

## Welcome to this Public Exhibition

### A96 CORRIDOR MASTERPLAN

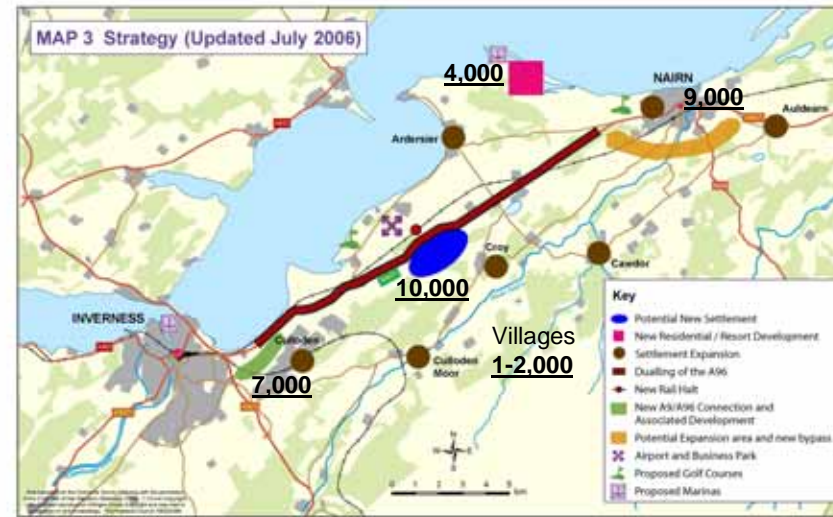
### Draft Proposals & Implementation

The A96 Corridor covers all of the land eastwards from Inverness to the border with Moray and south to the B9006. Population in the Inverness City-Region has grown by almost 32,000 and more than 20,000 houses have been built during the last 30 years. This period has also witnessed the development of a new community of 12,000 people at Culloden. The Highland population has been increasing by more than 2000 persons per annum recently. Some 750 houses were erected in the Inverness area during 2006, the highest figure since 1977.

The National Planning Framework for Scotland (2004) promotes the City-Region as one of the key development areas in Scotland, specifically referring to potential within the A96 Corridor. Both the Highland Structure Plan and the Inverness Local Plan identify the Corridor as the preferred location for long-term development. In 2003, Scottish Ministers endorsed the City Partnership's Vision of a further 30,000 people to be housed in the Corridor by 2041.



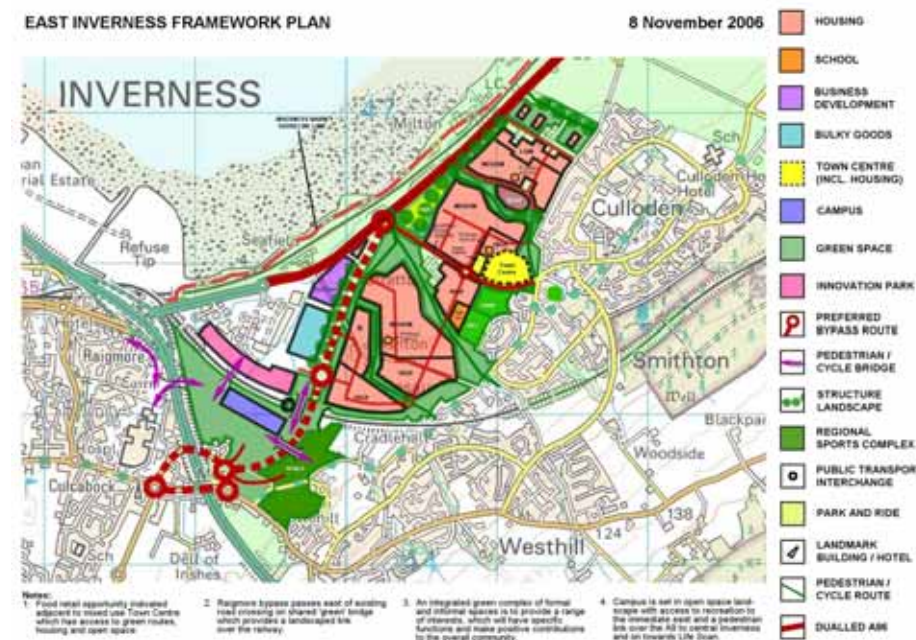
An outline strategy for the A96 Corridor was prepared by the Council's consultants in 2005 (see below). This provides for modest expansion of existing villages and the development of two new communities at Whiteness and Tornagrain as well as significant development at East Inverness and Nairn. Most of these proposals are embargoed until 2011 or later in order to ensure that existing stocks of zoned and serviced land can be substantially completed.



Further masterplanning, infrastructure and feasibility investigations have since been carried out. In September 2006 the Council consulted on a range of options for Framework Plans covering Nairn and East Inverness, together with draft proposals for the wider countryside setting of the whole Corridor.

#### EAST INVERNESS

The main proposals for Culloden are to increase population by 7,000 persons, some 3,300 new housing units and for the creation of approximately 3,500 jobs. Principal features are as follows :



- Dual carriageway bypass route linking from an upgraded A9/TLR junction at Inshes northwards across the railway to connect with the A96 in the vicinity of the Smithton interchange. Direct access for adjoining business, retail, campus and residential developments.
- Park and ride scheme with bus links adjoining the Smithton junction, and provision for a transport interchange facility to serve the Campus including a longer term rail halt option at Beechwood.
- Upgrading of the Culloden distributor from the A96 as far as the new District Centre to be situated centrally by Smithton, including provision for a major supermarket outlet.

- Hotel developments at Stratton Lodge and at the A96/Bypass gateway site where there is scope for an iconic entrance building.
- Bulky goods shopping outlets (regional retail) between the bypass and the existing West Seafield Retail Park.
- New Inverness College/UHI campus comprising faculty, research/incubator and student/staff accommodation with buildings held to the north-eastern flanks of the site in a high quality parkland setting, and segregated pedestrian links spanning west across A9 into the city and the railway into East Inverness.
- An Innovation Park for spin-off businesses and high growth technology enterprises opposite the Campus at West Seafield.
- A major Regional Sports complex situated at East Beechwood
- A formal Town Park and adjoining structural open space at Smithton/Resaurie including informal landscaped areas, core footpaths and flood alleviation measures connecting through to adjoining countryside green wedges and the projected coastal trail.
- A reserved site for a secondary school close by the Park and District Centre.
- A compact new residential quarter lying to the west of Culloden and offering a range of mainstream and affordable dwellings with a graduated density mix with lower intensity housing towards the northern margins by Milton of Culloden.

#### TORNAGRAIN

Moray Estate's proposals for a new community of 10,000 people by *Tornagrain* were the subject of a 'charette' design process during September 2006. The masterplanners (DPZ) have since revised the design including integration of the Airport Business Park and A96 bypass realignment. These changes will shortly be publicised locally by the developers in a newsletter. No planning applications have yet been lodged with the Council.



#### WHITENESS

The outline masterplan for this new settlement/resort located on the former Ardersier oil fabrication yard was approved by the Planning Authority on 28 November 2006. Proposals are subject to detailed conditions and S.75 Agreement with the Whiteness Property Company and require referral to Scottish Ministers. Plans include provision for a major marina and 1950 new dwellings to be constructed during 2008-18. This indicates a population of approximately 4000 inhabitants on completion.



- Site to be reserved for a secondary school.
- Longer term residential and community development at West Nairn (Delnies), clustered around the proposed third golf course and ancillary uses, and connected to the projected coastal footpath link from Nairn to Whiteness/Inverness.
- Major business and industrial land allocations on the eastern flanks of the town at Balmakeith.

Measures to safeguard more than 90% of the A96 Corridor from future building development are an integral part of the draft Strategy. Proposals include protection of key heritage sites, buffer zones for existing communities, major treeplanting/ landscape improvements, an extensive network of new footpaths including a coastal trail from Inverness to Nairn, together with improved countryside access and interpretation facilities.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Consultants have recently drawn up a draft programme for future development of the Corridor as a whole between 2006-41. This has been carefully prepared in conjunction with the findings from traffic, electricity, water and sewerage infrastructure studies which were commissioned by the Council. These demonstrate the need for major investment in new facilities required to remedy existing deficiencies and service new development. They include dualling of the A96 road with bypasses at Nairn and Inshes, more than a dozen new primary and secondary schools, a new water supply likely to be sourced from Loch Ness, reinforcement of electricity supplies to the central part of the Corridor and major new sewage treatment, outfall and sludge facilities.

### EXISTING VILLAGES

Limited expansion of Culloden Moor, Croy, Ardersier, Cawdor and Auldearn is also planned within the Corridor. Each of these communities has the benefit of existing Local Plan land allocations and other consents for residential and community uses. These commitments comprise almost 500 additional dwellings in total, with capacity for up to 1000 additional residents overall

Total development costs in the A96 Corridor are estimated at £3.1 billion of which £430 million represents essential infrastructure investment. The consultants have conducted an assessment of potential funding mechanisms which points to the use of interlocking Joint Venture companies and S.75 Agreements with developers to deliver key infrastructure projects at the appropriate times.

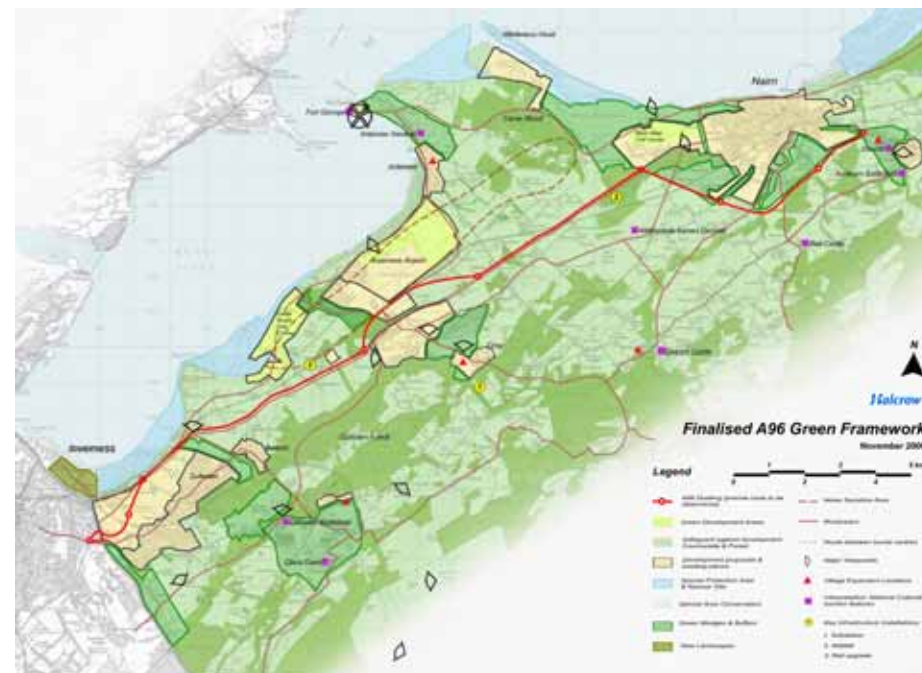
### OTHER DEVELOPMENTS



Proposals are underway to build a major hotel and championship golf resort at Castle Stuart. Expansion of Inverness Airport /Business Park will cater for more than double the existing passenger numbers, see the building of a new rail halt at Dalcross and create over 5000 jobs.

This implementation programme also includes a draft protocol for these developer financial contributions towards future provision of services. Costs have been apportioned between developers and the public agencies, between the different categories of land use, and between different localities within the Corridor. The assessment suggests that a proportion of land values equivalent to £9-11,000 per dwelling will need to be levied via landowners. This level of contribution is considered to demonstrate the viability of the overall strategy proposals.

### GREEN FRAMEWORK



### NAIRN

At Nairn the current priority is to develop allocated sites at Balmakeith (Lochloy), Sandown and the town centre. Longer term proposals allow for an additional 4,300 housing units and the creation of at least 4,500 jobs. The principal features are :

- A96 bypass starting from Drumdivan in the west, crossing the river at Howford and connecting back to the existing trunk road at Auchnacloch. This also enables a direct link for future development at Delnies.
- Two intermediate junctions on the new bypass where it crosses the A939 Granttown route and at a convenient point for access to serve proposed development at South Nairn.
- Eventual doubling of the town's size with total expansion capacity for an additional 9000 persons.
- A new neighbourhood at South Nairn representing the first phase of town expansion, including new District centre facilities located towards the north, from which improved pedestrian links will facilitate use of town centre shopping and other functions.
- Development of additional riverside and woodland based leisure and recreational facilities utilising adjoining floodplain lands.



### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Masterplan work is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which the Council is now lodging for consideration by the statutory Consultation Authorities via the SEA Gateway. The relevant documents, including a non-technical summary, are available for public inspection and expressions of opinion.

### MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

**The DEADLINE for this consultation is Monday, 5 March 2007.** You are invited to submit your views in writing to :

John D Rennison, Director of Planning & Development, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The views of local people, stakeholders and statutory agencies will be reported to the Planning Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2007. A finalised strategy will be considered with a recommendation that this be approved as *supplementary planning policy guidance*. The Council expects to commence formal review of a replacement statutory Local Development Plan covering Inverness and the A96 Corridor during 2008. Proposals will be subject to public consultation and objections heard at Public Local Inquiry before that Plan is adopted.