

A96 Corridor Masterplan

East Inverness CfS2 Assessment

Introduction

On 21 September 2006 30 stakeholders with an interest in the A96 Corridor Masterplan options for Inverness East¹ met. Through Collaboration for Success the stakeholders were allocated across five workshops. These workshops assessed each option within the context of the Smart Growth Appraisal Matrix (see Appendix 1).

Outcomes

Figure 1 provides a summary of the workshops' ranking for each framework option and an over-all ranking resulting from an amalgamation of these considerations.

Option	Group					Smart Growth Ranking
	1	2	3	4	5	
A	1	1	2	3	3	1
B	3	2	1	4	2	2=
C	3	3	4	5	4	4
D	2	4	3	2	1	2=
E	5	4	5	1	5	5

Figure 1: Inverness East Smart Growth Ranking Summary

The stakeholder option preferences were Options A, B and D. Option A was the top preference for two groups and in the top three of all groups. Options B and D ranked equally across the five groups receiving a top ranking and two 2nd preferences. They each received a 3rd and 4th preference. Neither option B or D were scored 5th. There was a clear differentiation in scored rankings between the top three (A, B and C) and the bottom two (C and E). Option C received bottom two rankings from three groups and a middle ranking from the remaining two groups. Option E ranked poorly with most groups. However, one did rank it top.

The benefit of amalgamating the rankings is that it allows extreme considerations to be evened out and a consensual response to emerge.

¹ See Interim Report – Phase 1: Options for Development and Green Frameworks

Observations

Despite the clear preference established by the stakeholders through CfS, some key observations emerged that, in the view of stakeholders, would make the options better. These are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Option A observations

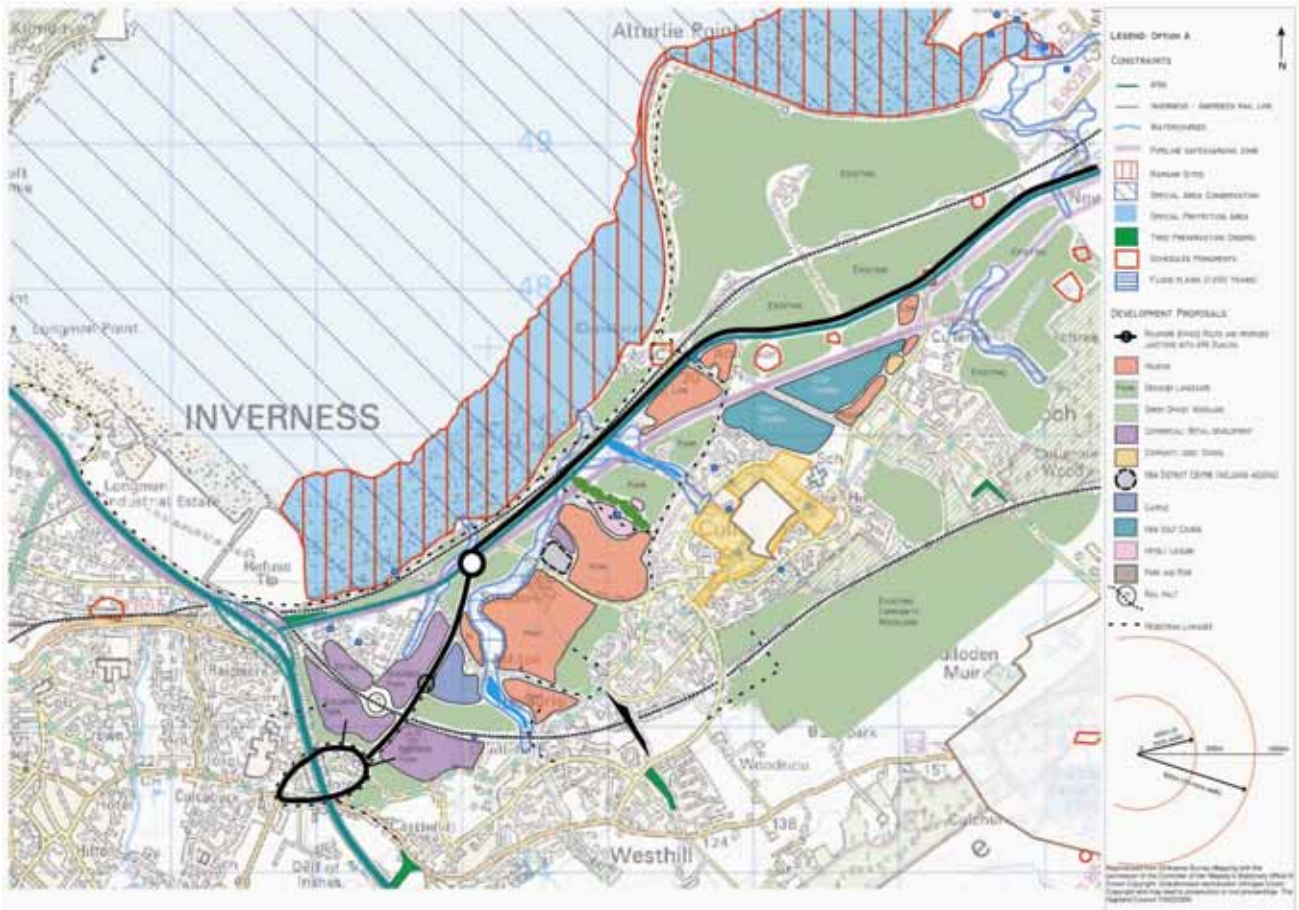


Figure 2: Option A

Low density housing to far east is unattractive as it will elongate Inverness, present a poor entrance to the city from the east and encourage car use. Further, there is little opportunity for integration with existing communities at Balloch.

District centre and associated retailing should be located closer to established community as this will facilitate integration, provide services and shopping and provide an established customer base for shops early in development.

Increase community provision that could bring benefits to existing communities as well as meeting needs of new communities over time.

The campus proposal would be more appropriate at Beechwood Farm area as the current location was isolated and not as readily accessed. The Beechwood site could be accessible from the enhanced Inshes junction proposals and would be attractive for developing links with Lifescan and Raigmore Hospital.

The By-pass route should be closer to retail park as this would make the road shorter and would avoid intersecting Inverness East.

There was an opportunity to increase the land use mix of the area by integrating compatible land uses.

The park proposal could be refocused to be integrated with the existing and proposed communities (of which the option seemed to imply); although the scale of provision was felt to be appropriate.

Option B observations

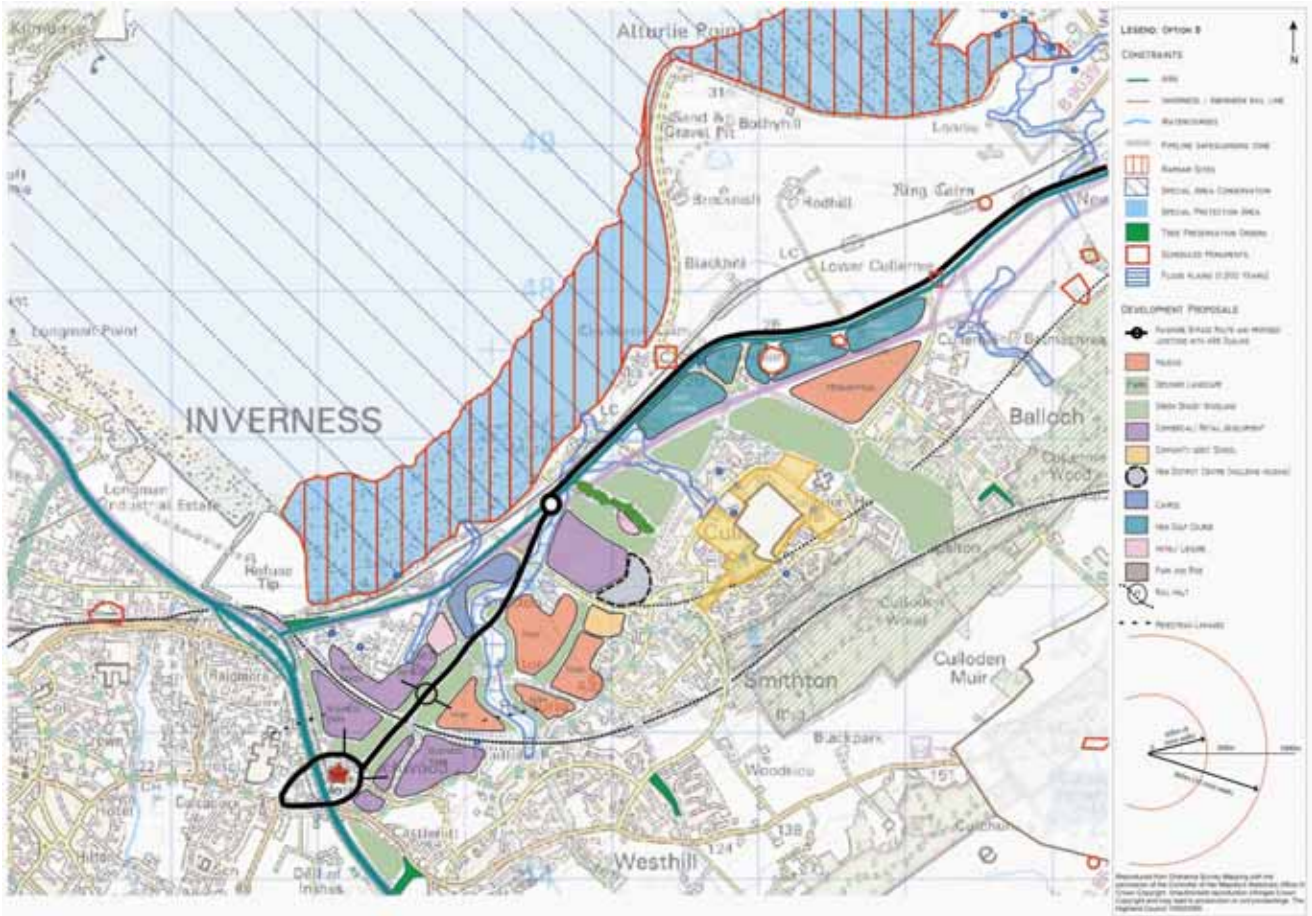


Figure 3: Option B

A shorter by-pass would be better as it would be cheaper to deliver, would not impact on the floodplain and would not divide the area as much because the junction with the A96 would be further west.

The appropriateness of development to the far east was questioned as it was generally isolated and did not seem to bring any substantial benefit to existing communities.

The location for the campus was supportable as it would provide the opportunity to present an iconic entrance to Inverness from the east. However, although the site could be well served by public transport it was felt that it was isolated from shopping and services that would be located in the district centre to the north and the opportunity to cluster with Lifescan/Raigmore Hospital. This

concern, combined with observations about shortening the length of the by-pass, suggested that Beechwood would make a better location.

The option would be enhanced through the introduction of an appropriately integrated park.

Option D observations

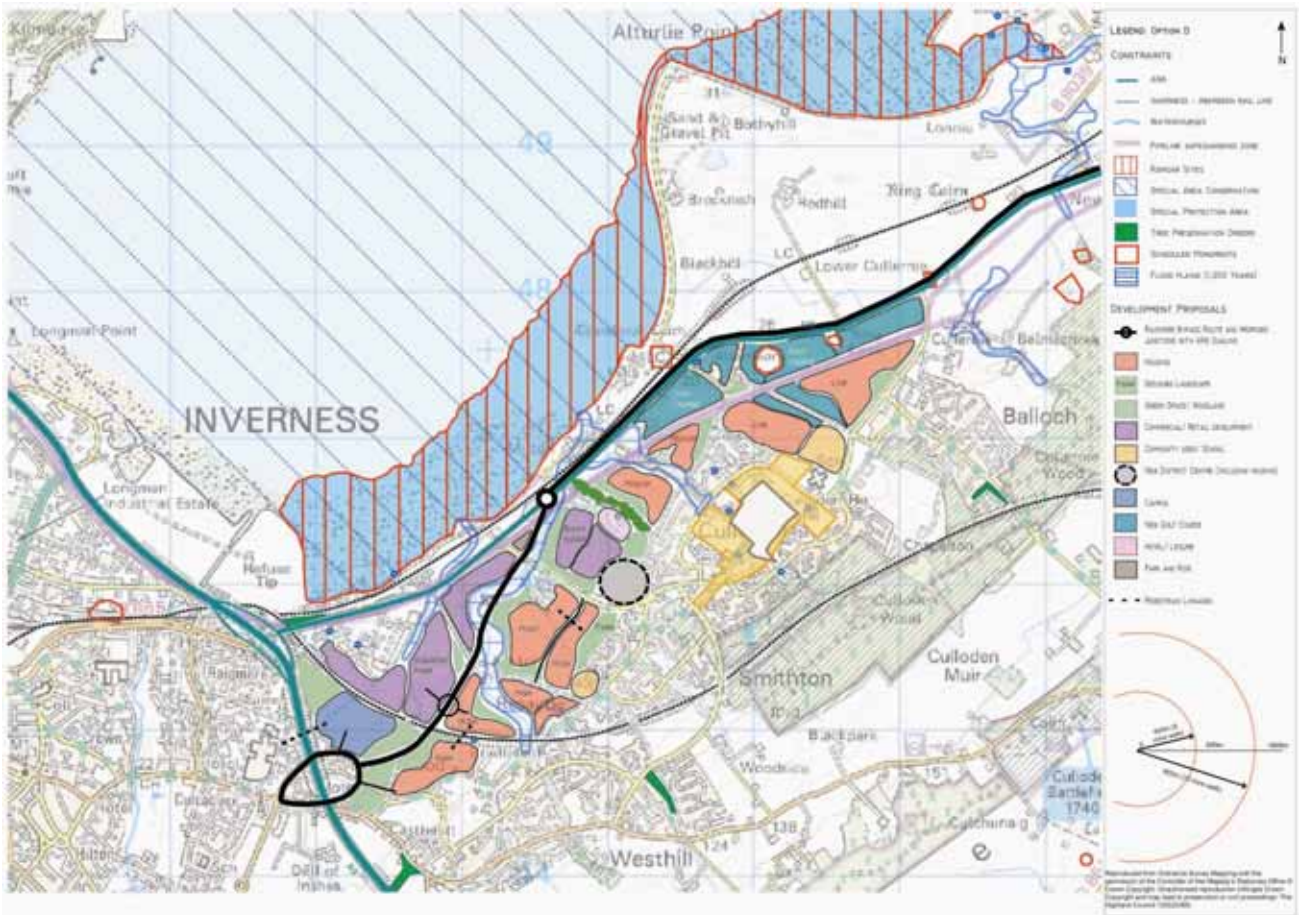


Figure 3: Option D

A shorter by-pass would be better as it would be cheaper to deliver, would not impact on the floodplain and would be not divide the area as much because the junction with the A96 would be further west.

The campus is well located as it can be accessed and integration with Lifescan and Raigmore Hospital should be achievable.

The bulky goods allocation should be refocused to be associated with the retail park as it would not be suited, in the proposed location, to the approach proposed for developing Inverness East.

As the employment projections for Option D were low, it was felt that more employment land could be allocated.

As with the other options, low density development to the far east should be omitted due to its isolation, lack of integration and urban form that encourages car use.

Conclusion

Resulting from the CfS considerations it is clear that an option for the growth of Inverness should incorporate the following features:

- A by-pass that relates to the Inverness Retail Park and limits the bisection of the area. This suggests a by-pass leaving the A96 at the Smithton roundabout or further west.
- A new sustainable extension to the north of Culloden that could accommodate around 8,000 people. This would incorporate higher density development, other appropriate densities, and appropriate retail/business allocations. This would be focused around a central core (district centre) to serve existing and proposed communities (including a supermarket). Schooling would be allocated here.
- A significant park that could serve existing and new communities linked into the floodplain to form a *green wedge* of quality parkland that would provide an integrated environmental asset.
- A university campus located at Beechwood that is accessible from across Inverness and the new communities to its east.
- Appropriate business and employment land integrated with the new communities that can provide substantial employment in the context of requirements for the A96 Corridor as a whole.
- Sub-regional retailing (e.g. bulky goods) should be focused around the existing Inverness Retail Park.

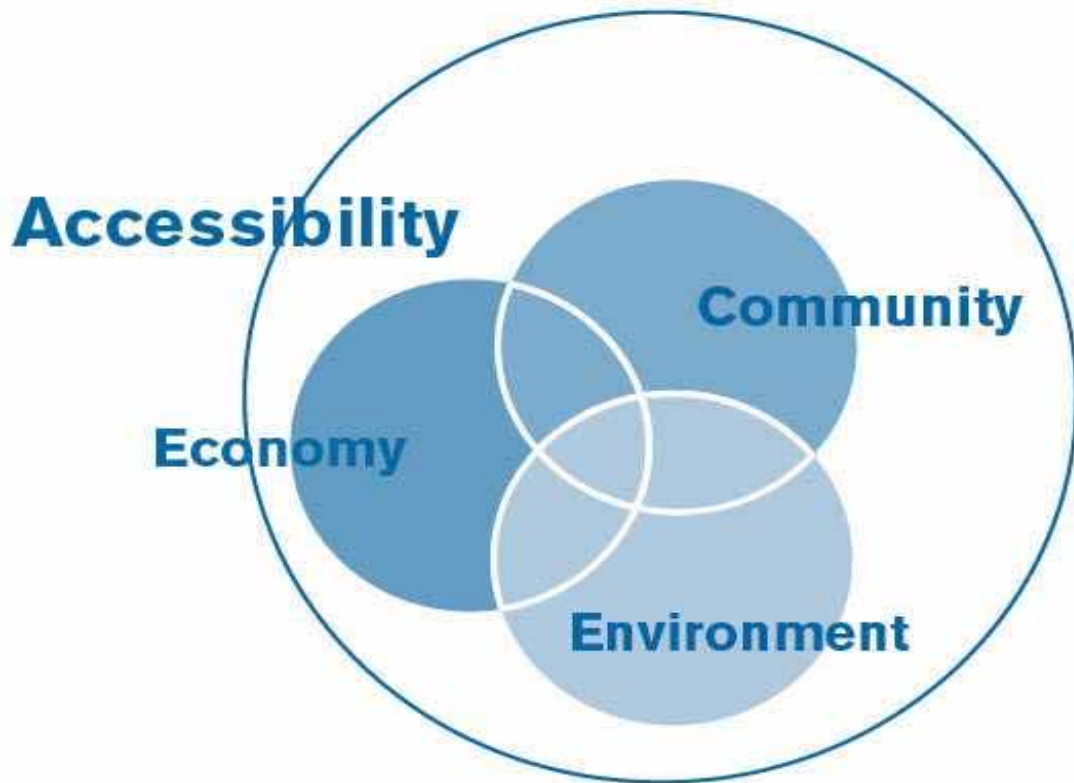
Generally, an option based on the above would:

1. Meet Inverness's long-term growth needs in the context of proposals for the A96 Corridor as a whole.
2. Provide for high quality open space and recreational provision.
3. Recognise the environmental assets of the area and integrate with them.
4. Integrate with the existing communities to help improve the services and shopping available to them
5. Deliver a by-pass of relevance to the area's requirements and trunk road needs.

These outcomes must be placed in the context of other considerations related to stakeholder submissions, general consultation, agency consultation and technical assessment.

APPENDIX 1

SMART GROWTH SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL MATRIX



Sustainability criteria fall within the matrix as follows:

Accessibility

- Transport and Access
- Access and Accessibility

Economy

- Local Economy and Work
- Education & Lifelong Learning
- Development Capacity
- Marketability
- Infrastructure

Community

- Community Participation
- Social Justice
- Health and Safety
- Existing Development
- Adjoining Land Uses and Relationship with Surrounding Communities

Environment

- Pollution, Waste and Resources
- Energy
- Buildings, Urban Design and Land Use
- Open Spaces
- Site Characteristics
- Topography
- Landscape Features
- Wildlife and Habitats
- Views

Accessibility

- Transport and Access

Would proposals

- reduce the number and length of car journeys?
- encourage walking and cycling links with adjoining areas?
- be accessible to public transport routes?
- increase use of public transport?
- provide a variety of transportation choices?

Score /100

Justification

- Access and Accessibility

Would proposals

- establish permeability of the urban fabric?
- provide accessibility choices?
- maximise accessibility for people with disabilities?
- integrate access with adjoining communities?

Score /100

Justification

Total Accessibility Score /100

Community

- Community Participation

Would proposals

- be conducive to community involvement?
- allow people, groups and partner organisations to be actively involved in identifying problems and delivering solutions?
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions?

Score /100

Justification

- Social Justice

Would proposals

- strengthen existing communities?
- address the needs of under-represented groups and less well off households?
- offer good potential for affordable housing?
- reduce inequalities and improving facilities, access and opportunities?
- reduce occurrence of crime and anti-social behaviour?
- reduce fear of crime?

Score /100

Justification

- Health and Safety

Would proposals

- provide an environment conducive to physical and mental health and wellbeing?
- provide good accessibility for emergency vehicles?
- ensure medical services to meet population requirements?

Score /100

Justification

- Existing Development

Would proposals

- respect existing developments that provide character and context?
- acknowledge investment that has brought sustained renewal and regeneration?

Score /100

Justification

- Adjoining Land Uses and Relationship with Surrounding Communities

Would proposals

- complement adjoining land uses (existing and proposed)?
- provide support and opportunities for surrounding communities?

Score /100

Justification

Total Community Score /100

Economy

- Local Economy and Work

Would proposals

- attract employment opportunities suited to local people?
- facilitate accessing knowledge opportunities so that every living centre can be an earning centre?
- promote local shops and facilities?

Score /100

Justification

- Education & Lifelong Learning

Would proposals

- promote life-long learning and encourage the adoption of sustainable lifestyles and practices?
- provide well located and appropriate schools and other educational resources (incl. libraries)?

Score /100

Justification

- Development Capacity

Would proposals

- ensure that development proposals were appropriate to the capacity of Nairn South?
- Provide a framework to meet demand for development?

Score /100

Justification

-

Would proposals

- deliver marketable development sites, particularly for housing?
- present attractive neighbourhoods for investment in the longer term?

Score /100

Justification

- Infrastructure

Would proposals

- maximise the utilisation of existing infrastructure?
- promote infrastructural investment that contributed to enhanced quality of life?

Score /100

Justification

Total Economy Score /100

Environment

- Pollution, Waste and Resources

Would proposals

- enable the efficient use of resources?
- be suited to a Sustainable Urban Drainage System that contributes positively to the area?
- minimise the potential for increased pollution?
- recycle water?
- re-use appropriate buildings?
- maximise existing infrastructure?
- promote efficient and effective waste disposal and the use of recycling?

Score /100

Justification

- Energy

Would proposals

- allow for the generation of energy from renewable sources or waste?
- minimising energy use?

Score /100

Justification

▪ Buildings, Urban Design and Land Use

Would proposals

- help provide for or enhance local amenities?
- protect or enhance the visual landscape and local character?
- conserve built/cultural resources?
- facilitate design quality in relation to the built and natural environment?
- take advantage of compact building design that is also sensitive to the environment?
- ensure that land use is appropriate and that any development uses a development site to its best advantage?
- allow a relationship between density of development and accessibility?
- help relate accessibility demand to location of development type?
- meet needs locally through ensuring access to local services and facilities?
- ensure an adequate supply and range of good quality housing?
- facilitate the creation of workable neighbourhoods?
- foster distinctive, vibrant communities with a strong sense of place distinctive to Inverness/Nairn?

Score /100

Justification

▪ Open Spaces

Would proposals

- create open space opportunities to benefit communities?
- establish or develop public access to quality open space?
- preserve and enhance critical environmental areas?

Score /100

Justification

- Site characteristics

Would proposals

- promote development proposals that responded positively to site characteristics?
- Build on the positive aspects of sites and locations?

Score /100

Justification

- Topography

Would proposals

- take advantage of the area's natural topography?

Score /100

Justification

- Landscape Features

Would proposals

- respect the established landscape framework?
- provide visual highlights in new urban areas?
- respond to and enhance the setting of key buildings?
- Protect / enhance open land / countryside / landscape quality?
- Preserve/enhance heritage and local identity?

Score /100

Justification

- **Wildlife and habitats**

Would proposals

- protect/enhance wildlife habitats (open spaces, trees, hedgerows, private gardens, some buildings, designated sites) and their connectivity?
- increase tree cover, especially broad-leaved woodland?
- improve/maintain public access to open spaces, wildlife areas and the countryside?

Score /100

Justification

- **Views**

Would proposals

- ensure that quality views were developed and created?
- Identify existing views and retain them?

Score /100

Total Environment Score /100

Smart Growth Sustainability Appraisal Matrix Score

Total Accessibility Score /100

Total Social Score /100

Total Economy Score /100

Total Environment Score /100

Total Smart Growth Score /100