

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

Reference Number:	<b>HWLDP-MIR-267</b>
Organisation/Individual:	Turley Associates – Sainsbury's Supermarkets

### 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	x
Phasing of Development	
Developer Contributions	x
East Inverness	
Nairn	x
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	x
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	x
Accessibility and Transport	
Agricultural Land	
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:

<b>Background</b>	<b>Spatial Strategy</b>	<b>Policy Options</b>	<b>Consultation</b>
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### Notes:

<p>Should be certainty of funding, in total, for any infrastructure  Infrastructure requirements should be prioritised  Developer contributions may threaten viability of projects in A96 corridor  Proposed plan should provide a strategy for addressing retail provision in Nairn  Further clarity is required about a network of centres  Deficiencies in retail capacity need to be outlined in proposed plan  Competition commissions funding should be taken into account once the Scottish Government stance has been taken</p>
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Action Sheet Completed by:	SH
Date:	14/12/09

# TURLEY ASSOCIATES

2 Miltrees Walk  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DQ

T: [REDACTED]  
F: [REDACTED]

[www.turleyassociates.co.uk](http://www.turleyassociates.co.uk)

17 November 2009

Delivered by Email

Freepost

Director of Planning and Development

The Highland Council

Freepost SCO5568

Inverness

IV3 5BR

Our ref: SAIE2014

E: [REDACTED]

Dear Sirs

## HIGHLAND WIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT (AUGUST 2009)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide initial comments on the Main Issues Report (MIR). On behalf of our clients, Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd, we are pleased to make the following comments.

Sainsbury's serves around 580,000 customers each week in Scotland and employs approximately 6,000 people. Sainsbury's currently has 37 stores in Scotland where it has an estimated 6% market share compared to a 14.7% market share UK wide. In September, Sainsbury's announced that it is to create nearly 1,300 additional jobs in Scotland by summer 2010. The new jobs are an integral part of Sainsbury's plans to increase its presence and number of stores in Scotland and provide investment to the Scottish economy.

Sainsbury's is the third largest food retailer in the UK, but is only the 7<sup>th</sup> largest in Scotland. Currently it does not operate, nor does it have planning permission to operate, any stores in Highland. It is Sainsbury's desire to expand their presence in Scotland and, more specifically, obtain a presence in Highland. Making comments on the Main Issues Report is part of this strategy.

Please find enclosed the completed MIR Questionnaire with papers apart dated 17 November 2009.

The comments relate to the following key issues:

- Spatial Strategy – A96 Corridor
- Developer Contributions in the A96 Corridor
- Nairn
- Retailing
  - Network of Centres
  - Deficiencies in retail provision ('retail capacity')

- Sequential approach
- Assessing proposed developments
- Competition issues
- Business and Industrial Land

Sainsbury's look forward to working with Highland Council and being involved in the preparation of the Proposed Plan. We hope that you find these comments helpful and we would be pleased to meet you to discuss these further.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Phillips  
Director

# Highland wide Local Development Plan Main Issues Report

## Questionnaire

Please fill in this questionnaire. Your views are extremely important to us and we will take them into consideration when preparing the proposed plan.

If you would prefer you can answer only the questions on the issues that you are interested in. If you have any general comments, please put them in the box on page 12.

Please fill in your details below so we can keep you up to date with the progress of the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

Name ..... SAINSBURY'S SUPERMARKETS LTD

Address ..% TUVELEY ASSOCIATES.....

..... 2 MULTREEFS WALK .....

..... EDINBURGH .....

.....

.....

Postcode ..EH1 3DQ

Phone ..[REDACTED].....

Email ..[REDACTED].....

You can respond via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Post: Director of Planning and Development  
The Highland Council  
Freepost SCO 5568  
Inverness  
IV3 5BR

This form can also be filled in online at <http://www.highland.gov.uk/developmentplans>

**This Questionnaire must be returned by  
5pm Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2009**

## SPATIAL STRATEGY

Please tick one box

### Spatial Strategy: Inverness

- Q1 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Do you prefer the stated alternative?  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Spatial Strategy: A96 Corridor

- Q2 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Do you prefer the stated alternative?  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

SEE PAPER APPART DATED 17/11/09

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Developer Contributions in the A96 Corridor

- Q3 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Do you prefer the stated alternative?  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

SEE PAPER APPART DATED 17/11/09

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### East Inverness in the A96 Corridor

- Q4 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Do you prefer the stated alternative?  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Nairn in the A96 Corridor

Q5 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

SEE PAPER APART DATED 17/11/09

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Tornagrain in the A96 Corridor

Q6 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Smaller Settlements in the A96 Corridor

Q7 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Action Plan for Caithness and North Sutherland

Yes No

Q8 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Action Plan for Nigg and Easter Ross

Yes No

Q9 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Development of Local Centres

Yes No

Q10 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

The Wider Countryside and Fragile Areas

Yes No

Q11 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

## SUSTAINABLE HIGHLANDS

### Population and Housing requirement

Q12 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Housing in the Countryside

Q13 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Affordable Housing

Q14 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Planning for an Ageing Population

Q15 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Needs of Gypsies / Travellers

Q16 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Retailing

Q17 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

SEE PAPER APART DATED 17/11/09

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Developer Contributions

Q18 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

## SAFEGUARDING OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

**Q19** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Yes No

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Previously Used Land

**Q20** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Yes No

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Wild Land

**Q21** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Yes No

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Water Environment

**Q22** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Yes No

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### Renewable Energy

- Q23** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Do you prefer the stated alternative?  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Flooding

- Q24** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Do you prefer the stated alternative?  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Waste Management

- Q25** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Do you prefer the stated alternative?  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Air Quality

- Q26** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Sustainable Design

- Q27** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why  
Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

## COMPETITIVE, SUSTAINABLE & ADAPTABLE HIGHLAND ECONOMY

### Business and Industrial Land

Q28A Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Yes No

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

SEE PAPER APART DATED 17/11/09

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Accessibility and Transport

Q28B Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Yes No

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Crofting and Agriculture

Q29 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Yes No

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

### Subdivision of Existing Crofts

Q30 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Yes No

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Allocation of Inbye land

Yes No

Q31 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

New Crofting Township

Yes No

Q32 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Small Scale New Crofts

Yes No

Q33 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

Coastal Development

Yes No

Q34 Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

**Forestry and Woodland**

**Q35** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

**Minerals**

**Q36** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Do you prefer the stated alternative?

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

**A HEALTHIER HIGHLANDS**

**Open Space and Physical Activity**

**Q37** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

**Access to the Outdoors**

**Q38** Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why

Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

Yes No

Comments

*continue on a separate sheet if you need to*

**End of Questionnaire**

**Paper apart**

**Highland wide Local Development Plan  
Main Issues Report (August 2009)**

**Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd**

**17 November 2009**

**Spatial Strategy: A96 Corridor (Phasing of Development)**

**Question 2.(a) Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, please tell us why.**

No. The preferred approach is to endorse the development sites set out in the A96 Corridor Framework and to support early development, subject to certain triggers being reached. A relationship with the development of sites in Inverness is also identified in the preferred strategy.

The approach taken in the A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework has only been approved by Highland Council as interim planning guidance. It is not yet part of the development plan and it has not been subject to full public scrutiny. The Proposed Local Development Plan should not therefore place too much reliance on this document in the first place. However, the preferred approach has greater potential than an alternative strategy to look at long term expansion in other directions (e.g. north of Inverness). For example, there is significantly more developer interest in the A96 corridor and a greater amount of base information.

Sainsbury's welcome a review of the phasing of delivery of the infrastructure improvements across the A96 corridor. This work should also carefully review the necessity for these improvements in the first place. There may be circumstances where development can proceed without infrastructure development at all. Where it is required there needs to be clarification of the level of commitment that the private sector on an individual development proposal can give towards ensuring that the infrastructure can be in place when it is needed. Much depends on public sector funding and other decisions as well as land assembly and separate consent process (e.g. roads).

The premise for any review must be that if it relies on upfront funding from the private sector or even a commitment to deliver infrastructure at a particular point then this will threaten the viability of development projects in the A96 Corridor. It will also be essential that where private sector funding is being sought for infrastructure, that there is certainty over its funding in total (including from the public sector), its timescale for delivery and over its details (e.g. location, scale of development).

It would be preferable to target priorities for infrastructure development. This may mean allowing a greater amount of development or a particular type of development to proceed without infrastructure development being in place or commitments being made by the private sector. New development, particularly retail development, can act as a catalyst for subsequent stages where higher development values can be achieved which would have a greater prospect of bringing forward development.

The relationship to the development of sites in Inverness, outwith the A96 Corridor, also needs to be carefully considered. There is a real risk of delaying beneficial development in both regions before other development comes forward. There appears to be an unnecessary overlap between the application of strategies to develop sites and encourage investment in the Inverness and the A96 Corridor areas. This should be clarified and reviewed.

**Q2.(b) Do you prefer the stated alternative?**

No. See 2(a) above.

**Q2.(c) Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?**

Yes. See 2(a) above.

  
17/11

**Paper apart**

**Highland wide Local Development Plan  
Main Issues Report (August 2009)**

**Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd**

**17 November 2009**

**Developer Contributions in the A96 Corridor**

**Question 3.(a) Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, please tell us why.**

No. The preferred strategy states that all development in the A96 corridor expansion areas will contribute to a revised developer contributions protocol. An alternative strategy set out in the MIR is to negotiate on a case by case basis.

The approach taken in the A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework has only been approved by Highland Council as interim planning guidance. It is not yet part of the development plan and it has not been subject to full public scrutiny. The Proposed Plan should not therefore place too much reliance on this document in the first place.

Secondly, the Framework is dependent on substantial public and private sector investment in infrastructure. The credit crisis and step changes in borrowing and funding regimes raise serious doubts as to whether the framework can ever be delivered in its current form. A review of its provisions for developer contributions is therefore welcome.

Sainsbury's understand the Council's dilemma in attempting to deliver infrastructure across the A96 Corridor. But if the revised protocol relies on upfront funding from the private sector then this will threaten the viability of development projects in the Corridor. It will also be essential that where private sector funding is being sought for infrastructure that there is certainty over its commitment and funding from the Council and relevant infrastructure providers, its timescale for delivery and on its details (e.g. location, scale of development).

It may also be important to explore other forms of funding streams to help deliver major infrastructure.

Sainsbury's recognise that there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to make developer contributions. For example, where it serves a planning purpose, relates to the development

proposed, be related in scale and kind to the proposed development and be reasonable in all other respects. It should follow the principles set out in Circular 12/1996 on planning agreements. The approach to securing developer contributions has been endorsed in the draft revised circular 12/1996 published by Scottish Government in December 2008. Sainsbury's will continue to provide appropriate contributions to local infrastructure including consideration to the enhancement of town centres.

**Q3.(b) Do you prefer the stated alternative?**

No. See 3(a) above.

**Q3.(c) Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?**

Yes. See 3(a) above.

  
jx/ll

**Paper apart**

**Highland wide Local Development Plan  
Main Issues Report (August 2009)**

**Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd**

**17 November 2009**

**Area Specific Issues - Nairn**

**Question 5.(a) Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, please tell us why.**

No. The MIR preferred option for Nairn reflects the existing local plan sites including a broad corridor where the bypass can be delivered coupled with expansion sites at Delnies and Nairn South. The alternative option presented in the MIR is to restrict development to those sites within the existing local plan sites and only when they are completed should other sites be brought forward.

In June 2009 the Council resolved to grant planning permission to a planning application for major food and non-food bulky goods retail development on a site at Forres Road, Nairn (HC ref. 07/00099/OUTNA). Consequently the strategy for Nairn, perhaps surprisingly, does not follow this Council decision.

Neither option, set out in the MIR, is considered appropriate to deal with Nairn's present needs as well as its future ones. Another alternative should be considered. The Proposed Plan should adopt a strategy that addresses the identified shortfall in retail provision for the town. It should put forward the site at Forres Road for such development whilst providing for appropriate local infrastructure improvements, as agreed with the Council as part of the recent planning application. Furthermore the strategy should allow this development to come forward outwith the A96 Corridor protocol on infrastructure provision and developer contributions.

The above planning application was called-in by Scottish Ministers and a public inquiry was held. To date the Ministers decision is awaited. The comments below bring together the main aspects of the case which were unchallenged by the Council at the inquiry.

- There is already a quantitative and qualitative deficiency in retail provision that needs to be remedied now. This position has nothing to do with the planned expansion of Nairn, which Sainsbury's support, or associated with the A96 Framework or otherwise, which will only make matters worse and even more pressing. The strategy of the Proposed Plan should not prevent retail development from coming forward now.

- There are substantial levels of retail expenditure leakage for all types of shopping (i.e. convenience, general comparison and bulky comparison) particularly to Elgin and Inverness. The level of convenience shopping leakage is unsustainable and not appropriate for a town of Nairn's size and status in Highland's hierarchy of centres.
- In terms of the sequential approach to identifying sites there is no suitable town centre or edge of centre site on which a retail development of the necessary size could be developed.
- The retail proposal is likely to enhance the vitality and viability of Nairn town centre. For example, retail provision on the Forres Road site will help increase trade in the town centre. The availability of enhanced convenience and bulky goods shopping in the town is likely to encourage more people to do their whole shop in Nairn more often.
- The retail proposal supports the existing settlement hierarchy and the role that each settlement plays for the population it serves. Nairn is a significant centre and should provide as full a range of services as possible. The retail development would be of an appropriate scale for Nairn.
- The retail proposal contributes to sustainable development objectives by bringing shopping as close as possible to the customer, rather than relying on travel to a distant location.
- The retail proposal is supported by public opinion. A comprehensive public consultation exercise including an exhibition has been undertaken. The headline responses to those questions were as follows:
  - 82% of respondents said Nairn and the surrounding area would benefit from new shopping facilities.
  - 77% of respondents said that they do the majority of their shopping outwith Nairn.
  - 79% of respondents said they travel by car to shop for food.
- Sainsbury's support the allocation of business land east of Nairn as shown in the MIR. Retail development can come forward in this area without prejudicing the scale of release for other business uses. It is relevant that a retail development will also bring investment and jobs to the community. It would provide approximately 300 jobs and also potentially act as a stimulus to further investment in the town

- The retail allocation of the site would accord with Scottish Planning Policy including SPP8. SPP8 also applies the sequential test to bulky goods but recognises that out of centre locations may be appropriate for such uses.

The retail allocation stands apart from, and independent from the A96 Framework. The retail allocation is being presented to meet current deficiencies which can be accessed from the A96 on its present alignment without the need for a bypass. The allocation would not prejudice the strategy set out in the A96 Corridor document to deliver development which in any event is many years away.

**Q5.(b) Do you prefer the stated alternative?**

No. See 5(a) above.

**Q5.(c) Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?**

Yes. See 5(a) above.

  
13/11

**Paper apart**

**Highland wide Local Development Plan  
Main Issues Report (August 2009)**

**Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd**

**17 November 2009**

### **Retailing**

**Question 17.(a) Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, please tell us why.**

In general the preferred strategy is supported but further detail is required. The following comments are made.

#### **Network of Centres**

A fundamental matter to town centre and retail policy is the definition of a 'network of centres' and the role of each individual centre. It has implications for the sequential approach and to the assessment of the impact of proposed development. The Proposed Plan should define these matters and list the town centres and commercial centres. In doing so, it should not only recognise centres in Inverness but also the strategic significance of the smaller towns in rural areas.

#### **Deficiencies in retail provision ('retail capacity')**

The Proposed Plan should identify qualitative and quantitative deficiencies in retail provision across the region. This should be based on up to date evidence. This may involve a review of existing Council studies or adopting retail assessments carried out in association with recent planning applications for major retail development. In some circumstances these should be replaced by a new region wide study based upon household shopper surveys. This can then inform retail capacity for additional retail floorspace. It should also consider qualitative issues such as the distribution of retail provision and to improving choice and competition.

#### **Sequential approach**

The sequential approach in terms of site selection is an important policy to help guide retail development to the most appropriate location. Sainsbury's supports this approach to retail planning which should be set out in the Proposed Plan.

#### **Assessing proposed developments**

The Proposed Plan should set out the circumstances where retail development would be supported. This should not preclude retail development in out of centre locations. Rather it should qualify the position and set out a list of criteria that each development proposal should be assessed against. The criterion should have regard to Scottish Planning Policy as well as taking into account of significant public benefits of retail development such as job creation and regeneration.

#### **Competition issues**

The Council will be aware of the findings of the Competition Commission contained in its report, "The supply of groceries in the UK: market investigation". The Competition Commission decided to recommend that a competition test be implemented within the planning system. The decision and recommendation apply to Scotland as well as the other parts of the United Kingdom. This means that the issue of a competition test in the context of retail planning policy remains a very significant issue which needs to be addressed in the Proposed Plan.

Sainsbury's, along with many other retailers believe that the introduction of a competition test will protect local markets from exploitation. Sainsbury's considers that the Proposed Plan should give a clear commitment to reviewing the retail section of the SDP once the Scottish Government's decision has been made known.

In more general terms Sainsbury's endorse the importance and benefits that competition can bring to customers. The ability of the planning system to foster such competition must be recognised in the Proposed Plan.

#### **Q17.(b) Do you prefer the stated alternative?**

See 17 (a) above.

#### **Q17.(c) Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?**

See 17 (a) above.

ix/14

**Paper apart**

**Highland wide Local Development Plan  
Main Issues Report (August 2009)**

**Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd**

**17 November 2009**

**Business and Industrial Land**

**Question 28A.(a) Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, please tell us why.**

No. The preferred strategy fails to take into account the contribution that retail development has to sustainable economic development. Sainsbury's believes that a positive approach should be taken in the Proposed Plan towards development that could contribute to sustainable economic growth. It should confirm that economic development covers a wide range of development, including retail. Retail development, both in town centres and elsewhere, provides major employment opportunities, generates wealth in an area and helps attract further investment. The retail industry is one of Scotland's largest business sectors. This also applies to the Highland area. This is a particularly relevant issue at this time as new retail development continues to be active despite difficult economic circumstances.

**Q28.(b) Do you prefer the stated alternative?**

See 28(a) above.

**Q28.(c) Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?**

See 28(a) above.

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