

Essich Road, Inverness Masterplan Consent Area (MCA)

Issues and Actions Note of Project Group Meeting Meeting 1: Opportunities & Constraints

7 September 2026 - Online

Attendees

Masterplan Consent Area Facilitator (MCAF) and The Highland Council (THC)
Community Representatives: Holm Community Council (HCC) and Essich & Torbreck
Community Association (ETCA)
Development Partner: Tulloch Homes (Tulloch)

Issues Raised

The following issues were raised by ETCA and endorsed by HCC:

- Road safety generally and particularly within the Big Burn housing group and on those other sections of Essich Road that currently have no footway provision;
- The feasibility of safer routes to Ness Castle Primary School and the Inverness Royal Academy;
- Traffic queuing on Essich Road at its connection to the Southern Distributor Road roundabout;
- The requirement for gathering, sharing and discussion of further technical information;
- Independent vetting of that information particularly on transport, ecology (including Biodiversity Net Gain and protected species), flooding (including net betterment) and drainage issues;
- The speed limit on Essich Road;
- The potential for non-housing uses within the MCA site, including community facilities, jobs/retail opportunities, their phasing and how they relate to giving young people something to do rather than engaging in anti-social behaviour;
- The need for play facilities within the site and/or contributions to enhance existing facilities;
- Public transport frequency and connectivity given the requirement for 35% affordable housing;
- Other infrastructure capacity including education and health;

- Existing flooding issues particularly to Torbreck Road properties;
- Local residents' opinions on the character and identity of their community as expressed through the Place Standard assessment;
- Whether the MCA site complies with national Local Living policy and the 20-minute neighbourhood principle as defined in NPF4;
- The need to assess the requirements of existing and future residents;
- The presence of underground plant beneath the MCA site and dry stone dykes bordering it;
- Query as to how best large electronic files can be shared between all Project Group partners;
- Request for the Note of each meeting to cover issues raised as well as actions;
- Need for ETCA to feedback to wider community and to receive each meeting Note in time to allow that;
- Matters of land ownership including the extent of developer options secured on the site.

The following issues were raised directly or indirectly in response to questions, by Tulloch representatives:

- That topography and the now confirmed flood risk area will be key design parameters;
- The flood risk area can be seen as both an opportunity and a constraint;
- Matters of ownership;
- The opportunity to create an additional public open space at the southern tip of the site because of its attractive outlook and proximity to a popular cycling route;
- Whether surface water drainage systems (SuDS) must be located outwith the flood risk area;
- Which watercourse(s) and where SuDS will discharge their waters to;
- The options for widening of Essich Road, providing traffic calming along it, and providing active travel route provision in parallel with that widening;
- Whether active travel routes should be designed and constructed to cross land that is subject to occasional flooding;
- The requirement for net betterment of existing flooding issues.

The following issues were raised by THC:

- The need for green corridors to be designed for active travel and wildlife not for one or the other;
- The importance of taking design clues from the wooded burn-sides that are a key landscape feature of the fringes of Inverness;

- Recognition of the mix of architectural styles and settlement forms that adjoin and lie close to the site;
- The importance of providing an attractive public frontage for/to the development.

Actions

No.	Action	Who
1	Completion, sharing, independent vetting (led by THC), and discussion of technical reports and other evidence between all Project Group partners including: • Essich Road / SDR junction micro simulation model; • Essich Road widening options; • Active travel route connections particularly to local schools; • Flooding and drainage matters; • Ecological survey work particularly protected species surveys; • A Biodiversity Net Gain report.	All
2	Consideration of reduced speed limit on Essich Road	THC/Tulloch
3	THC and statutory agency vetting of Tulloch and community technical reports	THC
4	THC to circulate draft Note of each Project Group meeting within 7 days of each meeting or sooner if possible and invite comment on amendments / additions	THC
5	Completion of further technical reports including on transport, ecology and drainage	Tulloch
6	Investigation of best (large) file sharing mechanism	THC/Tulloch