

Nairn Active Travel Master Plan

Project	Nairn Active Travel Master Plan	Date	4 October 2010
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Author	Pamela Gidney\ Jonathan Plant\ Michael Naysmith		

1 *Introduction*

1.1 The Highland Council is developing a series of Active Travel Master Plans for each of the main settlements within the area. The purpose of the master plans is to help establish a network for walking and cycling and access to public transport. The master plans will identify a core active travel network in each location which will form part of the Local Plan and serve as a framework for future development proposals and discussions with developers regarding financial contribution and investment in relation to transport improvements in the future.

1.2 In April 2008 Highland Council appointed Halcrow Group Limited to undertake the preparation of an Active Travel Transport Master Plan for Nairn. .

1.3 Figures 1 and 2 issued with this statement illustrate the potential for a core route network for active travel and public transport subject to further discussion, consultations and necessary feasibility/ environmental studies.

1.4 The note has been updated to reflect comments received from The Highland Council in July 2010. In addition, Paragraphs 4.7 to 4.12 have subsequently been added in August 2010 to reflect recent changes to the planning system and subsequent development of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HWLDP). Figures 1 and 2 have also been updated in order to reflect the up to date position with regards to planning applications which were pending in 2008.

2 *Background*

2.1 Nairn is a principal administrative centre in Highland with a population of approximately 8400¹. The town also serves the larger rural hinterland of

1 <http://www.scrol.gov.uk/scrol/browser/profile.jsp?profile=Population&mainArea=Nairn&mainLevel=Locality>

Nairnshire (total population approximately 11,000). The A96 and north coast railway are part of the national transport network and provide direct links from Nairn to Inverness, Aberdeen and Moray.

2.2 Nairn is a popular commuter and retirement base. In terms of the future development of Nairn, priorities include strengthening the position of the town as a focus for employment, services and tourism. It is envisaged this will be achieved primarily through regeneration of the town centre, the development of a business park and improved tourism and recreation facilities.

3 *Methodology*

3.1 To inform the development of an Active Travel Master Plan for Nairn a number of tasks were undertaken, including:

- A review of relevant policy documentation, including Highland Structure Plan (2001); Nairnshire Local Plan (2000); Aberdeen to Inverness Corridor Study and A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework;
- Identification of significant zones for future development, including residential; shopping; business; industrial and parking;
- Site visits to gather information in relation to the existing transport network in Nairn and establish a baseline in terms of routes, facilities, signage and identify barriers to active travel, interchange and public transport; and
- Liaison with Highland Council officers to identify existing transport issues and problems in Nairn and potential solutions.

3.2 For the purposes of background an overview of the existing policy context is set out below.

4 *Policy Context*

4.1 The Highland Structure Plan (2001) sets out the strategic planning framework for the Highland region with the overall aim “*To promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of the people of Highland.*”

4.2 Against the background of the Structure Plan, the Nairnshire Local Plan (2000) identifies a number of priorities specific to Nairn, including:

- A96 Bypass for the town ultimately, upgrading transport links and a network of segregated and pedestrian routes;
- Land for housing and related community facilities;
- A new supermarket and more specialist town centre retailing;
- A business park located in close proximity to the A96 and Inverness Airport and further sites for service and large scale industry.

4.3 Both the Structure Plan and Nairnshire Local Plan recognise the A96 Corridor is a strategic route integral to the continued growth of the Highlands. In September 2007 the A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework was approved by Highland Council Planning and Environment Development Committee and this sets out future development proposals for settlements located along the A96 corridor.

4.4 In respect of Nairn, key developments identified as part of the framework include:

- Support for the regeneration of Nairn Town Centre;
- By-pass commencing at Drumdivan, crossing at Howford and rejoining the A96 at Auchnacloich;
- Appropriate structural landscaping;
- Accessible business/industrial allocations in the east;
- Two new places at Nairn West and Nairn South, each with a local centre;
- Integrated environmental and heritage assets focussed on the River Nairn and the golf course/development to the West; and
- A country park on the east bank of the River Nairn.

4.5 The specific outcomes of the framework are outlined in further detail in Table 4.1.

Residential Units	4,629 @ 1,542 high; 2,873 medium and 214 low density
Population	9,700 people
Business	78,000m ²
Industry	50,000m ²
Employment	5,000 jobs
Retail	7,000m ²

Centre(s)	2 District Centres of 11,000m ² and 4,000m ²
Education	18,000m ² of schools
Leisure	2 x 50 bed hotels; 1 x 100 bed hotel
Open Space	Circa 165ha (including Country Park)

Table 4.1: A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework – Outcomes for Nairn.

- 4.6 In summary, the Nairn Development Framework provides for a population of approximately 10,000 accommodated in over 4,600 homes (primarily high density), over 5,000 new jobs and wider facilities, including 4 primary schools and a new secondary school.
- 4.7 The planning system in Scotland is now undergoing significant change and modernisation with a new system of Development Planning in the process of being implemented under the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008. Through the new system, the existing Development Plan System comprising the aforementioned Structure Plans and Local Plans will eventually be replaced by a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and Local Plan once the new Plans are adopted under the new system.
- 4.8 The Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HWLDP) sets out the strategic land use planning context for the area over the next 20 years. A Draft Vision and Spatial Strategy were presented to Committee in May 2010.
- 4.9 The overarching vision is *“By 2030 the Highlands will be one of Europe’s leading regions. We will have created sustainable communities balancing population growth and economic development across the area, and have built a fairer and healthier Highlands.”*
- 4.10 The HWLD recognises that whilst the delivery of the A96 Corridor Framework remains an important long-term aspiration, one of the main changes to be brought forward by the spatial strategy which will form the core content of the HWLDP is the scaling back in housing allocations to reflect likely needs over the next 20 years with significant reductions in land allocated during the 2011 – 2031 period around a number of settlements, including Nairn.
- 4.11 With regards to Nairn, a review of housing demand and need undertaken to inform the HWLDP concluded the very long term aspirations identified in the

A96 Corridor Framework do not need to be brought forward at this time. Taken together, the land identified in Nairn has the capacity to deliver housing across all sites identified in Table 4.2.

	Years 1-10		2011-21	Years 11-20		2021-31
	2011-16	2016-21		2021-2026	2026-2031	
Nairn Local Plan (Town) + major sites	380	186	566	0	0	0
Wider Nairn HMA & windfall	121	121	242	121	121	242
Sub-total	501	307	808	121	121	242
A96 - Nairn Delnies	140	160	300	0	0	0
A96 - Nairn South	120	210	330	300	300	600
A96 - Cawdor	85	70	80	65	65	130
Sub-total	345	440	785	365	365	730
Total - Nairn HMA	846	747	1593	486	486	972

Figures expressed as house units

Table 4.2: Nairn Housing Proposals (Highland Wide Local Development Plan, August 2010).

4.12

In summary, the key housing sites identified in the HWLDP include: -

- **Lochloy** – this site is subject to existing planning permissions and will continue to provide much of the immediate housing supply in Nairn;
- **Sandown** – level of development will be commensurate with the aspirations of elected members. Any access solution must also relate to the Delnies site to the west and provide for unfettered access to that development and shared access arrangements as far as possible;
- **Delnies** – this site will provide a means to meet housing demands in Nairn over the period 2011 – 2021. The site will be restricted to 300 units; and
- **Nairn South** – the development of a Phase 1 (mainly residential with localised employment opportunities) in the period 2011 – 2016 subject to further assessment of the transport and infrastructure requirements. Later phases of development would require major infrastructure improvements.

4.13

The full HWLDP reported to Committee for consideration in August 2010.

5

Existing Transport Network

5.1

As detailed in Section 3 a review has been undertaken of the transport network in Nairn to establish the existing baseline provision.

Cycling

- 5.2 National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 links with Nairn from the south via the A939. The route changes to off-road from Grantown Road and extends north adjacent to the River Nairn before rejoining the local road network at Maggot Road/Lochloy Road.
- 5.3 Local routes within Nairn also provide linkages between communities, residential areas and local facilities as well as links to the NCN. However, the railway line and A96 currently act as a barrier to the cycling network because of the limited number of suitable crossing points at present.

Walking

- 5.4 Within Nairn standard footpaths and pavements are provided on both sides of the A96 and also on the High Street. Signalised junctions with crossing facilities are provided at A96/Leopold Street; north of Falconer's Lane and A96/Lochloy Road. A pedestrian crossing facility is also provided to the west of St Ninian Road/Harbour Street. The NCN provides off road walking facilities together with local links such as the riverside footpath between Nairn and Cawdor.
- 5.5 Similar to the cycle network, the railway line and A96 currently act as a barrier to the walking network because of the limited number of suitable crossing points at present.
- 5.6 In February 2008 Highland Council published the Inverness and Nairn Draft Core Paths Plan for public consultation over a 12 week period to 5th May 2008. The purpose of the plan is to detail a framework to provide the public with reasonable access in the area through the identification of core paths.
- 5.7 The aforementioned Draft Core Paths Plan includes proposals for upgrades to both existing paths and also additional links to the existing network.

Bus

- 5.8 Nairn is served by both local and inter-urban bus services. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the services in operation which include a local town service (Queens Park and Nairn Hospital or BoathPark to Tradespark) operating at a frequency of every 30 minutes Monday to Friday and hourly

on a Saturday. Together local and inter-urban bus services operate at a 20 minute frequency on the A96 corridor.

5.9 In addition, a dedicated bus service operates between Nairn and Inverness Airport and the Nairn area Dial-a-Bus service operates on all public roads within Nairnshire, and also to/from Croy and Ardersier except where journeys could either reasonably be made by the Nairn town bus service or by inter-urban services along the A96 corridor. The service operates 0800 to 1700 Monday to Saturday and bookings are required by 1800 the day before travel.

5.10 Nairn Bus Station is located on the eastbound carriageway of the A96. The station is small, comprising two stands incorporating bus shelters and timetable information at each. Outside of the bus station the provision of shelters and timetable information at bus stops within Nairn is not widespread.

Operator	Service	Frequency	
		Peak	Off-Peak
Stagecoach	10 – Inverness to Aberdeen	Hourly	Hourly
Stagecoach	11 – Inverness - Airport – Nairn - Elgin	Hourly	Hourly
Stagecoach	20/20A – Nairn Circular	Every 30 mins (Mon to Fri) Hourly – Sat	Every 30 mins (Mon to Fri) Hourly – Sat
Forres Taxis	252 – Cawdor to Nairn	AM and PM service (schooldays only)	AM and PM service (schooldays only)
Forres Taxis	Nairn Area Dial-a-Bus	0800 – 1700 (Mon to Sat)	0800 – 1700 (Mon to Sat)

Table 5.1: Summary of Bus Services in Nairn

Rail

5.11 Nairn is situated on the Aberdeen to Inverness rail line and served by 11 trains Monday to Saturday and 7 trains on Sundays. The rail station is located approximately a 5 minute walk from the High Street and includes a

car park, ticket office, waiting area and cycling parking facilities. The station is also equipped with a real-time passenger information system.

Road

5.12 The A96 trunk road corridor passes through Nairn and provides links to Inverness to the west and Aberdeen to the east. This is a multi-modal corridor serving both local and long distance traffic. In addition, a network of A and B roads provide links from Nairn to surrounding settlements, including Croy and Cawdor to the west and Auldearn to the east.

5.13 To the south of Nairn the A939 provides links to Grantown-on-Spey and the A95 and A9.

Parking

5.14 There are 7 main car parks in Nairn as detailed below.

Car Park	Spaces
Bus Station	22
Watsons Place	45 (39 + 6 Disabled)
Central	64
Library	69 (65 + 4 Disabled)
Falconers Lane	31 (29 + 2 Disabled)
Somerfield	31 (24 + 7 Disabled)

Table 5.2: Off-street parking in Nairn

5.15 There is also on street parking (maximum stay one hour) at the locations detailed below.

On Street Parking	Spaces
High Street (NW side)	18
High Street (SE side)	13
Leopold Street (N side)	10
Gordon Street (SW side)	7
Cawdor Street (W side)	17
Lodgehill Road (NE side)	8
Millbank Street (NE side)	16
Queen Street (SW side)	12

Table 5.3: On-street parking in Nairn

6 Suggested Improvements to the Existing Transport Network

6.1 As noted, the activities listed in Section 3 have sought to identify key issues and problems associated with the transport network in Nairn and potential solutions to inform the development of a Transport Master Plan for Nairn.

6.2 In summary, key issues relate to:

- Facilities for promoting active travel within Nairn town centre and the wider area, including pedestrian crossings; cycle parking; cycle lanes/routes and signage;
- The rail line and A96 currently act as barriers to walking and cycling because of the limited number of suitable crossing points;
- Public transport infrastructure, in particular facilities for buses and the quality of the bus station;
- Access arrangements for all modes in the High Street area;
- Conflict between long distance and local traffic on the A96 corridor through Nairn and associated congestion.

6.3 Figures 1 and 2 outline potential improvements to address the key issues identified and improve the transport network in Nairn. In support of Figures 1 and 2 further narrative is provided in Table 6.1. In addition, Table 6.2 outlines potential transport requirements in respect of future development sites. It is anticipated a similar standard of provision and related infrastructure would be required of future applications coming forward through the development planning process.

7 *Summary and Conclusions*

7.1 As noted, the activities listed in Section 3 have sought to identify key issues and problems associated with the transport network and potential improvements to form the basis of a sustainable Transport Master Plan for Nairn for further consideration and development.

7.2 A baseline of the existing transport network has been established and this information together with site visits and discussions with Highland Council officials has informed the development of the potential improvements presented in the following table.

Table 6.1: Nairn Transport Master Plan – Problems and Potential Improvements

Problems	Potential Improvements
<p>Town Centre – as part of the regeneration of Nairn Town centre consideration is required of the existing traffic management arrangements and potential opportunities for improvement as part of the overall regeneration.</p> <p>Existing pedestrian crossing facilities on A96 are not on desire lines to/from High Street and to/from Bus Station.</p> <p>Bus station of poor quality - there is no signage either west or eastbound from Academy Street to the bus station which itself comprises two stands, each with a shelter and timetable information. There are no CCTV or lighting facilities. Access arrangements from the bus station are also problematic, especially for westbound traffic.</p> <p>Poor traffic management arrangements within High Street.</p>	<p>Pedestrian crossings on identified active travel network as per Figure 1a.</p> <p>Bus Station – investigate improved waiting environment to include shelters; timetable information; lighting; cycle parking; signage to town centre and rail station. Formalise taxi rank at bus station. Provision of improved right turn access for buses onto A96.</p> <p>Review traffic management of High Street to include increased pedestrian space; contra-flow cycle lane; cycle parking; access restrictions; tactile paving and parking review/strategy.</p>
<p>Active Travel - In addition to three key physical barriers (A96; Inverness to Aberdeen rail line and the River Nairn) there are a number of difficulties in the promotion of active travel in Nairn with both the immediate town centre and surrounding area not presenting an environment conducive to cycling and walking.</p> <p>Existing cycle network focussed to the south of the town centre, including links to the National Cycle Network (Route 1) and residential areas. Links to residential areas to north of town centre limited.</p>	<p>Extension of existing cycle network as per Figure 1 to provide comprehensive network to existing and future developments. In particular solutions to the current barriers presented by the A96 and railway need to be addressed.</p> <p>Developer contributions sought where appropriate to facilitate development of cycle/footpaths.</p> <p>In the respect of cycling, when identifying improvements, developers should consider the full hierarchy of options presented in Cycling by Design (http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/reports/road/cycling-by-design) ranging from traffic reduction through to cycle lanes, cycleways and cycle paths.</p> <p>Improvements for pedestrians along the identified corridors should also consider the full range of measures such as dropped kerbs, crossing facilities and signing.</p> <p>Appropriate cycleways and footpaths to be provided internal and external to all new developments as appropriate and could include improvements to existing infrastructure and/or development of new facilities.</p> <p>Delivery of proposals outlined in Draft Candidate Core Paths Plan and improving links to wider access network including the National Cycle Network and coastal paths.</p> <p>Development of longer routes to nearby towns, including Auldearn, Whiteness, Ardersier, Cawdor and Croy. Where existing routes are currently an attractive option they should be protected from significant increases in development traffic unless suitable mitigation can be provided.</p>
<p>Bus – Nairn is served by a local town bus service and also inter-urban bus services along the A96 corridor. Key issues include priority for buses on the A96 and overall quality of the public transport infrastructure for buses within Nairn.</p> <p>The town bus service (Stagecoach service 20/20A/20B) is operating at full capacity and any further</p>	<p>Expansion of existing bus service as per Figures 2 to provide links to new developments and to serve future land</p>

Problems	Potential Improvements
<p>expansion of the service to serve existing or new developments would require a second vehicle.</p> <p>Around Nairn itself waiting facilities at bus stops are of poor quality and generally limited to a standard bus pole and flag with a shelter and timetable information an exception rather than the norm.</p> <p>Opportunities for interchange between bus and other modes limited.</p> <p>Nairn Hospital and medical centre noted to be remote from main residential areas and less attractive in terms of accessibility.</p>	<p>allocations outlined in A96 Development Growth Framework. Developer contributions should be sought where appropriate - most immediate developments to follow up are Sandown/Tradespark, Somerfield Store, Forres Road and Balmakeith.</p> <p>Bus access should be accommodated within new developments where appropriate with suitable road design and appropriate provision of bus stops. All new bus stops in Nairn should include a shelter, timetable information and where necessary internal lighting</p> <p>Upgrade required to include shelters and information at all existing bus stops.</p> <p>Secure cycle parking facilities required at bus station; signage from bus station to rail station, town centre and cycle routes.</p>
<p><i>Rail – Nairn is located on the Inverness to Aberdeen line. The station offers facilities of an appropriate standard for passengers.</i></p> <p>Opportunities for interchange with bus limited.</p> <p>Potential for park and ride constrained by size of car park.</p>	<p>Signage to/from rail station to bus station and town centre.</p> <p>To form part of parking review to be undertaken on completion of development of new medical centre.</p> <p>Also, requirement for investment in Aberdeen-Inverness line but responsibility outwith the control of the Council.</p>
<p><i>Road Network – Nairn is located on the A96 corridor, the main trunk road between Inverness and Aberdeen. The A96 Aberdeen to Inverness route is a multi-modal corridor that provides both local and long-distance connections along its route. Congestion; limited opportunities for safe overtaking resulting in convoying and conflict between long distance and local traffic are key issues.</i></p> <p>Conflict between long distance and local traffic on the A96 corridor through Nairn. Future growth of Nairn constrained by issues in relation to the A96.</p> <p>Localised congestion. Likely this will increase as future development to the east and west of Nairn extends the length of the town and travel distances to the town centre.</p> <p>B9006 into Nairn used as an alternative commuter route to/from Inverness (increasing accident rates on B9006, B9090 & B9091).</p>	<p>Ongoing promotion and support for delivery of A96 Nairn Bypass. Also need to monitor impact of delays for side road traffic especially on routes served by public transport</p> <p>Expansion of existing bus service and cycle/footpath network as per Figure 2 to serve new development sites and tie into the existing network.</p> <p>Ongoing promotion and support for delivery of A96 Nairn Bypass.</p>
<p><i>Parking – There are a total of 14 car parks in Nairn of varying capacity. Three of the car parks are located within the immediate town centre and a further 7 are in the beach/harbour/promenade..</i></p> <p>Parking in Nairn is scattered and uncontrolled with the largest public car park at the Somerfield supermarket on Academy Street. No parking charges in Nairn – lack of incentive or deterrent for residents and visitors not to use their car, especially for short journeys.</p>	<p>Parking review on completion of medical centre.</p> <p>Revised parking arrangements as part of redevelopment of existing Somerfield site.</p>

Table 6.2: Nairn Transport Master Plan – Future development sites and associated transport infrastructure

Problems	Potential Improvements
<p>Future Development Areas – New transport links/infrastructure required to connect new development sites with the town centre and other parts of the town.</p> <p>Sandown/Delnies</p> <p>Lochloy/Kingsteps</p> <p>King Street</p> <p>Balmakeith / Forres Road</p> <p>Nairn South (either side of the B9090 and B9091)</p>	<p>Provision of bus stops and shelters on Sandown Road with pedestrian access from the site.</p> <p>Developer contributions for funding of the Altonburn path and Delnies circuit in the Tradespark/Sandown area as detailed in the Inverness and Nairn Core Paths Plan (Draft).</p> <p>Development of internal layout conducive to bus access north of the A96.</p> <p>Developer contributions for extension of the existing town bus service.</p> <p>Cycle parking facilities in association with any business/commercial proposals for site to the east of Sandown.</p> <p>Developer contributions for extension of existing town bus services eastwards of Lochloy Road.</p> <p>Developer contributions for extension of existing town bus service eastwards of Lochloy Road.</p> <p>Address barrier to active travel in accessing Balmaketih/Boath Park areas of the town presented by the railway.</p> <p>On site cycle parking facilities.</p> <p>Pedestrian links to site from Academy Street and across the A96.</p> <p>Improve facilities, access to/from for passengers and operation of Bus Station.</p> <p>Pedestrian/cycle links including from adjacent Boath Park residential area, Lochloy Road, Town Centre and Auldearn.</p> <p>On site cycle parking facilities.</p> <p>Development of internal layout conducive to bus access from the A96 or alternatively provision of bus lay-bys on access road with pedestrian links into site. Both options would require provision of appropriate turning circle.</p> <p>Developer contributions for extension of existing town bus to serve any new development.</p> <p>Connectivity to the town centre, primary schools and Firhall development.</p> <p>Extension of bus services and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>Extension of the pedestrian and cycle network.</p> <p>Reduction in traffic impact on Cawdor Road and at existing pinchpoint under the rail bridge.</p>