

Halcrow Group Limited

A96 Corridor Masterplan Stage 2

Submission Assessment – East Inverness

September 2006

The Highland Council

Halcrow Group Limited

A96 Corridor Masterplan Stage 2

Submission Assessment – East Inverness

September 2006

The Highland Council

Halcrow Group Limited

The Octagon 35 Baird Street Glasgow G4 0EE
Tel +44 (0)141 552 2000 Fax +44 (0)141 552 2525
www.halcrow.com

Halcrow Group Limited has prepared this report in accordance with the instructions of their client, The Highland Council, for their sole and specific use. Any other persons who use any information contained herein do so at their own risk.

© **Halcrow Group Limited 2006**

Halcrow Group Limited
The Octagon 35 Baird Street Glasgow G4 0EE
Tel +44 (0)141 552 2000 Fax +44 (0)141 552 2525
www.halcrow.com

Contents

1	Introduction	1
	1.1 <i>Context</i>	1
	1.2 <i>Report Structure</i>	1
2	Salient Points and Comment	2
	2.1 <i>The Matrix</i>	2
3	Conclusions and Recommendations	5
	3.1 <i>Conclusions</i>	5
	3.2 <i>Recommendations</i>	5

1 Introduction

1.1 *Context*

As part of developing proposals for the growth of Inverness (in the context of considering growth across the A96 Corridor as a whole) a range of proposals were developed¹. These were designed to present options for growth at East Inverness and to stimulate debate and discussion.

The options are being considered in the context of broad stakeholder considerations², general public consultation (undertaken and assessed by The Highland Council), agency consultation (undertaken and assessed by The Highland Council), technical considerations and contributions from the East Inverness Framework Planning Group³ and other related interests.

This paper reports on submissions from the latter group and assesses them. It attempts to draw some conclusions that will allow a single preferred option for the growth at East Inverness to emerge.

1.2 *Report Structure*

The report's structure is straightforward. It will:

- Summarise each option drawing out the salient points and make comment in the form of a matrix.
- Draw conclusions and make recommendations for developing a growth option at east Inverness.

It is not intended that sources of issues raised can be identified from this report; although all submissions have been circulated within the Nairn South FPG.

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

² Utilising Collaboration for Success

³ The East Inverness FPG was set up to drive forward the preparation of a Framework for East Inverness. It is made up of key land interests and appropriate public agencies.

2 Salient Points and Comment

2.1

The Matrix

The following matrix draws out the salient points from the submissions and makes comments on them. This has been themed in order to facilitate interpretation.

Point	Comments
Campus Location	
Options D and E are best locations for a campus type development as it facilitates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clustering of research and development activities at Lifescan, Raigmore Hospital and the Centre for Health Sciences. • Expansion opportunities for Lifescan. • A parkland setting for development. • The development of a gateway to Inverness from the south. • The delivery of a Raigmore by-pass/Inshes junction upgrade. • The provision of a rail halt. • Shared sports and recreational facilities/grounds with the general public. 	The location of a campus/research facility in extensive parkland at the Beechwood area between the A9 and the north/south rail line has merit.
By-Pass Alignment	
The achievement of the Raigmore by-pass is critical to unlocking the development of the area. Its deliverability must be a key consideration.	The impact of the Raigmore by-pass is critical. The selection of route must meet a range of requirements; particularly in relation to access, deliverability and urban form (e.g. integration of road).
A longer route for the by-pass (starting east of Smithton roundabout) is preferred (options b and D) as it maximises accessibility of the site.	Noted. This must be balanced in the context of impact on the floodplain and intersection of the site.

Point	Comments
Taking the alignment of the A9/96 link road further to the south-east (as in option E), rather than in a straight line , would be beneficial, to increase the space available south-west of the rail line at Beechwood.	Noted. This must be balanced in the context of impact on the floodplain and intersection of the site.
Retail Provision	
<p>In the context of the A96 Corridor as a whole and existing retail provision at the Inverness Retail Park, retail provision at Inverness East should focus on providing convenience shopping for the new communities (and existing communities at Culloden). Some bulky goods provision would be acceptable.</p> <p>The impact on Inverness centre would also be a consideration.</p>	<p>The proposals at Inverness East would seek to deliver an appropriate balance of retail provision that met local needs and provided for appropriate need across the Corridor. This suggests convenience provision, in the main, with some supporting bulky goods provision.</p> <p>Of course, the challenge is to ensure that convenience provision for local needs remains so over the long term.</p>
Rail	
Impacts on the crossing of rail lines need to be considered.	Noted.
Consideration should be given to a rail halt at Beechwood to serve the campus / business park.	Noted
Open Space	
Proposals should respond to the green wedge requirements established in the current development plan.	The integration of environmental assets that meet the <i>green wedge</i> requirements will be developed. An appropriate park to serve existing and new communities will be included.
Option A provides best open space provision; but needs development.	Noted
Open space provision should integrate with the floodplain.	Noted.

Point	Comments
Placemaking Outcomes	
<p>Option A represents the best outcome subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The campus should be reallocated to the Beechwood area (and the current allocation should be business/retail) • The district centre/retail allocation should be moved south to provide services for the existing and new communities. • Community use at the shoreline should be investigated. 	Noted.
<p>Option D would be a round off of the existing housing settlement at Culloden coming to a natural conclusion as it tapers off towards the A96.</p>	Noted.
<p>Major business type developments and college campus should be clustered at the western end, but also allowing for further retail development adjacent to the current retail park. Large retail should be concentrated in one area rather than spread out as this will minimise transport impacts and favour service by public transport..</p>	Noted

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1

Conclusions

It is clear from the submissions made that there is support to grow Inverness at Inverness East. Further, this growth should respond to the following:

- The opportunity afforded through research and academic growth/potential.
- The need to bring wider benefit to the established communities; particularly in providing convenience retailing and parkland..
- The by-pass route should facilitate balance accessibility, environmental integration and urban form.

3.2

Recommendations

Resulting from the above considerations, it is recommended that Option A with the following amendments be pursued:

1. The Beechwood area is allocated for high amenity business and campus.
2. The by-pass road connects the Smithton roundabout with an enhanced Inshes junction. This should incorporate an access junction for the site. This should skirt the floodplain.
3. A park and ride facility at the Smithton roundabout.
4. A district centre/convenience retail at the north of new communities adjacent to existing communities.
5. Appropriate provision of open space that ensures environmental integration and quality parkland.
6. Growth should be focused to the west of Stratton Lodge in order to facilitate a sustainable urban extension