**NAIRN COMMON GOOD**

**PROPOSAL TO SELL (FOR DEVELOPMENT) COMMON GOOD PROPERTY KNOWN AS SANDOWN LANDS AT SANDOWN ROAD, NAIRN**

**COMBINED ANALYSIS OF INITIAL AND ADDITIONAL PERIODS OF CONSULTATION**

**1 ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATIONS MADE**

This document presents a combined analysis of consultation representations received to the questions in the surveys used in both the initial and additional consultation periods.

Initial consultation period - key questions:

* What are your views on the proposed disposal of this piece of Common Good land?
* Do you have any views on potential benefits of the proposal?
* Do you have any issues or concerns arising from the proposal?
* Do you have any additional comments?

Additional consultation period - free text questions:

* To what extent do you agree with the balance of housing/wetlands/green space as outlined in

the Sandown Development Brief?

* What would you wish to see included as part of any future development that is not covered by

the contents of the Development Brief?

* To what extent do you agree with the balance of housing/wetlands/green space as outlined in

the Sandown Development Brief?

* Do you have any proposals for use of Sandown Lands that have not already been raised within the consultation process or are covered in the Development Brief?

The representations received have been grouped into 5 themes below:

1. Housing Provision

2. Infrastructure

3. Nairn Common Good

4. Green Space

5. General reluctance to sell / dispose of Sandown

**1.1 Summary**

The representations received across those 5 themes can be summarised as:

* ***Housing Provision***– The representations received contained a strong voice against the current

balance of land use contained within the Sandown Development Brief. However suggestions

contained in the representations for future affordable/social housing provision indicated that

using empty houses and flats in Nairn and town centre or on land which became available

following the completion of the A96 bypass could provide alternative housing development

locations to Sandown. There were also representations which encouraged affordable self-build

plots with eco credentials as part of the Development Brief reinforcing a reoccurring green

theme to the representations received. There was also strong feeling that the Development Brief

needed refreshed to take account of revised housing need and demand following recent new

build completions in Nairnshire since the Development Brief was completed. The strongest view

of all received in relation to housing provision was that development of housing on Sandown

should not be considered until proposals for the A96 bypass are finalised.

* ***Infrastructure***– As shown above the representations received contained a significant number of

voices urging the completion of the infrastructure around an A96 bypass before the consideration of any development on the Sandown Lands fearing that a failure to do so would compound existing traffic flow problems through Sandown to Nairn on the A96. There was also strong support in the representations received for the development of renewable or green energy projects on the Sandown Lands which asked that the potential for community renewable schemes on Sandown to be explored as part of any future land use considered. Models of energy project suggested included ground source heat pumps and an electricity generating solar farm.

* ***Nairn Common Good***– There was strong support in the representations received that any future

use for or disposal of Sandown Lands must have a focus on the development of the Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF). There was a strong voice for any capital receipts or revenue generated from future land sale or use to be focused on development of an income stream for the Nairn Common Good Fund that could be used to support community activities or provide support for charitable organisations working in Nairn

* ***Green Space***– The representations received contained a great deal of comment showing support

for developed community use of the green space at the Sandown Lands with a range of potential

options for this provided by the respondents. This was very much a key feature of the second phase consultation. Some respondents took this theme further still suggesting that ‘Community

Supported Agriculture’ or community food growing on the Sandown Lands would develop resilience in the food system and could facilitate wider community-based projects. There were a

great number of suggestions in the representations received for varying community green space

uses at Sandown including country paths, walks, tree planting projects with added value of

creating a carbon sink. There were also a number of respondents that believed that this type of

use would enhance the already attractive west entrance to Nairn.

* ***General reluctance to sell / dispose of Sandown -*** There were strong views expressed within the representations received that the Development Brief is no longer representative of the need in Nairn and suggesting that a lot has changed since the Charrette in 2012 on which the Brief was based, such as the planned bypass, housing development at Nairn East and the pandemic which reinforced the importance of green space for health and mental well-being. On that basis there was encouragement in the representations received for a wider range of options to be debated before any plans or recommendations are finalised and there were also views that engagement with groups across the community would be important to ensure a wide range of views and input was achieved. There were also some views in the representations received that the building of A96 bypass was likely to raise land values in Nairn and that any Land sales should not take place before the A96 bypass is in place or finalised to avoid selling the Sandown Lands in an uncertain market.

**2 THEMED REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

The following provides a summary of main representation themes received:

**2.1 Housing Provision**

* If houses are to be built, we need innovative solutions not simply more of the same.
* If houses and shops are to be built, they should be on field to south of A96 with the field to the

north being left as nature reserve, wetlands or farmland.

* There are empty houses and flats in Nairn and town centre that could be used rather than building more houses.
* Extra housing is not needed due to the Lochloy and Nairn East developments. There is already too much development.
* Social housing rather than affordable.
* What type of housing is actually needed should be explored before approval to sell is sought. More executive homes are not needed.
* All housing to be social as locals cannot afford to buy due to incomers putting the prices up.
* Consider self-build plots with eco credentials rather than sale to single developer who will build

harled, white boxes. Any development should be in keeping with the surrounding properties.

* Why do the council think now is the correct time to sell given the current property market boom

and the effect the bypass will have on property prices?

* Highland Council’s statutory duty to provide social housing for the community should be the only

option on land owned or purchased by the council to meet their obligations.

* There are town centre buildings that could be brought back into use as housing.
* Selling the land is not of long term benefit. Can the Council go into partnership with a housing association and retain rights to the land?
* Before any development of Sandown is considered, a strategic plan for the development of Nairn

as a whole needs to be produced.

* Nairn could be developed as the coastal resort for Inverness and be uniquely placed to provide mixed development.
* Sandown would be the ideal location for housing that would appeal to the aspiring and affluent that such a development would attract.
* Since the Charette, significant housing has been approved at Kingsteps so does the same need

for housing exist.

* Current Scottish government policy is to redevelop, renovate or purchase town centre property

not develop greenfield sites on the edge of town.

* No allowance has been made for available and consented alternative sites for affordable housing in and around the town.

**2.2 Infrastructure**

* There is not enough infrastructure to support more housing – sewage system, schools, doctors,

traffic management, bypass need sorting first.

* Currently everyday traffic flow is heavy, a large development at Sandown will compound this.
* The Charrette for the Development Brief was undertaken 10 years ago and there have been a lot of changes in the local area – for instance the proposed dualling of the A96 and new bypass. Any proposal for Sandown should not go ahead until the position regarding these road projects are

clearer.

* Infrastructure, traffic management issues are not included in the current proposal.
* Housing on the scale envisaged is not needed and will overload the already struggling services.
* Sandown Farm Road and Altonburn Road are very narrow and barely cope with existing traffic.
* Provide community renewable schemes on Sandown and/or ground source pumps for community areas.
* What about using for a solar farm to generate electricity or ground source heating system.
* Any development should not include shops – the High Street is an eyesore with buildings not looked after and empty. Development of the High Street is needed.
* Upgrade junction of Sandown Road to A96. Improve crossings on A96. The plan showing the

connection from site to safer routes to school path is not clear and does not look particularly safe

or convenient.

* Road enhancements to cope with extra traffic and a new primary school. Infrastructure needed.
* Develop it further for leisure use for the people of Nairn as originally intended.
* If a bypass was built, it might be appropriate to develop the lands.
* No alternative options provided, no further extensive community consult on choices. This is a

proposal to sell in entirety only. What about part sale for small development only, solar panels or

use for school?

* It has to work for Nairn and bring social and economic benefits to town. It should not be just a

satellite settlement like Tornagrain, Milton of Leys, Lochloy etc with cursory community spaces

and poor transport and social infrastructure.

* Once it is gone, it is gone and a valuable asset is lost to the people of Nairn, forever.
* It is short sighted. Yes, there is a housing shortage, but we need social housing and sheltered housing; not selling off our land to the highest private bidder for a huge housing estate at the entrance to this beautiful village.
* Plant trees, plant an orchard, make a ground-breaking community asset where renewables generate power for the village, have allotments, plant a forest.
* Make a future for our youth to be proud off.

**2.3 Nairn Common Good Fund**

* Sales fund of £6-7m could be useful for town but with careful stewardship.
* Nairn needs substantial annual funds so CGF can support activities in Nairn.
* Funding for community activities in Nairn, support for charitable organisations working in Nairn.
* There is a need to ensure any income and assets from Nairn Common Good benefit the Nairn

community – be it providing new facilities, new opportunities for local business/enterprise, setting up new events, grants to local groups or renovating/refurbishing existing areas of the town.

* (the c*onsultation contained*) No specific proposals for how any money received would be spent.
* The lands could be used for projects to provide sustainable employment or projects that would add value to Nairn as a contemporary tourist destination.
* The Common Good Fund could be managed better to unlock potential funds by raising rents & selling off smaller areas/buildings etc so that a grant fund can be established.
* It would be better used as a community resource which could be structured in a way to provide

continuous funds for Nairn and provide real development opportunities for Nairn people.

**2.4 Green Space**

* Selling arable land for housing is short sighted when we may be facing food shortages due to

climate change and need to produce more at home.

* Mixed use of Common Good land is an admirable idea – would the Council support excluding part of the land for Community Supported Agriculture? This would address concerns about sustainability and resilience of the food system and allow for community based control and

ownership of part of the food system.

* Leave it alone. Keep it as open space. Increase the allotments. Covid has shown that green space is important/needed.
* It should be retained for the use of the people of Nairn.
* Wetlands and associated wildlife are very important to the area and should be protected – housing will destroy this. The area is greatly used by the community. It is a beautiful view which will be lost to anyone entering the town from the west.
* Redevelop it as a leisure space with better uses so it can be enjoyed – sports facilities, cross country paths, walks, tree planting. Forests and green space to create a carbon sink that will help offset traffic pollution.
* Well managed community assets give residents a sense of belonging.
* Account should be taken of the environmental benefits which could be created for instance with a community woodland, playing fields, open spaces and similar amenities.
* Develop site as a new 3-18 school with state of the art sports facilities also available for community use.
* The current development brief is not good and needs more discussion retain the land as community asset.
* Wetlands should be fully protected, and a limited number of midmarket and affordable housing provided.
* The site should not be used for any form of supermarket.
* The old school site could be redeveloped for housing.
* Whilst the wetland/green space and tourist space aspects of the brief would be of benefit, the

development of these aspects would not require the disposal of Common Good land.

* Sandown is a popular green space and an attractive entrance to the town. It promotes health and

wellbeing: fights climate change allows food growing and counteracts loss of wildlife.

* There are many recreation/tourism options that do not include housing – allotments are already

there and are to be expanded, other orchard sites, wetlands area and visitor centre, small plant nursery etc.

* Land is used for agriculture in summer and recreation by people of Nairn in winter. It has been used this way for many years and its use should be preserved. There is a great range of wildlife on site
* North side should be kept as a community asset and turned into a family park with paths and cycle paths to the coast. It would attract visitors to Nairn.
* I would support Sandown Lands being used for projects to benefit the community, for example riding for the disabled, gardening projects for people with mental & physical disabilities, park for adults and children to enjoy etc. It would be good if individual groups would apply to Council with ideas for consideration.
* Our preferred option would be to retain it as green space.
* The bypass will free up land for development.
* Suggestions for land to south of A96 - create a recreational facility – wetland/wildlife area with dog walking, maybe small stable with livery and riding with rest of land being used for orchards.
* Suggestions for land to north of A96 - leave as they are for agricultural use or maybe a community farm. This would benefit the environment and provide opportunities for exercise.
* Long term benefits of environmentally sound projects would be better than creating more grey,

featureless schemes for small cash gain and prospect of income from council tax.

**2.5 General reluctance to sell / dispose of Sandown**

* A wider range of options should be publicly debated before any plans or recommendations are

put forward.

* Land should not be sold off at this time. There may be an argument to sell some of the land in the future, but the greater part should be kept as green space rather than the volume and density proposed.
* A lot has changed since the Charrette in 2012 on which the Brief is based – planned bypass,

development at Nairn East and the pandemic indicating the importance of green space for health

and mental well-being of the community.

* Land should not be sold in one go. Perhaps smaller sections could be developed for housing to

enable other bits to be put to better use for the common good.

* Sale may not get the best value for the common good, but timing would be crucial.
* There should be full communication with the community. This does not mean engaging with the community councils – they do not genuinely represent the community.
* The use of Sandown Lands should be put to the people of Nairn to make suggestions. The current

development brief is not good and needs more discussion.

* Community cannot comment without more information – earning power, lease options, investment proposals, timeline, alternate scenarios.
* The factors behind such a plan are referred to in the consultation paper but nowhere is there any

detail provided. The public, in my opinion, are not adequately informed by that paper - another

reason why a new consultation process with a proper development brief to follow is required.

* The plan identifies area for public use and connected activities – it would be best to keep these areas as part of the Common Good. It does not address a part disposal of the land.
* Since the first consultation there have been several initiatives to further encourage community land ownership and control. The Scottish Land Commission, HIE and the coming Land Reform Act

are all firmly of the opinion that this is the way to ensure good management and economically

sustainable use of land.

* Supportive of proposal to develop at least specific parts of Sandown but proposal should be based on a full final development proposal which has been presented and agreed in the framework of a public consultation.
* Why sell in uncertain market when building of A96 bypass is likely to raise land values in Nairn.