

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE – 11 AUGUST 2010

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Inverness City Vision

Report by Director of Planning and Development

SUMMARY

This report details the draft Inverness City Vision. It is proposed to consult on the draft City Vision in tandem with the Highland wide Local Development Plan and Members are asked to agree the content of the document. The City Vision is also being considered at the Inverness City Committee on 9th August.

1. Background

1.1 A report was brought to the April 2010 Inverness City Committee which set out progress on the preparation of an updated Inverness City Vision. The existing City Vision, which was prepared in 2003, identified a number of key themes for city growth and these remain relevant and a useful starting point. Architecture + Design Scotland have been working closely with the Council to assist with updating the city vision. This work will help define the kind of place the city aspires to be and identify ways to deliver this vision at the city-wide scale.

2. Recent work on the City Vision

2.1 Following on from Committee in April the Inverness City Vision symposium, "Inverness Today and Tomorrow", was held on the evening of Monday 21st of June. It was open to the public and was attended by over 50 people from a variety of backgrounds. The outcome was a broad discussion in which most people agreed with the themes of the city vision and the emerging priorities for the spatial strategy in regard to the potential of the Longman area, Muirtown, the city centre and riverfront through the city, Ness-side, and Inshes/Raigmore.

3.0 The draft City Vision

3.1 A draft Inverness City Vision document has now been prepared and it is attached as appendix 1. It will be issued for public consultation and sets out the common themes that have come out of consultation so far and which will guide how Inverness will grow in the future:

- **the economy should be at the heart of everything**
- **strengthen the city centre**
- **a better connected Inverness**
- **a city for young people**
- **greenNess**
- **build on our assets**
- **think tourism**
- **culture, pride and identity**
- **health and well-being**

3.2 The document also addresses the emerging key city vision focus areas based on an assessment of the key strengths and weaknesses. It provides a very visual representation of what particular elements the city should be aspiring to develop, enhance and improve. These areas are:

- The A9 corridor through the city – the gateway to Inverness
- The waterfront – an asset the city should take full advantage of
- The city centre and Raigmore - as a core element of the city urban fabric and a service centre for the whole Highland area
- The quality neighbourhoods – the creation of sustainable communities and neighbourhoods surrounding Inverness
- The canal / river / green links - building on the key resource of both the river and canal and the connecting green spaces
- The ‘spider’ – the creation of main linkages, priority streets and arteries

5. Community Engagement

5.1 There will be opportunity for extensive community engagement on the HwLDP Proposed Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance when published.

6. Gaelic Language

6.1 We will provide Gaelic translation of headings and sub-headings in the publications that we are producing.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report and supplementary guidance.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The Inverness City Vision 2010 comes at an important time for Inverness, and will inform the ongoing land use planning and transport planning work. It will also set the context for future investment in the city.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- (i) Agree the draft City Vision to be issued for further public consultation.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning and Development

Date: 2 August 2010

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INVERNESS CITY VISION:
building a better Inverness

‘can-do **IN**verness’: where *individuals and communities* are enabled to **fulfil** ambitions that benefit them, their city and the wider area; where *passion* is matched to *potential*, and every **action** generates the *best possible* outcome

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Introduction

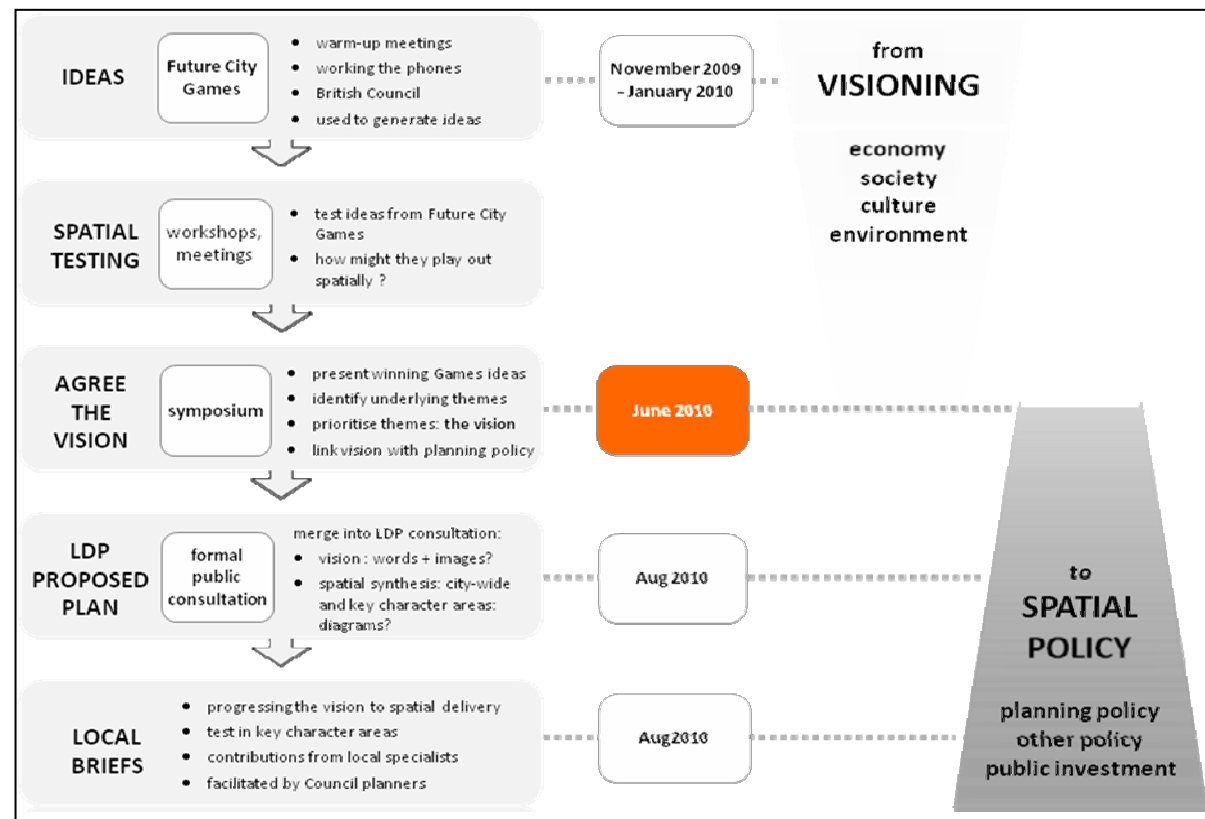
The future of Inverness is about people and their relationship with the natural and built environment. The city is a remarkable place with a fantastic setting and amazing assets; it is remote but well connected; it is a place where people want to be and choose to move to. To guide the future we need to agree a vision of what we collectively want to happen. The Vision must be about the needs and aspirations of the many different generations who make up Inverness; this must be a vision for the people, for the creation of their place. In this context, there are three fundamental questions underpinning this vision:

1. Who is the city for?
2. What sort of city are we trying to create?
3. Why would you want to be there?

To answer these we need to look at what we have [our assets], what we want and need [our desires] and what we can do [collective action and responsibility]

The visioning process

The vision builds on the successful City Vision of 2003. The starting point for the work was a thorough understanding of the city, what it is, its history and identity, how it works. The broad visioning process is summarised as follows:



Layout of the vision document

This visioning document is laid out in three sections:

- Section 1: Laying Foundations
- Section 2: Building Structures
- Section 3: Making it happen

Inverness City Vision - Building the idea

Every house starts as an idea. We shape it in our minds. We see the roof, walls, windows, doors, the view. We feel the warmth of family, friends and conversation. We construct it step by step, block by block, with each move transforming an idea a reality.

It is hard for an individual to build a house by themselves. More often, it is a collective effort. Every little does help. Different people have something to offer the process. Often, the simplest thing - a well timed cup of tea, or a kind word in a moment of despair - push the builder, and the building further than all the tools in the box.

The house is built. We move in, and listen to the story of the building; we see how the light shines in, how the sea looks from this point, how the very spaces of the building give us shelter and comfort in those most personal of moments. Over time, the walls and fabric of the building roar with the memory of conversations had, experiences formed, ideas forged. New projects start at the kitchen table over a cup of tea; desperately avoiding the familiar; never ordinary. Yet, every building is ordinary and familiar to those who need it.

Sometimes, what we need to build is an extraordinary everyday place to be.

So too with the city. To make the kind of place we want to be in, we start with an idea. We build a story. Collective action and leadership shape the building blocks of the idea. It starts to become a reality; a reality shared with others. New stories emerge. The place gets stronger. It matters to people. They like the idea of the place.

This document sets out an idea for the kind of place Inverness could be. It is based on stories of people of the city, young and old. The aim of the vision is to help guide decisions about how we, collectively, build the Inverness we want.

01. Laying foundations

[a] The basics-starting with the people

Cities are a cultural idea. They need people to make them work. To be serious about a vision for a place, we must try to understand the pathways of people as they navigate through their life in their place. As life circumstances change, so too do our needs. From youth to young adulthood, to the formation of relationships, starting work, and perhaps a family, to old age, our needs and demands of our fellow man and our environment change.

Often we would like to meet these needs in the spaces most familiar to us, in the places that give us comfort, strength and inspiration. Many call this place home. Home is not necessarily a building. It can be somewhere that makes us feel connected, understood, and part of something. In this sense, a city is as much 'home' as a house.

Inverness is home to many people, people who have been born in this place, people who have moved here, people who are just passing through. It is a place that evokes great passion. People are proud to be both of the

city, and of the Highlands. However, there are some significant challenges for people who wish to remain living in the city. A recent study by the University of Highlands and Islands [UHI] identified that young people, although passionate for the place, often see little economic future and leave. There is evidence to suggest that there are significant numbers of older people living on their own. Over time, the long term independence of these people is challenged.

In a place where culture matters, the increasing distance between young and old matters. Passing on the culture of the place and the people is hindered if the generations cannot meet. The long term future of the place is challenged if the youth never come home, and the lifeblood of the city is not refreshed with new ideas, ambition and passion.

The best kind of place, just like the idea of home, is somewhere you can leave but always have a reason to come back to. At its most basic, this is the vision for Inverness; to match the passion of the people with the potential of the place. A place that knows, really knows, how to take care of its citizens is a place that knows how to take care of others. It works

because people matter and they have a chance in this place.

To be the kind of place that people want Inverness to be, the city needs to enable people to live their lives their way, and to create a place which has the potential to recover from shocks and challenges. The city needs to be a resilient place, an enabling place, a place which has a strong heart at its core, a city centre that works.

It also needs to be accepting and creative about the suburbs that exist and the suburbs that will be created, making these better people places. The vision for Inverness is not about the city centre only. It is not about the suburbs only. It is about all these things.

A resilient, people-oriented Inverness is about taking a whole system view, working with the assets and ambition of the people and delivering a place that provides for people socially, environmentally, economically and culturally.

01. Laying foundations

[b] Resilience as a framework for building

The emerging themes from the Future City Game highlight the importance of economics to Inverness. Increasingly economic 'resilience' is critical to meet the challenges of our time; be they climate change or socio economic challenges. The Centre for Local Economic Strategies [CLES] argues that 'resilience' is the ability of a place to bounce back from a shock – whether economic, political, social, cultural or environmental. Why is it, they ask, that some places can recover from dramatic changes in fortune relatively quickly, and others struggle for long periods of time? Their evidence points to the concept of resilience: something in the DNA of these places enables them to cope and recover from changes in context. They can adapt. They re-invent themselves.

Inverness can foster this ability. Within the city, people and organisations are already re-imagining what this place could be. Inverness Old Town Art (IOTA) for instance has uncovered less known spaces in the city, revealed their potential, invited us to re-think how we use old spaces. At the Future City Games, one member of the youth group suggested that the pattern of development in

Inverness and extensive suburbs are changing the nature of the city centre. Instead of focusing on the negative aspect of this phenomenon, this girl likened the process to the creation of a village green, a re-imagined central meaningful space in the city, a special space, a people space.

The concept of 'resilience' is interesting in terms of its relevance to economy. The economy can be seen as a system, made up of key elements:

- The commercial economy [financial transactions for profit]
- The public economy [the role of the state enabled by public budgets and taxation]
- The social economy [informal transactions between people; 'neighbourliness', health and well-being]

The goal is to enable a series of inter-relationships between these elements, a diversity of economies. These economies are fed by different forms of resources:

- Human capital - skills and resources
- Social capital - the bonds that connect individuals and communities, the health and well-being of the people and place
- Technological capital - science, competencies, competitiveness and productivity
- Public capital - the enabling role of the public sector, management of public services and the public realm

- Environmental capital – the land, water, air, flora and fauna that shape our world.

A resilient place is one that uses resources creatively to drive the local economy. If one mix fails, others form. The place is constantly re-inventing itself.

In Inverness, there are reasons that people choose to be in this place. It is a service centre at regional level. It offers an excellent quality of life. It offers the potential for high levels of health and well-being. However, traditionally, the city has relied on a narrow range of industries. This a vulnerability. Despite this, Inverness is a city where things emerge. People do things. Innovation happens.

Working with this innovative capability of Inverness, in the context of a place that embeds health, quality of life and fairness at its heart, will build a more resilient Inverness. Critical to making this happen are:

- Better use of existing assets
- Providing space and support to people to do it for themselves; enabling people
- More joined up working
- Ensuring that economic development responds to the DNA of the place
- Working within environmental limits
- Championing the health and well-being of the citizen in all resource management decision making.

01. Laying foundations

[c] Using the assets we already have

In building a better Inverness, we need to make the best use of the resources we have. Building a better place is not just about money. It is as much about building confidence, acknowledging and celebrating what we have, strengthening capacities and making it easy to do the right thing. We are not starting from scratch. We already have regulatory frameworks, delivery frameworks, decisionmaking frameworks. Part of the challenge is to make all these assets work harder. This is a collective responsibility.

It is essential that we think differently about Inverness. It is a great place. It has its problems, and its faults, and its failures. It has its critics. It is right to acknowledge all of this but the strength in moving forward is not to get lost in the negativity of what is or was. The strength in moving forward is an honest appraisal of the place in total terms. This is a great place. The DNA of Inverness is strong. It is often hardest to see what is right in front of us, to accept it and to see how valuable it is. If we can not see the value of Inverness today, and imagine its real potential to just be a

better Inverness, then everywhere else will always be better. The things that make New York New York, or London London or Edinburgh Edinburgh matter to those places.

What matters to Inverness is what makes this place Inverness; what makes this place special. We need to declare our love for our city more, champion it, build a place that feels loved. It is a necessary foundation of resilience.

Let's start with our assets. We have many. Our assets can be broadly broken down into three groups:

Citizens. Our people have a passion for our place. It runs deep. Our citizens have imagination, capabilities and innovation. Our youth are imaginative and skilled. We breed social entrepreneurs who do good things for other people and for the place. Our city has a very strong creative community, and a wealth of small and medium businesses that thrive. We have highly skilled workers in all sectors, and particularly in health. We understand the need to shift the balance of care from institutions to people, especially in health, and we are good at doing it because we have to be. The Highlands are a dispersed community. Inverness has a central role as its service heart. Our creative community challenge us to

re-view and re-imagine what we have. These challenges are always useful. We are a family place. It is a good city to grow up in.

Tangible assets. Within our city and wider setting we steward a range of important physical assets. The city sits in the Highlands, a major international brand, part of the very identity of Scotland. Visitors come with an expectation of this resource. They are rarely disappointed. We need the city to work harder to contribute the overall experience of this asset. The landscape and waterscape settings immediately around and within Inverness are fantastic. We don't use this well enough.

The city contains major high value industries. It contains major high value service facilities, including Raigmore, council facilities, the University and colleges. We have all the assets to be a really smart city, a learning place municipally, institutionally, culturally and at community level. Learning places do the basics well and always place the citizen at the heart of all decisionmaking. We have a wealth of public land and building assets, including assets in public ownership and common good assets. Some publicly owned land assets are underutilised. Some are vacant, some are

occupied by uses that no longer deliver the city. We need to retain these assets but use them to consolidate the city, make them work harder, make them work for better citizen outcomes. This is an opportunity we have that many other places don't, particularly adjacent to the city centre. The biggest challenge is to re-imagine how to use these assets, and commit to making change happen.

Competencies. Not only do we have people who care, but we have people with a range of abilities, as individuals, communities and as a city. The creative economy in Inverness is strong. Increasingly, the city is building a strong reputation in this sector at national and international levels. It matters.

Our city experiences phenomenal social change every year. Our population increases during the tourist season, then contracts. There is in-migration. The multi-cultural flow of people through the city is an opportunity. In a society that is increasingly globalising, awareness of different cultures and how to communicate with different cultures is an asset. The potential to capitalise on this asset moves through our city every year.

Inverness has a culture of doing things. Things happen here. Perhaps not everything we do is right, but we do work to make things happen. This is a capability that we can develop further.

Inverness is a city of culture, a place where past and present mix. We are good at retaining our identity despite massive social change. Finally, despite our remoteness, we have real high value skills in the city, like the skills of people in the bio-medical industry. Taken as a whole, we are a wealthy place. A key challenge now, is to make what we have work harder. This will require leadership and collective responsibility. It matters to us all.

Towards a set of priorities. Identifiable neighbourhoods exist across the city and eleven broad character areas have been mapped. Using criteria from the Scottish Government's National Policy Statement on Designing Places a qualitative assessment has been carried out. This shows that there are areas of the city, with strong assets that can be enhanced.

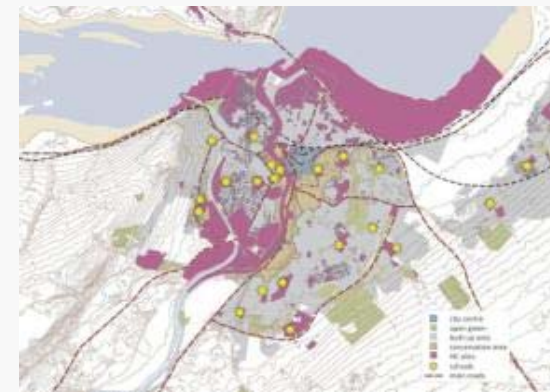
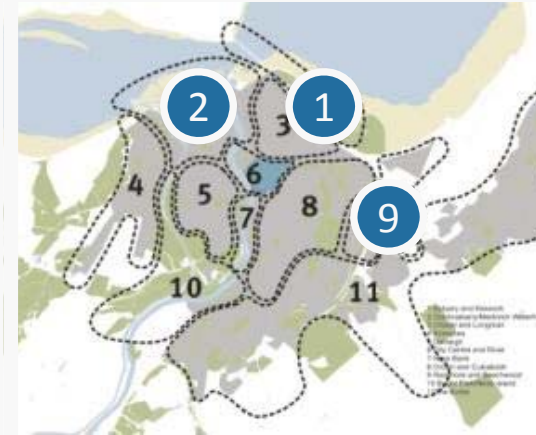
The greatest potential for improvement exists along the estuary and the A9, in some of the most attractive parts of the city, and also in

areas where there is a high degree of public influence. This is important not only because of the city image, but more crucially because the city needs to give careful consideration to how it best manages its assets, to continue to deliver a high level of services, and maximise the best return on resources in terms that are not just financial.

Whilst the city enjoys a reputation as being a good place to be, the mapping exercise demonstrates that there is potential for improvements to be made in strategic locations that can improve peoples' lives and the perception of the city.

Character area

Character area	Identity	Safe and pleasant spaces	Ease of movement	Sense of welcome	Adaptability	Good use of resources
1. Estuary and Kessock	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
2. Clachnaharry/Merkinch Waterfronts	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
3. Citadel and Longman	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow
4. Kinmylies/Scorguie	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
5. Dalneigh/Central	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
6. City centre and river	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red
7. Ness Bank	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
8. Crown and Culcaboc	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red
9. Raigmore and Beechwood	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green
10. Bught Park/Ness	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
11. Suburbs	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow



02. Building structures

[a...] Big ideas

The starting point for this vision is that the people of Inverness matter, and the place matters. This means we need to shape the resilience idea to relate to the place that Inverness actually is. Quality of life is central. In this context, to enable a more resilient Inverness, where the passion of the people matches the potential of the place, the focus needs to be on quality. Taking the themes that emerged from the visioning process, there are four essential qualities to focus on:

- **Quality of life** [standard of living, work, education, equality]
- **Quality of service** [services to meet community need delivered by the public, private and third sectors and the community themselves]
- **Quality of design** [the way the ingredients of better places, streets, buildings and spaces are put together and managed]

- **Quality of brand** [the identity of the city and how it is perceived externally]

The Highland Single Outcome Agreement addresses some of these themes at strategic level. The vision aims to ground these themes in Inverness, and link them to principles of spatial planning and design. The following table takes each of the qualities in turn and, on the basis of the themes that emerged from the visioning process, sets out a story of the kind of city that Inverness could be. The text is written from the point of view of a citizen of Inverness, to illustrate how a focus on these outcomes could make a practical difference to people's lives.

The qualities table crosses many of the areas of Local Authority, community planning partners, citizens, communities and businesses. The objective here is to provide a loose framework to inform future policy development and decision making by a range of groups.

themes	Quality of life - a city that...	Quality of service - a city that...	Quality of design - a city that...	Quality of brand - a city that...
the economy at the heart of everything	Supports my employment and enterprise, values and enables my social enterprise and fosters mutual support between neighbours.	Co-ordinates infrastructure investment to achieve economies of benefit. That recognises the value of the social economy and encourages learning and skills development.	Uses what is already happening to allow people to do what they want to do and what they want to contribute.	Encourages investment that strengthens and improves the city.
strengthen the city centre	Has a centre which is a destination that's relevant to me ... a place where I want to be, that permits me to do things I want to do.	Aids the understanding of what's there, who's there and what's going on and promotes a services strategy that meets citizens desires.	Is adaptable, has a long life / loose fit and promotes high quality developments. A centre capable of expansion that considers the generative influence of activities.	Has a centre that is known as a flexible place that adjusts to accommodate different activities
a better connected Inverness	Allows me to get to people, amenities and services easily and allows them to get to me.	Facilitates better outwards communications and connections (global – IT / travel) as well as internally in services across the public sector. That supports the creation and operation of social networks	Connects at all scales, locally through green network with both rural and urban connections.	Is a networked city where Inverness is perceived across the scales – globally to locally – recognised as a good place to be, easy to get to and a good base from which to explore.
a city for young people	Lets me enjoy today and build a future, without losing my sense of the past.	Encourages talent and energy where youth can contribute positively to the community in ways that they want (e.g. time banking).	Supports and enables young people to occupy and inhabit space. A "let's do it" city that ensures play and learning space.	Is a fun place to be with the reputation of being a learning place in the broadest sense.
greenNess	Enables me to enjoy, participate and improve in the environment without harming it.	Builds on existing capacities and local expertise to inform the whole city sustainability culture.	Develops a sustainability framework and looks at long term maintenance and management. And provides parks for people.	Showcases how green skills benefit the local economy. Encourages Inverness as the place to develop green skills; being positioned at forefront of renewables / centre of expertise.
build on our assets	Encourages me to use and benefit the historic and landscape heritage	Values what we have, and protects and strengthens what already exists. Encourages active community management of assets	Makes sure new proposals will be of a quality that contribute to and create new assets	Showcases its own assets, whilst being a place that can be used as a base that links to the wider assets
think tourism	Integrates the visitor as a vibrant addition to my place and my people.	Promotes good leisure and entertainment facilities in addition to encouraging and supporting appropriate tourist destinations.	Is authentic and confident, that is of its time and of its place	Is a place for different groups with different expectations, and is a centre for eco and extreme sports
culture, pride and identity	Provides opportunities for my lifestyle within an accommodating identity. That supports active citizenship and empowers individual actions for community benefit.	Values its culture and transfers knowledge between the generations, and communities with equal opportunity.	Designs places that are adaptable – that flex to meet differing requirements.	Allows for global and local action
health and well-being	Encourages me to have an active lifestyle	Allows space for shifting care closer to home and provides health facilities.	Allows decisions to be made that contribute to making a healthier place that promotes well-being.	Is regarded as a centre of excellence for catering for a dispersed population.

02. Building structures

[c] A new map of the city: 3, 2, 1...



The themes that emerged from the Future City events are not just representative of issues that need to be addressed. The games revealed that particular themes and issues locate in particular parts of the city in particular ways. We are therefore able to understand the city as a series of layers, where each layer responds to different contexts. Some contexts are more strategic; some are more local. On the basis of the

themes and peoples' stories, we can construct a simple map of the city. Seen in these terms, it should be possible for any person, young or old, to draw a basic diagram of their city and explain what it means; what the priorities are and how the parts of the city come together.

The diagram represents a mental map of the city: easy to understand, it tells the story of the people and the place, and helps to shape the city as a more resilient place. The Vision diagram is made up of:

- 3 primary areas,
- 2 linking elements, and
- 1 central heart.

The objective in each area is to strengthen Inverness as a people place, to strengthen its resilience. In this context, there are a range of actions to consider in each zone. These include:

Physical interventions: the nature of how the streets are made or retrofitted, how buildings relate to streets and blocks, how public spaces are organised will be different in each area, because they are all places with different characters.

Management interventions: there are assets such as views, existing open spaces and buildings that need to be appropriately managed and protected to strengthen the city image in all areas.

Enabling spaces: to enable people to have the opportunity to do what they need to do, a creative approach to building spaces is required. It also requires supporting a mix of small and cheap spaces in the city centre, supported by an integrated approach to approvals of regulations.

Social and cultural actions: identity and meaning is shaped when people can get involved. Processes such as public art, festivals and discussion about the city are important. They provide some of the glue that connect people to the physical structure of the city and to each other. People-place processes are critical and need to be supported strategically.

Joined up working: From the point of view of a user of the city, the more separation there is in the institutional frameworks that manage the city, the more difficult it is to understand how to get things done. More joined up working will help the city.

The City diagram explained....



[i] The 3 primary areas comprise:

The A9 corridor operates at a strategic level, linking into the highlands and the wider landscape setting; it presents an opportunity for the city to portray itself at an international scale. It is a gateway. It announces the moment, for many of 'coming home'. The power of feeling of coming home needs to be translated into the way we organise the physical environment in this location. The A9 needs to be seen as a major city street, which is a busy traffic corridor, but is characterised by good buildings, good views into the city centre and to the Firth. It should be a key centre of economic resource in the city, which brings together human, social, technological, public and environmental capital. Design is critical. Sustainability and meeting the climate change challenge is critical.. Public art is critical because we need to collective re-imagine this place and reconnect it into the mental map of the city.

The waterfront operates at both strategic and local levels, and is an area with considerable potential for regeneration at Muirtown, South Kessock, the harbour and at Longman. Too many waterfronts have tried to become cappuccino places without understanding what makes the place really work. The Inverness waterfront should be a people place, a place where you walk down the waterside and you see evidence of people living there and loving this place: bicycles, people fixing things, families, work spaces. The seeming 'messiness' of people spaces is important. Often, it means the place is lived in. People should always be at the centre of this thinking: why would people want to live here?

The neighbourhoods operate at a local scale, and cater to local need. Inverness, through the Scotland Housing Expo, is looking at new models of neighbourhood. Some of the lessons from this exercise can inform new neighbourhoods, some of which will be in suburbs. Some of the lessons can be applied to existing neighbourhoods. A key issue in these spaces is to connect people to the facilities they need to live their lives. This means integration with big ideas like the

green networks. It also means looking at the existing open spaces, pathways and cycleways and seeing how they can be better connected. Public art is an important ingredient of this work to draw communities together and be creative about what is possible, then starting with the small things quickly and building up a bigger picture of a better place in time.



[ii] The 2 linking elements

The first part of the city diagram set out broad brush areas. The second part of the city diagram focuses in on the elements that pull these parts of the city together. The emphasis is on connectivity. In this context, there are two big ideas:

The canal / river / green link are major cross-cutting assets that connect and join the city. They act as a cross to pull many areas of the city together.

The canal and the river are wonderful spaces. The point at which they link, around the islands, is a special place in the city. The river needs to become the city promenade. Every investment along the riverside - from

infrastructure such as flood defence, to public realm, to the nature of buildings should all work together to create this promenade experience.

The canal is a fantastic asset. Not only does it pass through some of Scotland's finest scenery, but it also provides a major amenity for the city. It is a huge resource, that needs careful thought. Areas like the Muirtown are important, but need sensitive thought to ensure what's special already isn't lost and what's coming is great.

From the islands, there is a series of greenspaces, walks and links (including the escarpment) that exist heading south and east into the city. These assets could be connected up as a fantastic sequence of civic spaces, and form a strategic eastern link which could connect to the A9 zone and east Longman in time.

ii. The 'spider' is a way of thinking about streets and links for pedestrians and cyclists. At the Future City Game youth session, one of the boys observed that the city is like a bowl, with the city in the centre. If you were to construct a 'spider' of links connecting to the centre you could connect into every neighbourhood in the city. This means that

there would be a choice of high quality pedestrian and cycle routes, which would allow youth, families and older people to travel around safely. This means having a good look at the streets and walks we have, seeing if the user experience can be enhanced through public realm, public art and integrated thinking about transport and design.



[iii] **The 1 central heart is:**

The city centre is of national and regional significance; a focus for the whole Highland region and a key element at the heart of the city's fabric. As the resilient core it offers considerable potential to adapt and re-model itself to provide a variety of different activities that include residential, cultural, employment and other uses. It is about more than retail.

A lot of good work has been done in the city centre. However, the city centre has vacant units and empty spaces over ground level shops. It is fragmented in areas. It is not easy for citizens or tourists to work out what's there, who's there and what's going on. The

city centre needs to be a priority area for action.

Throughout all the engagement people consistently re-imagine the city centre as a special place. This is an important starting point. To be a special place, citizens and stakeholders have to be enabled to take over and use the spaces of the city creatively. This means looking at how existing vacant spaces could be re-used, how the regulatory environment around planning, building control, licensing etc join up, and how the city collectively can look creatively at finance and enabling infrastructure for small and medium businesses, social enterprise and community initiatives. The city has a wealth of people in these sectors. This potential needs to be unlocked. There are initiatives in other places, such as Designing Dublin, that have already started to do this. It is all about creativity, and human potential, and allowing people to express this in their city, their way. In broad terms, there may be 5 key priorities for the city centre, subject to budgets being available:

- Expand the city centre area and define the character and purpose of the expanded area
- Translate this into land use planning, and there should be areas of flexible and

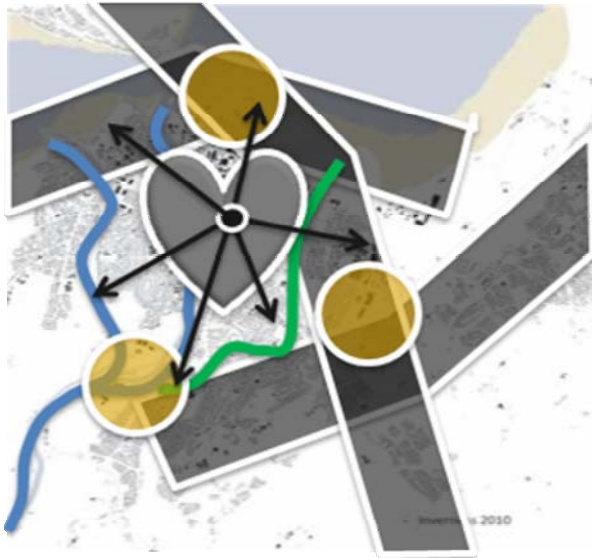
mixed use throughout the city centre area. Joined up working should also be promoted.

- Develop an integrated public realm and movement strategy prioritising pedestrians
- Develop a creative finance and vacant space strategy
- Continue to strategically support public art excellence and the creative and cultural use of the city centre.

These priorities will be investigated further through a detailed development brief for the city centre which will assist the implementation of the city vision.

02. Building structures

[d] Priority areas



When we pull the city diagram together we see that there are overlaps. The overlaps bring areas of international, national and local significance together. They are priority areas, with the city centre at the heart.

The priority areas do not occur or function in isolation, but are nodes which join up and pull

the city together; they enable strategic connections to link back to the inner core.

As a supplement to this vision document, outline spatial frameworks have been prepared for 3 priority areas of:

- Longman
- Ness-side
- Raigmore/Beechwood

The purpose of the outline spatial frameworks is to show how the themes derived from the visioning, the qualities of life, service and design and the broad objectives of the city zones could come together to shape better places in the city, and use city assets more creatively.

[e] Cross cutting strategies

The city diagram sets out broad areas, connecting elements and priorities for the city centre. It also drills down into detail on the 3 priority areas. Working across all these levels though will be a series of cross-cutting strategies that set out the quality ambitions and design standards for the way we do things. These cross-cutting strategies will include:

- A public art framework for the city. IOTA has been developing some excellent work in the city. This organisational capacity is a major asset for Inverness, and should continue to be used in a strategic way to help people understand and create meaning in the city.
- Integrated public realm and movement strategy. This should set out a hierarchy of streets and spaces [primary, secondary and tertiary streets, public squares and open spaces] for which a series of performance criteria and design standards can be presented.
- A sustainability framework for the city which sets out parameters and standards for integrated resource management, [waste, energy, water etc].
- A design charter which sets out the design ambitions for the city.

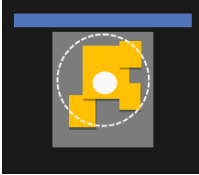
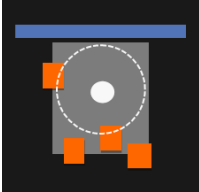
Consideration should also be given to strategies on social economy to supplement existing and emerging economic policy.

03. Making it happen

Plan of action:

Collective responsibility is key. The Highland Council alone cannot make it all happen; what is required is smart management of resources to secure opportunities for the future. Being clear on priorities encourages leadership at all scales and across sectors. Changing mindsets will create a process of enabling; allowing conversations to happen. We must learn from what is happening around us. We should become a learning city. Every action across the city should become a learning opportunity. The public sector's role will be to support; facilitate and encourage citizen involvement to make things happen.

This vision document when it is complete will propose a series of short, medium and long term actions to translate the vision into reality, and will be summarised in the accompanying table. We are looking for views on what the short, medium and long term priorities should be.

actions	Generic actions for the city (relate across to specific for each area)
short term collective responsibility 	
medium term collective responsibility 	
long term collective responsibility 