

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

INVERNESS CITY COMMITTEE - 19 APRIL 2010

Agenda Item	3
Report No	ICC 11/10

Review of Inverness City Vision

Report by Director of Planning and Development

SUMMARY

This report provides Members with an update on progress with the Inverness City Vision. Members will recall that a number of events were held during January which engaged with a number of groups and individuals throughout the City. A further event is planned for May, and this report seeks agreement that the next stage of City Vision preparation is supported.

1. Introduction

1.1 A report was brought to the December 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. It will inform the ongoing work on the Local Development Plan and Local Transport Strategy.

2. Progress to Date

2.1 Following on from Committee in December a number of "City Futures" events were held, which brought together a range of different stakeholders from across the City. The outcome of each of the three days is shown in Appendix 1 of this report. Clearly a lot of the outcomes are aspirational but they do highlight a wide range of themes that will be picked up and advanced through the production of the city vision document itself. Day 1 focussed specifically on young people.

2.2 Diarmaid Lawlor of Architecture and Design Scotland will be present at the Committee meeting to provide an update of work carried out to date and touch on some of the key elements of these events that will be carried forward into a city "symposium" event which is programmed to be held at the end of May 2010. This will allow a synthesis of these key themes into a city strategy which will stand alone as a statement of the kind of city Inverness aspires to be, but just as importantly, will be reflected within the development strategy of future Local Development Plans.

2.3 A number of the themes emerging relate to specific parts of Inverness and demonstrate the need for an updated strategy for particular areas. The first of

these relates to the Longman area of Inverness and that is the subject of another item on the agenda. It is hoped that the potential for other such areas, including Muirtown, the city centre and riverfront through the city, Ness-side, and Inshes/Raigmore will be brought forward as a result of this city vision exercise. Feedback will be sought from Members on an ongoing basis.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 The city symposium and any further work on the vision itself will be funded by the Council. These costs will be met from the existing Planning & Development Service budget.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 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.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is invited to:

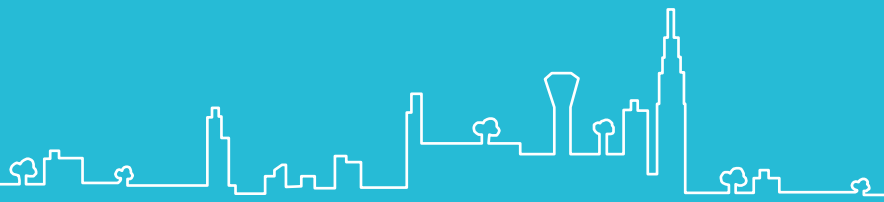
- note the content of this report and the presentation by Architecture & Design Scotland;
- provide further input to the development of the Vision through a Members' briefing; and
- support the symposium to be held in May 2010 to assist in the preparation of the updated Inverness City Vision.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning and Development

Date 6 April 2010

Report Authors: Malcolm Macleod



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Day 1: Inverness 20 Jan 2010

Ironworks

Winning idea: Inverness Eco-Festival

The Eco-festival brings together the four FCG challenges (environmental, economic, social and cultural). The Festival would be a month of special events throughout the city connected by the common theme of the environment.

- **Environmental:** The environment will become a more important issue over the next 20 years we believe that Inverness is uniquely placed to hold a festival with an eco twist. As well as the stunning natural environment of the Highlands and the potential for renewable technology in the area, there are other projects such as the eco housing development that the festival could tie into.
- **Cultural:** The festival could make use of existing venues such as Eden Court, the Ironworks, various pubs and even Falcon Square and the High street for outdoor performances, with an eco twist
- **Social:** The social elements are clear and events could be put on for all ages and tastes. One proposal was to offer free tickets to local residents
- **Economic:** The festival would provide an excellent opportunity to boost tourism to the area and raise the profile of the Inverness and the Highlands

The project could be linked to the Edinburgh Festival to provide a pre or post festival for people visiting wanting to see more of Scotland or who find the Edinburgh experience a bit too much. With the Eco theme we would also be keen to encourage the use of Public transport by perhaps offering free public transport during the event.

MULTICOLOURED TEAM

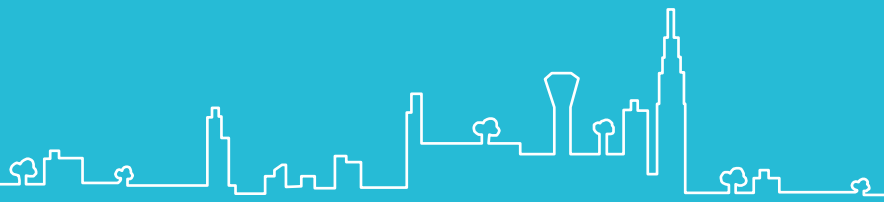
Winning idea: Inverness Eco-Festival

(see above)

Other ideas

1. A centre where gamers can compete against other gamers
2. Electricity monitor in every house to see energy consumption
3. Promotion local businesses by offering incentives to buy local produce
4. Develop a University in Inverness
5. Environmentally friendly public transport system with 'oyster' cards
6. More community centres – easily accessible and well advertised





7. Creating a centre for renewable energy with R&D
8. Allotments for people to grow own vegetables
9. Create a cultural quarter for the town

GREEN TEAM

Winning idea: GreenNESS

To develop Inverness as a centre of 'GreenNess' focused on the University of the Highlands and Islands as a centre for environmental and ecological conservation helping set standards for Scotland and boosting the economy of Inverness. UHI develops specialist courses and research in 'green' subjects. The plan would also encourage

- generation of renewable energy sources and harness natural elements to produce power
- run project focusing on environmental and ecological development in Inverness
- ensure new build completely sustainable
- UHI runs school outreach programmes and collaborations with local businesses

Other ideas

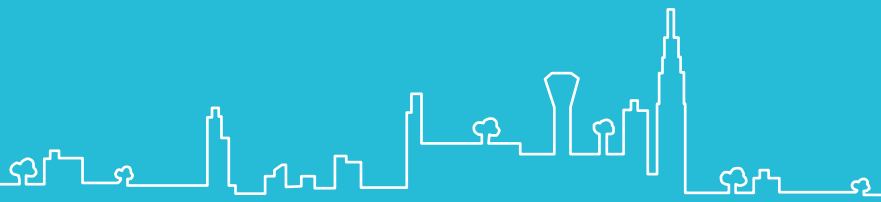
1. Improved and greener public transport system
2. Develop renewable energy sources
3. Recycling made compulsory
4. Inverness peoples Bank
5. Move more retail from retail park to city centre
6. More youth enterprise
7. Youth consultation group (advisory group to local council)
8. Improvement and development of tourist services within city centre (museum)
9. Expansion of the University of the Highlands and Islands
10. Public WiFi and broadband

RED TEAM

Winning idea: Green Space

Green Space is a public outdoor super venue in the town centre. It is literally an outdoor green space with temporary and permanent structures offering a range of sports and leisure activities. Green Space addresses the lack of opportunities available (particularly for young people) for entertainment and leisure. Power for the facilities is generated by renewable energy sources – low running costs, so free to use. The facilities include

- extreme sports
- ice rink
- cinema
- performance stage
- skills based activities
- general green space for leisure



Other ideas

1. Green college
2. Improved health promotion in schools
3. Extreme sports venue
4. Super city
5. Skills school
6. Electric transport

BLUE TEAM

Winning idea: Networked University

A university which promotes and facilitates access to a world-class education; a university connecting learners through innovative communications technology and distance learning techniques; a university which focuses on excellence in communication and cultural awareness; a university which give students the opportunity to gain exemplary qualifications which are recognised and respected all over the world.

Other ideas

1. Make Inverness more self-sufficient, reducing need to leave city
2. More stuff to do - sports, entertainment, shopping
3. Quality not quantity – focus on small number of good things
4. Top quality golf course
5. Introduce charge to encourage use of public transport (and revenue provider)
6. More renewable energy resources – wind, solar, wave
7. More festivals

PURPLE TEAM

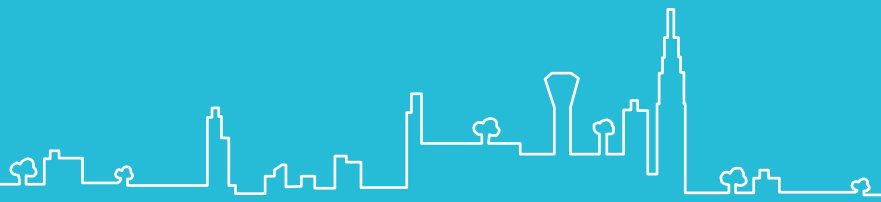
Winning idea: Operation ALBA

This project promotes a range of actions to maintain and celebrate our rich heritage - our national language, culture and identity - whilst being respectful to other cultures.

- to reintroduce the Gaelic as second language in schools as well as Scottish history and music.
- to celebrate a Tartan day, opening a heritage centre and introducing cultural festivals.
- to promote popular and traditional Scottish music
- run classes in all things Scottish

Other ideas

1. Increase sporting and leisure facilities (free?)
2. Expand hospital provision for better healthcare
3. Grants to encourage businesses to start up in city
4. Grants for graduates/apprenticeships for local business so they stay here
5. Encourage green businesses



6. Expansion of communication e.g. harbour, airport
7. Tighter regulations from protection environment and wildlife
8. More efficient recycling facilities
9. Transport: car sharing, improve transport network including cycle paths, cheaper fares, change to non-fossil fuel cars rewarded

WHITE TEAM

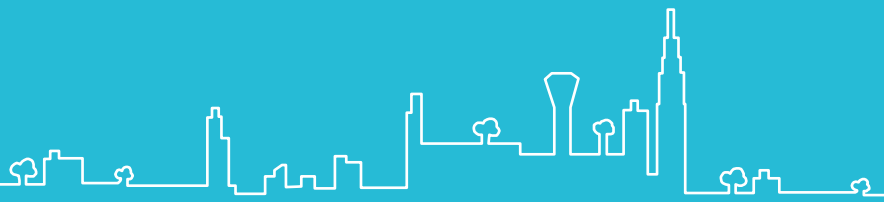
Winning idea: Spider Network

A giant cycle network to connect all areas of Inverness. There will be one main spider connecting the town centre to various areas and then sub-spiders to connect suburbs to the main spider. The project will encourage a healthier lifestyle and help reduce congestion and carbon emissions. It will save users money on petrol and car maintenance and benefits future generations. The plan would also include:

- schemes such as 'cycle to work' and 'cycle to school' would be given incentives such as vouchers for stores or free cinema tickets
- a possible bike part to keep your bike safe in city centre

Other ideas

1. More facilities and areas for young people e.g. youth clubs
2. University and better education/training for residents to compete with incoming skilled labour
3. More secondary school places needed, new secondary school
4. New housing must have percentage of energy needed to heat them produced by renewable sources
5. Bring back our culture – celebrate our history, culture and natural beauty of Inverness/Highlands
6. Languages: teach other languages in schools and Gaelic, our national language
7. Expand the airport
8. Attract large companies to Inverness to create jobs



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Day 2: Inverness 21 Jan 2010

Merkinch Community Centre

Winning idea: Riverside in Inverness (Make the river a link not a barrier)

The idea brings together the four FCG challenges (environmental, economic, social and cultural).

At present the city centre of Inverness is very constrained. The logical way would be to extend it to the North, enlarge the centre northwards. Making the River Ness a focal point in the city by developing the recreational opportunities and bringing new life to the waterfront.

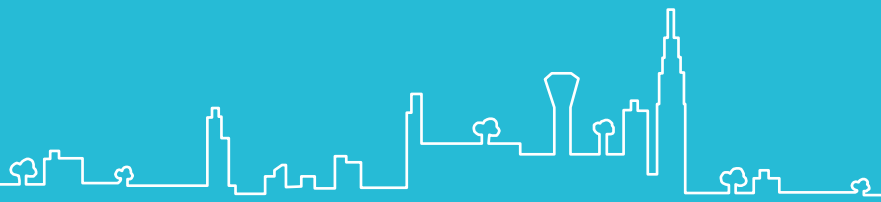


Main features of the idea include:

- linking parts of the city
- ferry connection across Firth
- turn Eden Court into a Cultural Centre of Inverness
- provides link from the castle to the cultural quarter
- links green areas with walking and cycling routes
- Firth Port and Ness Island to be protected
- brings new commercial opportunities
- provides leisure and cultural services/facilities

This could be implemented with the assumption that Southern District link is in place by 2030.





PURPLE TEAM

Winning idea: Riverside in Inverness

(see above)

Other ideas

1. Modernise communication and networks, proper broadband everywhere in the Highlands
2. More cultural activities in the city centre
3. Promotion local businesses by offering incentives
4. Build proper highways
5. Creating and improving walking and cycling networks
6. Environmentally friendly public transport system
7. Improved design in Marina
8. Improved leisure areas-more developed city centre
9. Create a cultural quarter for the town
10. Get on with it!!!

RED TEAM

Winning idea: Life Inverness + Just add water

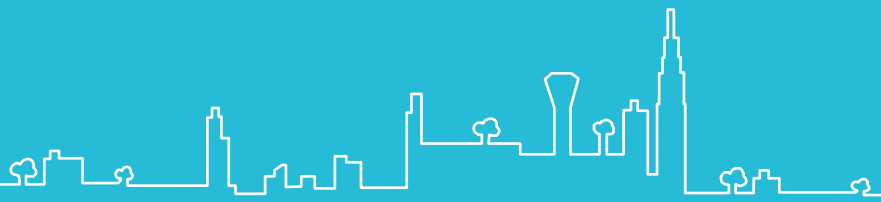
The team's vision is to bring back to life the built and environmental heritage of the city of Inverness. The idea was presented as a story of modern living, alongside and in harmony with our local wildlife.

- our journey starts with the reincarnation of the old Whin Park Hydro Scheme using modern technology to generate the power.
- HydroWild is a state-of-the-art power generation scheme with a difference: one's wildlife experience starts here. Visit our hides and see other, kingfisher, red squirrel, red kite and even osprey, to name but a few.
- the water power will be used to bring life and light to the key built assets of Inverness situated in the Spirit and Stage district and the grass roots, grit and grandeur district.
- disused buildings along the river will be brought back to life as Highland and Island embassies.
- bring power and light to this key area of the city will promote feel-good factor, encouraging further investment in the city centre and promoting a return to city centre living.

Other ideas

1. Wildlife and Ness Islands (team's winning idea)
 2. Support inner business
 3. Reinforcing the youth theme in the city – Highland Campus
4. Recycling made compulsory, waste used to create energy
5. Museum + Art Gallery –big public spaces around it- Cultural Centre





6. Build on what already developed in Inverness, look at what we did before (power plant)
7. Monorail between Inverness and Airport
8. Landmark Structure (replace Ness Bridge)
9. Improvement and development of tourist services within city centre (museum)
10. Expansion of the University of the Highlands and Islands

BLUE TEAM

Winning idea: Heart of Inverness

Elements of the idea:

- making heart of Inverness bigger in proportion to size of city
- flip heart of city across the River
- green blanket area (like living bandage) over railway. Where green blanket reaches firth, create beach
- new mono rail (to football ground, airport, university, etc (cost £500 for city, £250 to get to airport)
- Castle will become central, clearing
- Maritime museum
- Art Gallery to encourage cultural development

Other ideas

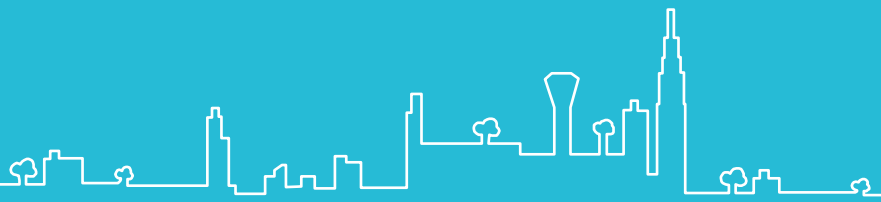
1. Cultural hub – studio/exhibitions for artists
2. Corporate sponsorship (Tescotland)
3. More indoor facilities –historic Arcade
4. Opening up river “bigger heart for bigger body!”
5. Festival- promotion of what is happening in Inverness
6. Reforestation- planting trees (not disturbing existing habitat)
7. Becoming energy self-sufficient
8. Changing curriculum balance in schools
9. Fully developed campus

WHITE TEAM

Winning idea: Inverness Castle

- to retain and reclaim the Castle for residents and visitors. Take the historic Town House and Castle and put new content into them and use as a flexible space
- Council currently in Town House, but assumption that they will move out.
- approaching the two buildings at present has no “drama” effect, thus how they are approached is important
- new Building in glass in contract to new historic centre with roof garden or outdoor exhibition space
- dramatic approach to new historic centre

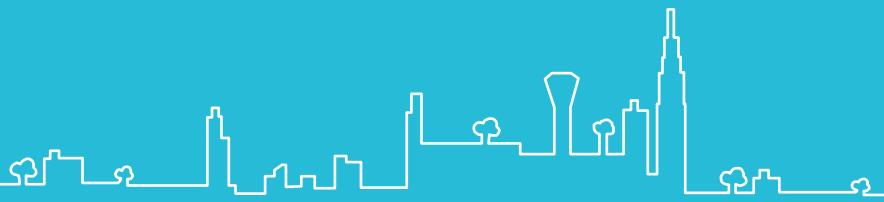




Vision statement: Visitors can experience innovative and provocative new art, relax, have fun, learn and discover fresh, new ideas. It should be active friendly space with strong educational focus. Bring good contemporary international art and design exhibitions. Area will be pedestrianised, turned into informal space. (Baltic in Newcastle as a model to aspire to).

Other ideas

1. Increase sporting and leisure facilities
2. Make Inverness more self-sufficient
3. University connecting learners through innovative communications technology and specialising on green/environmental courses
4. Cultural hub + sports, entertainment, shopping
5. Good quality local things
6. Small square
7. Encourage use of public transport and cycling
8. More renewable energy resources – wind, solar, wave
9. More festivals
10. Grants to encourage businesses to start up in city, grants for graduates/apprenticeships for local business so they stay here



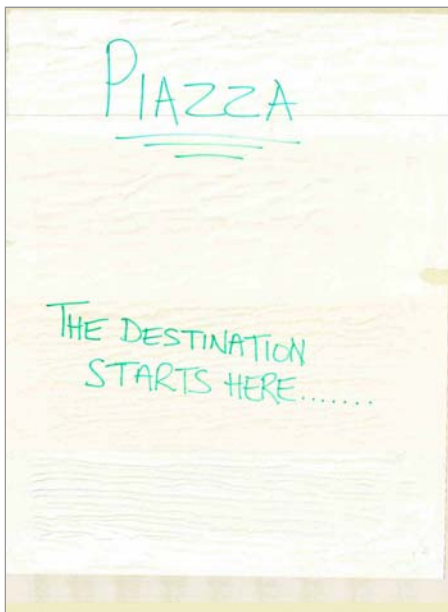
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Day 3: Inverness 22 Jan 2010

Spectrum Centre

Winning idea (Purple team): Piazza: the destination starts here...

Think of your favourite city in the world. Picture it? What are we missing? What has it got that other cities don't and what do we remember about those cities. It's usually a particular space or a building. (Eifel Tower, Alexanderplatz) What's missing in Inverness? Creating a central Piazza in Inverness could achieve this special identity.



The benefits:

- creates a focus and a welcome to the visitors
- creates a city to be proud of
- added tourism value
- reinvigorates the centre and Inverness
- creates a very flexible space
- holds tourists in the city centre longer, spending more
- helps to create a café culture
- reduces traffic in the city (park & ride)
- creates a focal point where people gather, a place where people want to stay and spend time
- a safe area for families to spend time together, for kids

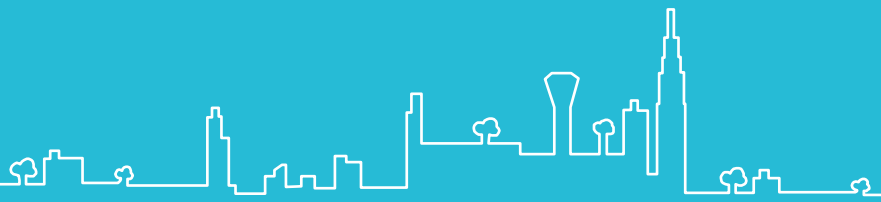
- Shopping
- Offers entertainment for all age groups
- place to have events: book fair, Scottish dancing, pipers
- environmental/green area, where one can sit and eat his sandwich during lunch break
- tourism info point

PURPLE TEAM

Winning idea: Piazza

(see above)





Other ideas

1. Make castle into heritage centre
2. Utilise vacant shop units as temporary gallery space
3. Protected social housing
4. Develop a city centre alcohol policy –manage positively - promote cafe culture
5. Walking and cycling opportunities with signage
6. Reallocation of land to green open space
7. Inverness economic development council
8. Road improvements and rail line upgrade
9. Preferential rates for local businesses

RED TEAM

Winning idea: Local environmental industry development

To create a focus on the environmental sciences and industries equivalent to the current focus on the health and life sciences.

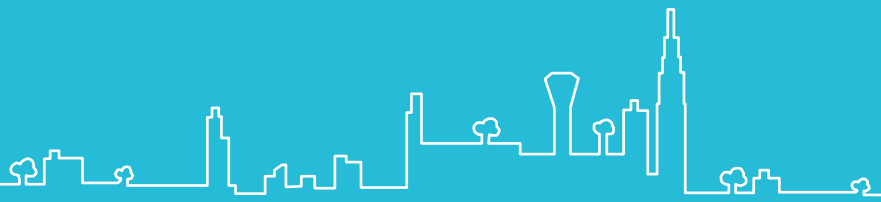
This should focus on the creation and development of small companies that punch well above their weight in an international context (eg Wavegen) rather than creating further dependence on large companies which are more vulnerable to the vagaries of international capital. Such a focus would play to the strengths of existing institutions in Inverness, eg Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland, as well as in the rest of the Highlands (eg Dounreay nuclear waste management) and could foster the development of new areas of such expertise, such as decommissioning fish and wind farms—planning now for a long term future.

It would be crucial that this become a key theme for UHI, helping to give UHI a distinctive identity in a crowded market. This is a very entrepreneurial field—it should foster business start ups and new social enterprises.

The SNH HQ at Great Glen House, and the planned Housing Fair offer models of ecological development.

Such a focus would deliver on many of the other areas we identified:

- contribute to intellectual interchange
- enhance cultural energy (in the way that oil and nuclear managers have driven cultural developments in the north and east)
- encourage diversity
- further pioneer new ways of working, reducing congestion and carbon footprints
- environmental philosophy should permeate every aspect of planning development, especially in peripheral communities of growth (the Tornagrain model)



Other ideas

1. Encourage social diversity / immigration
2. Broadband
3. Improve road, rail access
4. Reclaim contaminated land – use for visioning development; cultural incubator; including library museum complex
5. Develop River Ness, including flood protection
6. Create a destination development – sense of identity and place
7. Priority to UHI

BLUE TEAM

Winning idea: Inverness: the Gateway city

Cities have their own identity. How do people see Inverness? What word or image expresses the cities identity? What is our brand? What would the strap line be? Inverness: City of....? The team proposed that Inverness is a gateway city: 'Gateway City to a new and exciting world'. As a gateway city connectivity to this 'new and exciting world' would be the essence of its success. To become a gateway we need to:

- improve rail links
- increase international flights
- improve other means of communication such as broadband.

Other ideas

1. Improve broadband link / technology infrastructure
2. Cultural hub – building on what already exists in the Highlands
3. Build sustainable local communities; not bland sprawl
4. Development of the city to reflect the needs of tourism in tandem with businesses and residents
5. Improved facilities for young people
6. Integrate transport (road, rail, air) for highlands as a whole
7. Manage problems arising from climate change
8. Develop affordable social housing
9. UHI as a standalone unit

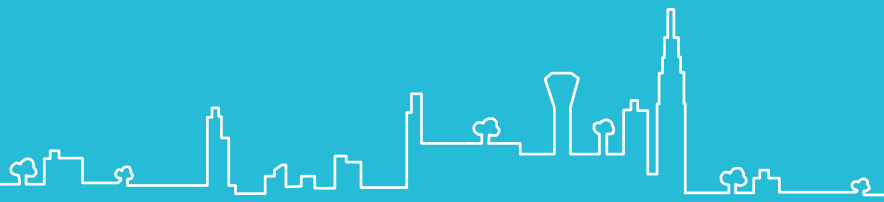
GREEN TEAM

Winning idea: Dot.Ness

The principal elements of this idea are to:

- Create a media hub in the city
- a cohesive media industry - TV, film, music etc.





- create links to the University as demand increases and requires its support
- promote the Highlands identity e.g. as a centre for music etc.
- inspire the next generation
- connect rural – providing valuable information for farming community and allowing that community to share information and ideas.

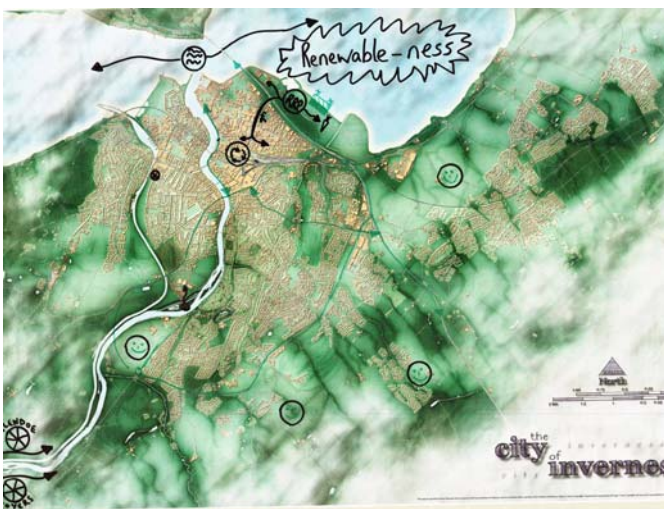
Other ideas

1. Connectivity / movement around city without car – green routes – walk / cycle
2. Woodland cemetery – Longman reclaimed land
3. City centre focal point – cultural network route
4. Low cost business start-up units, e.g. on High Street
5. Develop waterways – watersports?
6. Retain young people
7. Creative digital media centre – TV computer games
8. Create gateway into the city – better sense of arrival / highlight identity

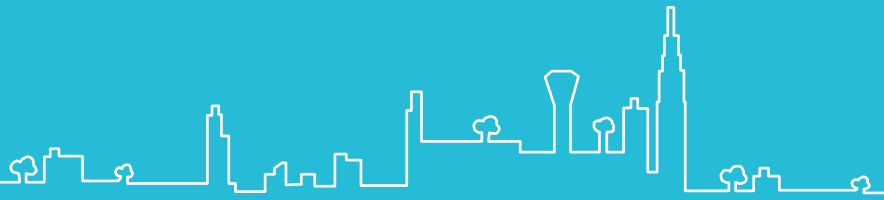
WHITE TEAM

Winning idea: Renewable-Ness

“I have a dream” to see the Highlands and Islands become a global centre for environmental excellence. To develop the area as a centre for renewable energy; for the production of renewable energy and for advances in renewable energy technologies. The benefits would be a reduction in the carbon footprint, cleaner air, water and land; education, job creating, new skills and re-skilling; a healthier, more holistic communities. The idea would include:



- Small-scale hydro schemes
- using natural resources for sustainable development
- generation of investment in renewables
- tidal energy – flood defense harnesses tidal energy
- solar-power - eco business premises
- allotments
- brownfield site development – new development should be carbon neutral



Other ideas

1. Development of Beechwood campus and UHI
2. Stable transport infrastructure – road, rail, air + coach park
3. Culture Park
4. Local opportunities for offshore wind potential – Nigg, Ardersier?
5. Create development sites of all types and scale – link with business; e.g. not huge business park – live within easy travel distance
6. Waste from energy, sustainable buildings
7. New delivery model for arts
8. Inverness city status conference