the Council to encourage the use of rail where possible and to encourage central government and Transport for Scotland to expand rail services, return to twin track lines singled in the last 50 years and to encourage electrification of at least the Highland main line from Perth to Inverness (and back to Stirling and Edinburgh). After all, Scotland and the Highlands in particular generate large quantities of electricity from hydro and, increasingly, wind power, that should be used to benefit the highland communities and enable the expansion that seems to be a main plank of your plan for the future without depending on fossil fuels and without covering in concrete or tarmac significant further areas of quality farmland.

There need to be new stations on the lines into Inverness from the south, east and north, to encourage travellers to and around Inverness to use rail, not cars. Existing 2-car diesel multiple units are overcrowded in peak periods, itself discouraging rail use.

What about encouraging the transfer of freight from road to rail, especially from the central belt to Inverness? Stobart Rail runs such a service for Tesco. ASDA are about to start a similar service. If there are fewer massive and slow-moving lorries on the A9, maybe the full dualling of the road becomes less vital. The rail resource is there. The Council should seek to encourage business to use it.

What about a light rail system for east Inverness, to the airport, Smithton, Culloden and Balloch as well as the Retail Park, the hospital and the new UHI campus at Beechwood? A simple twin-track loop could serve all these transport-generating points. Modern rapid-transit vehicles would cope readily with the gradients needed to reach the Smithton, Culloden and Balloch and provide a sustainable transport infrastructure that could be extended to the west of the city too to serve Longmans and the housing areas in the west.

The Council's Plan does not appear to face the fact of dwindling oil supplies over the next 20 to 50 years. An expanded roads infrastructure, whilst attractive in the short term, may prove a massive white elephant in the future.

Or does the Council have faith that electric or hydrogen powered vehicles will become viable over that period? If so, where is the Council's strategy for the supply of charging points for electric vehicles and the provision of hydrogen refilling points?

Nowhere in the strategy for expanding Inverness to the east is there any acknowledgment that such expansion will inevitably be on good quality agricultural land, some of it farmed organically, especially around the airport.

Nowhere does the Plan acknowledge that, as the cost of transporting food long distances both within the UK and from all corners of the earth to fill our supermarket shelves increases to unacceptable levels, farming land will be needed to feed us all and should be cherished.

Philip Hodges

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