Essich Road, Inverness Masterplan Consent Area (MCA)

Issues and Actions Note of Project Group Meeting
Meeting 2: Design Vision

28 September 2026 – In-Person Meeting

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/or HCC:

- That it may be beneficial to have greenspace and less housing density around the edges of the MCA site and more density in the centre of the site;

- That new trees could be planted on the site edges and in the green corridors to soften the visual impact of the development as seen from the surrounding area;

- ETCA stated that property heights should be a maximum of 1.5 storeys to maintain a rural village feel. Cottage flats were agreed as an appropriate house type but ETCA stated that these should be a maximum height of 1.5 storeys. ETCA rejected the inclusion of any taller buildings such as those on the Maples development at Ness-side. HCC expressed a preference for 1.5 storey units across the site but recognised that any flats may be 2 storey.

- Essich Road should be made safer for cyclists;

- The site isn't within a 10 minute walk of many daily needs and therefore enhanced local amenities provision is needed and better connections to existing facilities;

- That the type and amount of affordable housing should be considered reflecting likely future car ownership issues;

- Desire to match the character of the existing houses and avoid rear garden fences facing Essich Road;

- That off-street parking should be provided to alleviate congestion;

- That children walking / cycling to school will take the fastest route regardless of route signage and designation;

- The development should not segregate affordable housing and private housing and their appearance should be indistinguishable ("tenure-blind");

- That the unresolved landownership of the sisters' field continues to provide uncertainty in the project.

- ETCA felt that the Tornagrain development provided a good example of an acceptable village look, feel and character because it didn't follow standardised volume housebuilder house designs and types;

- That the site's entrances should be attractive and include sweeping stone dykes in-keeping with the existing drystone dykes to create a sense of place;

- HCC felt that Essich Road should keep its existing rural character with stone walling and tree lining retained and enhanced;

- HCC felt that as a general principle, buildings should be setback from Essich Road but recognised that some buildings closer to the road may have a traffic calming effect;

- That roads should be of an alignment and design that retains / creates a village feel;

- That the viewpoint at the southernmost point of the site should be accessible to all.

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

- That topography influences the type of housing chosen and access;
- That an internal loop for road access within the site was desirable;

- Providing frontage on to steeper connecting roads which join development areas (across different levels) will be challenging;
- That cottage-style flats could be used at this location;
- That there could be potential for an outward looking edge with frontage;
- Whether there is a market for luxury flats;
- That affordable housing agencies prefer rented units that they will have to manage in the future to be in small clusters to increase the efficiency of future maintenance but that this will still allow dispersal of the affordable unit provision across the site;
- That the previous man-made changing of the watercourse has contributed to flooding.
- That the potential active travel routes to Torbreck Road from the northwestern boundary of the site were subject to negotiation with the affected proprietors.

The following issues were raised by THC:

- That active travel routes should be safe, used, visible, and attractive;
- That character is experienced by the street - housing types and materials used should be similar on both sides of the street to contribute to this;
- Whether or not a nearby shop would have the population to support it;
- Gateways and access should be prioritised - people need to be able to move in and out of the development with ease;
- Footpaths and active travel should be aligned with green networks where possible.

Actions

No.	Action	Who
1	Find out amount of affordable housing and whether the contribution is to be applied on or off-site.	THC
2	Share any collected road data / transport modelling with Highland Council	ETCA
3	Provide a tour of existing developments for community representatives	Tulloch