

Development Plan Scheme and “Keep us in the Picture!”

As we will be required to under the new Planning Act, the Council has prepared a Development Plan Scheme. This sets out:

- what future local development plans for Highland will contain;
- when they are likely to be produced; and
- how individuals, communities and organisations can be involved in making these plans.

The Highland Wide Local Development Plan will guide future development of the Highland area for the next 20 years. It will make sure we make consistent decisions about planning permission in line with policies that apply to the whole Highland area. The plan will contain:

- A vision and spatial strategy
- Policies for managing development
- Supplementary planning guidance
- An Action Programme.

In addition the A96 proposals will be an integral part of the Highland wide Local Development Plan, and you are encouraged to respond to the next stage of the consultation process - the Main Issues Report – which will be sent out for comment in early 2009.

To help publicise the Development Plan Scheme, a photo competition was held, and young people from across Highland invited to indicate what they felt could be improved in their local communities. The winning entries can be seen on the Highland Council web-site on this link:

www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanscheme.htm

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Keeping you informed

The Council will continue to deal with the planning applications submitted, as well as progress the preparation of the Development Plan. News is also awaited on funding for the key infrastructure within the Corridor such as the dualling of the A96 and the Inverness Trunk Link Road, and is expected in the Autumn. We will keep you up to date with any progress on developments as and when it happens. In the mean time if you have any questions or queries do not hesitate to contact us.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Following the adoption of the framework the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Highland Council to produce a Post-Adoption Strategic Environmental Assessment statement. This has been completed and has been sent to the Scottish Government who will pass it on to the consultation authorities (Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland) for their consideration. This document sets out how the Council has integrated environmental concerns from the Environmental Report on the Framework into the framework itself or where issues have been flagged up to be considered in the context of the Development Plan. The Post Adoption statement can be viewed at the Council Headquarters in Inverness during office hours and online at www.highland.gov.uk. The Council have now fulfilled the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, but will continue to monitor the environmental effect of development in the A96 corridor.

Clarification

Attention has been drawn to the text contained in the acknowledgement section of the A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework. The intention in setting out a list of organisations in the acknowledgement section was to clearly state that others had contributed information and views to the ongoing preparation of the document and thereby assisted in its development. In these terms they supported (i.e. assisted) with the work carried out. It was not intended to mean that everyone so listed actually agreed with the content in totality.

Following representations from local group Action for Planning Transparency it has been pointed out that there is room for misunderstanding as to what the use of the word “supported” refers to. This was not intentional, and we have amended this in order to avoid any further misunderstanding and would apologise for any inconvenience caused. In order to ensure clarity and to help focus attention on the actual content of the Framework, future printed versions of the document and the version available on the Council’s web-site will be altered to remove the phrase “supported by”.



A96 Growth Corridor Framework Update

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

AUGUST 2008

Welcome to the first A96 newsletter since the adoption of the A96 Growth Corridor Framework in September 2007. The purpose of the newsletter is to update you on the progress of the framework.

Progress so far

The A96 Growth Corridor Framework was approved by the Council in September 2007. It provides planning guidance largely for development proposed from 2011 onwards, for a period stretching over the next 30 years. Covering all of the land eastwards from Inverness to the border with Moray and south to the B9006 the A96 Corridor offers huge potential for the continued growth of both the City and the Highlands. The Council will now take the provisions set out in this document through the Local Development Plan process in order to give it formal planning status. In the meantime, the A96 Corridor framework document forms what is called supplementary planning guidance to the current Development Plan for the area. You can see the document on the Highland Council web-site <http://www.highland.gov.uk/businessinformation/economicdevelopment/regeneration/a96-corridor-masterplan.htm>

The document identifies where new development will be located in this area over the next 30 years and beyond. These areas include:

Inverness East - which is identified as the location for the relocation of Inverness College as part of a wider UHI campus. In addition significant housing, retail and business development opportunities are identified to the east of the railway-line;

Dalcross - which includes the continued growth of the airport, a new Inverness Airport Business Park and the potential for a new settlement at Tornagraing;

Whiteness - the site of the former Ardersier Fabrication Yard, which has outline planning permission for almost 2,000 houses, community facilities and leisure and tourism uses;

Nairn - including significant housing and business expansion to the south and west of the town.

Although some of these developments are for the longer term, there is a lot of activity at present throughout the corridor, and a number of major schemes are being brought forward – the map overleaf shows what is currently happening where.

The draft National Planning Framework 2 has been published and identified the A96 growth corridor for the main focus of growth in the Inner Moray Firth. Following the closing of the consultation, the NPF2 is to be redrafted, information about this can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning>

In order to make sure that infrastructure keeps pace with development, the Council has been meeting with Scottish Government and other public agencies to look at how we can deliver the education, community, transport and open space facilities, water and drainage that will be essential in creating sustainable communities for the future. In recent weeks meetings have been held with, amongst others:

- South East Highland Community Health Partnership;
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency North Board;
- Transport Scotland; and
- Scottish Water

In addition the Head of Planning and Building Standards has met with John Swinney, Stewart Stevenson and Jim Mather to discuss progress on the delivery of opportunities such as those in the A96 Corridor. We have also been meeting with local community groups. There is concern with the levels of growth proposed over the next 30 or so years. Although many welcome development in the area, they feel that this should not be in advance of the necessary infrastructure improvements required. Community Councils and a recently formed action group, Action for Planning Transparency have been involved in discussions in recent months and we want to develop these relationships to ensure we are engaging with everyone as proposals go through the planning process.

Many of the major proposals being considered by the Council will present opportunities for further community involvement, whether that be through commenting on planning applications, or as part of any Public Local Inquiries held either as part of the Local Development Plan process or where individual planning applications are considered in this way.

6. Wastewater Treatment

- Activity has focused around the immediate needs in the east of the corridor in order to service the developments at Whiteness and the first phase of the Inverness Airport Business Park – Ardersier has available capacity in the short term.
- Work is still underway on the location for the long term strategic wastewater treatment facilities in the east of the corridor. This decision rests with Scottish Water taking into account planning and environmental issues which need to be considered.

5. Inverness Airport Business Park

- A planning application has now been submitted for the development of the business park.
- The proposal is for a total of 345,234 square metres of mixed commercial floorspace.

7. Whiteness

- Whiteness was granted Outline Planning Permission for 1950 houses and associated facilities in November 2006.
- A planning application for reserved matters for the first phase of development is expected towards the end of 2008.

8. Nairn Development Zone

- An application for 550 houses at Sandown on the west side of Nairn falls on a site allocated within the adopted Nairnshire Local Plan, albeit at a higher density than that originally proposed. The application is being considered by the Council at the moment.
- A major retail proposal to the east of Nairn has recently been granted by the Council. The proposal is in the process of being referred to Ministers due to it being a significant departure from the approved Development Plan.
- An outline planning application for a mixed use development at Delnies, to the west of Nairn, comprising up to 300 houses, tourism and leisure facilities as well as an 18 hole golf course has been submitted to the Council and is currently under consideration.
- The Princes Foundation are to carry out an Enquiry by Design project, sponsored by a number of housebuilders, on land to the south of Nairn. A Scoping day was held in Nairn on 22nd July 2008, with the formal Design workshops to be held in October 2008.
- All of the future expansion areas in Nairn are being brought forward in the context of the A96 Corridor Framework, with particular emphasis being placed on the need for infrastructure improvement, including the case for a by-pass for the town.

4. Tornagrain

- Moray Estates have carried out a number of consultation events to inform their proposals for a new town at Tornagrain.
- Submission of an outline planning application is still expected during the course of 2008.

3. East Inverness Development Zone

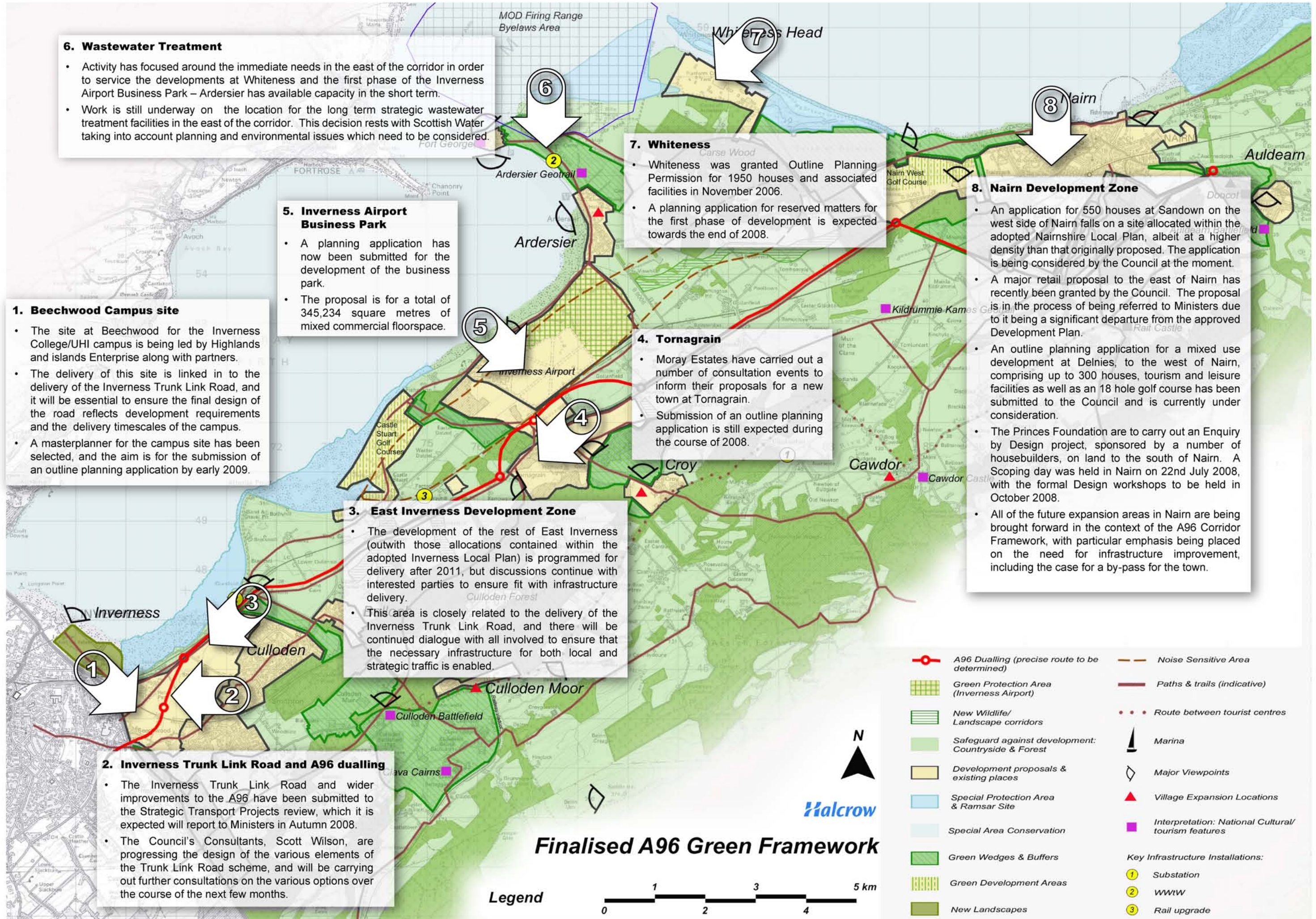
- The development of the rest of East Inverness (outwith those allocations contained within the adopted Inverness Local Plan) is programmed for delivery after 2011, but discussions continue with interested parties to ensure fit with infrastructure delivery.
- This area is closely related to the delivery of the Inverness Trunk Link Road, and there will be continued dialogue with all involved to ensure that the necessary infrastructure for both local and strategic traffic is enabled.

1. Beechwood Campus site

- The site at Beechwood for the Inverness College/UHI campus is being led by Highlands and Islands Enterprise along with partners.
- The delivery of this site is linked in to the delivery of the Inverness Trunk Link Road, and it will be essential to ensure the final design of the road reflects development requirements and the delivery timescales of the campus.
- A masterplanner for the campus site has been selected, and the aim is for the submission of an outline planning application by early 2009.

2. Inverness Trunk Link Road and A96 dualling

- The Inverness Trunk Link Road and wider improvements to the A96 have been submitted to the Strategic Transport Projects review, which it is expected will report to Ministers in Autumn 2008.
- The Council's Consultants, Scott Wilson, are progressing the design of the various elements of the Trunk Link Road scheme, and will be carrying out further consultations on the various options over the course of the next few months.



Finalised A96 Green Framework

Legend



Halcrow

- A96 Dualling (precise route to be determined)
 - Green Protection Area (Inverness Airport)
 - New Wildlife/Landscape corridors
 - Safeguard against development: Countryside & Forest
 - Development proposals & existing places
 - Special Protection Area & Ramsar Site
 - Special Area Conservation
 - Green Wedges & Buffers
 - Green Development Areas
 - New Landscapes
 - Noise Sensitive Area
 - Paths & trails (indicative)
 - Route between tourist centres
 - Marina
 - Major Viewpoints
 - Village Expansion Locations
 - Interpretation: National Cultural/tourism features
- Key Infrastructure Installations:
- 1 Substation
 - 2 WWTW
 - 3 Rail upgrade