

<b>Issue 57</b>	<b>Travel Policy</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	Policy 57 (Para 20.32, Page 101)	<b>Reporter:</b>
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (including reference number)</b>		
<p>Irene Brandt (18), Mr Alan Findlay (20), Peter Mason (24), Network Rail (32), Dornoch Rail Link Action Group (42, 536), Janetta Christie (81), Laid Grazings Committee (83), Kingussie &amp; Vicinity Community Council (93), Mr J D Moore (97), Nairn West Community Council (101), Elizabeth Budge (148), Highlands &amp; Islands Green Party (HIGP) (168, 533), Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) (180), National Union of Rail, Maritime &amp; Transport Workers (276), Alastair Christie (295), Inverlochry &amp; Torlundy Community Council (318), Sportscotland (320), Transition Black Isle (330), Action for Mental Health (HUG) (355), C Parkin (358), Road Haulage Association (386), Paul Cannop (405), Donald MacPhee (407), Mr G Bevan (408), Myra Carus (422), Mr William Brown (423), Dr I A Glen (427), Mr Brian Chaplin (430), Mr Anthony Lennon (439), Castletown Community Council (441), Cromarty and District Community Council (443), Scottish Association of Public Transport (446), A Heatlie (447), M Gilvray (453), Friends of the Earth Scotland (486), Leslie Freitag (487), Invergordon Community Council (497)</p>		
<b>Provision of the development plan to which the issue relates:</b>	Travel and transport	
<b>Council's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>Oppose expenditure on new or improved roads for the following reasons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would be in direct opposition to stated aim of encouraging "a modal shift from private car to more sustainable transport modes". (18)</li> <li>• It will not contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions. (330)</li> </ul> <p><u>Concerns that Road Infrastructure is inadequate or not fit for purpose in terms of the following issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The A9 in Thurso town centre is at capacity and improvements to Scrabster will generate further through-traffic. (81)</li> <li>• The A99 and A9 north of Inverness are in a poor state and deterring tourism. (81, 295)</li> <li>• The A838 to the west side of Loch Eriboll is in urgent need of widening (295)</li> <li>• The A82 is in a poor state and is hindering development and deterring tourism. (318)</li> <li>• The A82 in Fort William town-centre is grid-locked during peak tourist season and this will adversely affect the local economy. (318)</li> <li>• Lengthy journey times to/from the Highlands on the A9 and poor access to ports are hindering business and adversely impacting on development of global markets. (81, 386)</li> </ul>		

- Tomich junction on the A9 is unsafe. (497)

Concerns that Council priorities for Road improvements may not be the optimum approach for the following reasons:

- Communities are better placed than planning officers to state what improvements are required. (93)
- The implications of the proposed methodology within the LTS are not clear. (453)

Concerns regarding the impact of development on level crossings for the following reasons:

- Potentially significant increases in the vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic which can impact on safety and service provision. (32)
- A consequent reduction in train line speed with impact on timetabling of trains and future train service improvements in direct conflict with government aims and objectives of this LDP for improving rail service within the Highlands. (32)

Concerns that railways & rail network is being given insufficient support for the following reasons:

- In the absence of a rail-link between Alness and Nigg, the road between Inverness and Nigg is likely to become extremely busy should the Nigg Yard reopen. (295)
- Proposed level of support for rail network will not help reduce carbon emissions. (330)
- Proposed level of support for rail network will not help increase tourism in the Highland area. (446)
- Not enough provision for significantly upgrading the rail network across the Highlands, and reflect the need for major investment in rail infrastructure – in addition to Beechwood, Plan should include proposals for opening other stations in elsewhere (e.g. Canon Bridge); Dornoch Rail Crossing, doubling the main lines to Aberdeen and the central belt; and generally upgrading the track and signalling to increase frequency and speed of services. (168, 533)

Concerns regarding the omission of a proposal for the Dornoch Rail Link for the following reason:

- Its inclusion would contribute to maintaining and revitalising the economy in Caithness, Sutherland and Orkney through reducing journey times for freight, local residents, workers and tourists. . (20, 42, 97, 276, 295, 405, 407, 408, 427, 430, 439, 441, 447, 487)

Concerns regarding the adequacy of town-centre parking provision in Nairn for the following reason:

- The proposed volume of new housing in and around Nairn. (24)

Concerns regarding the inconsistent approach to homezones because of the potential adverse impact on:

- Residential amenity (assumed);
- Road safety;
- Active Travel.

(93, 168)

Concerns regarding the adequacy of support and proposals for public transport on the following grounds:

- Public transport within Badenoch & Strathspey is totally inadequate. (93)
- Public transport is not accessible to all mobilities (355)
- Lack of bus stop within Stoneyfield Business Park to serve dental surgery. (358)
- An integrated public transport system is virtually non-existent. (93, 101, 422)
- Constraints imposed by the global issues of Peak Oil and Climate Change (443)
- Provision for cycleways is non-existent (168, 533)

General support for Travel Policy on the following grounds:

- Network Rail is satisfied that the requirement for sufficient information to enable the Council to consider any likely on-and off-site transport implications is adequate. (32)
- SportScotland is satisfied that sports interests have been addressed. (320)

Concerns regarding the adequacy of the Travel Policy for the following reasons:

- Effective transport planning is more than just parking provision, impact mitigation and the production of green travel plans. (101)

Support for Active Travel (AT) networks on the following grounds:

- The AT networks based on proposed Core Paths will act as a tourist attraction. (83)

Concerns regarding the adequacy of support for Active Travel on the following grounds:

- The difficulty in implementing “Home Zones” and “Safer Routes to School” in the past. (93)
- There are no specific objectives for the provision of cycle routes not just on long-distance paths. (101)
- Lack of policies which show consideration of cycling as a serious method of transport. (330)

Concerns that there is no support for alternative fuels for the following reasons:

- There is no policy support for the use of electric cars or charging stations. (180, 486)

Concerns regarding the profile of freight within the Plan for the following reasons:

- Freight is extremely important to the lifeblood of the Highland economy and for its residents. (386)
- Ferry services need to meet the needs of business and hauliers through suitable timetables and vessels that can carry HGVs. (386)
- There is a lack of secure overnight lorry parking facilities throughout the region. (386)

Concerns regarding the lack of support for a direct air link from Inverness to an international hub (180)

Support for the approach to freight on the following grounds:

- The move from road to rail freight as well as people will help support the rail network north of Inverness (assumed). (81)

Support for improvements to water-borne transport for the following reasons:

- A new ferry service from Scrabster south to Aberdeen and on to Leith would be a welcome additional link. (81)
- In Cromarty and Nigg the local ferry is highly valued and has been greatly missed this year. (148)

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

Roads

Policy should be amended to *remove* support for increased road building and trunk road and local road improvements. (18)

Policy should be amended to include proposals to improve the Trunk Road Network (81, 318, 386, 497)

Policy should be amended to require consultation with local communities to prioritise improvements or enhancements to road network. (93)

Clarify the priorities for improvements to the Highland Council's road network. (assumed) (295, 453)

### Rail

Policy should be amended to include proposal/support for a Dornoch Rail Link (20, 81, 97, 276, 295, 405, 407, 408, 423, 427, 430, 439, 441, 487)

Inclusion of statement supporting the aspiration to deliver reduced journey times from Inverness to Caithness. Further comment on this is dealt with in more detail in *Issue 82: Caithness and Sutherland Vision*. (42, 536)

Policy should be amended to include specific proposal for a rail link between Alness and Nigg. (295)

Policy should be amended to include proposals for improving rail links to/from the Highland Area. (446)

Policy should be amended to evaluate development proposals in terms of their ease of access to railways and their contribution to strengthening the railway network. (330)

Policy should be amended to explicitly support the electrification of railways. (486)

Policy should be amended to require the Council to consult with Network Rail where a proposal for development is likely to result in a material increase in the volume or a material change in the character of traffic using a level crossing over a railway. (32)

Policy should be amended to require that any planning application which may increase the level of pedestrian and/or vehicular usage at a level crossing should be supported by a full Transport Assessment assessing impact and mitigation measures including assessment of closure. (32)

Policy should be amended to require the developer to fund any qualitative improvements required to the level crossing identified as a direct result of the development proposed. (32)

### Parking in Nairn

Policy bullet point which relates to *developer contributions* should be amended to require residential developments to contribute towards increased provision of town centre parking in Nairn (assumed) (24)

### Homezones

Policy should be amended to make Homezones a mandatory requirement for

residential developments (assumed) (93, 168)

#### Public Transport

Policy should be amended to include specific proposals to make public transport more accessible to all mobilities (355)

Policy should be amended to include specific proposals to extend and improve the public transport network (93, 358, 422, 443)

#### Integrated Transport

Policy should be amended to include specific proposals for the integration of transport services. (81, 93, 101, 422)

#### Active Travel

Policy should be amended to require that new cycle routes should be created with any road improvement (330)

Policy should be amended to give more emphasis to improving the cycle network and links with public transport (168, 330)

#### Electric Vehicles

Policy should be amended to encourage the use of electric cars. (486)

#### Freight

Policy should be amended to include support for secure overnight lorry parking facilities. (386)

#### Waterborne Transport

Policy should be amended to ensure that ferry timetables meet needs of haulage business and that ferries can accommodate HGVs (386)

Policy should be amended to support a ferry service between Scrabster to Aberdeen. (81)

#### Air Travel

Policy should be amended to provide explicit support for air connection between Inverness and an international hub. (180)

### **Summary of responses (including reasons) by Planning Authority:**

#### Roads

Improvements and extensions to the Trunk Roads are within the remit of Transport Scotland, with the priorities and funding set within the Scotland-wide [Strategic Transport Projects Review](#) (STPR). In terms of the national

Trunk Road network, many of the Highland Council (HC) Trunk roads are of low national priority in a Scottish context, despite them being a high priority in regional and local terms. However, some improvements to the A9, A82 and A96 have been prioritised for investment by Transport Scotland and these have been detailed within the STPR and [Local Transport Strategy](#) (LTS).

The Highland wide Local Development Plan and related Local Transport Strategy (LTS) will concentrate on policies and proposals for the Council-maintained non-trunk road network, and those trunk road improvements which are funding priorities identified in the STPR. The Council will, however, continue to support and jointly lobby for improvements to the Trunk Road network with Transport Scotland and developers in line with the LTS.

Given the rural nature of much of the Highlands, significant use of the private car can be expected to continue for many trips, particularly in the more remote and sparsely populated areas or where the population is highly dispersed. Thus in order to support these remote areas, the Council will need to maintain and improve the local, non-trunk road network. The priorities for improvements to these roads are determined via the [Road Asset Management Plan](#) (RAMP) incorporated in the Council's LTS, and via the Council's approved capital investment programme for roads. RAMP is based on an agreed common, Scotland-wide methodology for prioritising roads maintenance across the Highland road network.

## Rail

Whilst the current STPR does propose some minor generic improvements to the rail network in the Highland area, such as the replacement of Radio Electronic Token Block signalling, the STPR does not contain any proposals for specific improvements north of Inverness, such as the Dornoch Rail Link. Despite this project being promoted by a campaigning group with some wider support, it would not attract the support or funding from the Scottish Government during the period of the plan. Further comment on this is dealt with in more detail in *Issue 82: Caithness and Sutherland Vision*.

The STPR contains no specific rail-based projects to link Alness to the Nigg Yard. The LTS reflects this in that there is a general support for improvements across the Highland Rail Network, but nothing specifically targeted at creating the Alness-Nigg link. Such a link is likely to be demand-led and dependent on economic developments at the Nigg Yard.

The STPR supports an increase in service frequency and a reduction in journey times between Inverness and Perth through the provision of minor infrastructure improvements such as line-speed improvements, additional loops or lengthening double track sections and the removal of speed limits for freight trains. These improvements are, however, within the remit of Network Rail and the relevant train operators.

Policy 57 already requires that proposals are well-served by the most sustainable modes of transport, and this would include the existing railway network. Strengthening of the railway network is, however, within the remit of



## Network Rail and the relevant train operators.

The suggested electrification of the railway network would not be achievable via the HwLDP as it is again within the remit of Network Rail and not the Council.

The issue of level crossings will be taken forward through the provision of a policy hook in Policy 31: Physical Constraints and detailed as a constraint in the forthcoming Physical Constraints Supplementary Guidance (SG). The SG will require developers to fully demonstrate that proposals are compatible with an affected level crossing or that adequate mitigation is provided. In addition, Area LDP's will provide for specific developer requirements to consider level crossings and consult with Network Rail where allocations are likely to have an impact.

## Parking in Nairn

The policy's principle aim is to move to more sustainable modes of travel and as such the Council would not be seeking to encourage short-haul car journeys from new residential developments into Nairn Town Centre. Therefore any shortage of car parking spaces would act as a disincentive for using the car and an incentive to use Active Travel or Public Transport instead in line with the stated aims of the policy. However, should additional parking spaces be needed, the third bullet point states that developments should: "incorporate appropriate mitigation on site and/or off site, provided through developer contributions where necessary, which might include improvements and enhancements to the walking/cycling". This policy wording does not preclude the provision of additional car parking within the town centre.

## HomeZones

The requirement (or otherwise) for HomeZones to be made a mandatory feature of new residential developments will be outlined in the Residential Layout and Design Supplementary Guidance which the Council is currently preparing.

## Public Transport

The limited accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities has been identified as a key issue within the Local Transport Strategy (p26). The LTS contains a commitment to improve the accessibility of school transport to pupils with disabilities (p68) and will also build upon previous initiatives to provide accessible low-floor buses for all users throughout the Area

The LTS supports a number of initiatives under LTS Policy No 5 (p58) which are intended to extend and improve the public transport network, and which the HwLDP Travel Policy takes cognisance of, including:

- The Council will develop provision of bus priority measures as a means of improving the attractiveness of bus travel in the more congested areas and providing a viable alternative to the car.



- The Council will seek to ensure that locations with potential for introducing bus priority measure are protected from development.
- The Council will secure developer contributions where required to provide high quality bus services to new developments from the date of opening

### Integrated Transport

The Highland Council LTS Vision includes a commitment to “...establish an integrated transport network which supports safe and sustainable environments in which people can live, work and travel”. The LTS (p71) commits the Council to “...seek to improve interchange facilities to enable easier transfer between different transport modes such as cycling and walking at railway stations”. This approach is also proposed for airports as well as railway stations (c.f. ‘INTEGRATION’, p75).

### Active Travel

Active Travel is one of the key themes of the Local Transport Strategy. To this end the Council has produced a series of Active Travel Transport Masterplans for all the main settlements within Highland which will guide improvements to the walking/cycling network and links into public transport within allocations in this Proposed Plan and future Area Local Development Plans. Developer contributions (Policy 32, p79-80) may also be sought and used to create new (or improved) cycle routes to connect new developments with existing routes (LTS, p43).

### Electric Vehicles

Whilst [Scottish Planning Policy](#) (p34) provides support for the installation of charging points for electric vehicles, there is little demonstrable demand, and the economic viability of such an approach across the Highland Area is not proven. The current level of demand is extremely low, with the latest industry figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (“[Motor Industry Facts 2010](#)”) showing that in 2009 only 55 electric vehicles were sold across the whole of the UK. By contrast, 14,645 hybrid petrol/electric cars - which do not require charging points - were sold in 2009. Although there is currently a three-year Prius Plug-in Hybrid Vehicle lease demonstration programme running in the UK (20 vehicles), there are no mass market plug-in hybrids on sale in the UK at present, and so demand for charging points is likely to remain low in the Highland area for the foreseeable future, and almost certainly for the period of this Plan.

### Freight

The Council’s Local Transport Strategy’s Core Policy 13 (p86) already commits the council to “...identify suitable locations for lorry parking in and around major urban centres”. The Highland wide Local Development Plan has to take cognisance of this under the Travel Policy (57).

### Waterborne Transport

The Council's Local Transport Strategy's Core Policy 13 (p86) already commits the Council to support measures to achieve a relocation of freight transport from the road network to water transport and to support measures to introduce freight transfer facilities at the road/sea interface. However, individual ferry timetables and the ability of ferries to take HGVs will likely be demand-led.

The introduction of any new ferry service between Scrabster and Aberdeen would be demand led, although the Council will continue to support and jointly lobby for general improvements to the strategic and regional ferry network with its regional partners.

### Air Travel

The Local Transport Strategy (which this Policy explicitly references for additional detailed policies and recommendations) outlines the Councils' support under LTS Core Policy 9 'Air' (p74) for connections to London and to an international hub.

### **Any further plan changes commended by the council**

None

### **Reporter's conclusions:**

Added by Reporter at later date.

### **Reporter's recommendations:**

Added by Reporter at later date.