

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**CITY OF INVERNESS AREA COMMITTEE**

**3 JUNE 2013**

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| Agenda Item | 5          |
| Report No   | CIA/024/13 |

**INVERNESS CAMPUS UPDATE**

**Report by Director of Planning and Development**

**SUMMARY**

This report brings the Committee up to date with the development of Inverness Campus. A representative from HIE will be in attendance, and they will make a presentation to the Committee, outlining the aims of the development and bringing Members up to date with its progress.

Support for the development of the Inverness Campus fits with the Council Programme aim of developing our urban centres, and supporting the creation of quality jobs in the Highlands.

**1. Background**

1.1 Inverness Campus is being developed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise to provide a high quality facility capable of attracting inward investment to Scotland. The Campus vision is to create a vibrant, exciting and inspiring environment that will stimulate knowledge creation and transfer. The Campus will allow a number of key business, research and education organisations to work together, with the Centre for Health Science, Johnson and Johnson's Lifescan Scotland and Raigmore Hospital being connected to the Campus site by a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the A9. This link, along with public transport enhancements, ensures connection between the campus and the city centre, thereby reducing carbon emissions.

**2. Current Situation**

2.1 Construction of the first phase, comprising 89 acres of serviced land (with planning consent for 55,000m sq of development) is due for completion in the summer of 2013. This phase of the development will see the creation of a high quality campus location with excellent facilities including next generation broadband, vital ingredients if the site is to prove able to attract businesses from around the world. The Campus aims to provide a range of facilities for the use of the local community. These will include a mix of recreational and sports amenities aimed at complementing the strategic priorities of the facility, namely the development of an academic environment, with an emphasis on knowledge industries and collaboration that will act as an international exemplar and attract inward investment.

2.2 The Council's contribution towards the development of phase one is in the provision of improved road access, including road widening at key access points off the A9. The improvement of additional sections of Culloden Road

and the installation of improved public transport access into the Campus is also included. This work has been funded by developer contributions and is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2013. Part of the site (5.46 hectares) has been designated by the Scottish Government as a Life Sciences Enterprise Area, and this will attract further Council assistance in the form of a Simplified Planning Protocol. Rates relief amounting to a maximum of £55,000 per annum, up to 2017 is also available, along with advice on skills from Skills Development Scotland and international marketing support from Scottish Development International.

- 2.3 Work is just about to commence on the site of the new 20,000 sq m Inverness College UHI building. The main contractor for this development is Miller Equitix and the contract is worth £50m. Funding has been made available by the Scottish Funding Council through the Scottish Futures Trust, and completion of the facility is due in time for the autumn term 2015.
- 2.4 Alongside Inverness College UHI there are a number of organisations looking to develop proposals on the campus. There is potential to develop the Centre for Health Sciences further, focussing on Primary Care, and Scotland's Rural College (formerly SAC) plans to re-locate from its existing base in Inverness in order to allow it to grow its Inverness based research activity. Furthermore, Calbyn Limited, a partnership between the Calman Trust and Albyn Housing, are hoping to take forward a social hotel which has at its core a training function which will support disadvantaged young people in accessing skills, formal qualifications and employment in the hotel and catering industry, within a fully commercial four star social enterprise managed hotel facility.
- 2.5 HIE is actively marketing the Inverness Campus, and there are a total of 15 plots available for sale in phase one of the development. Six plots have been earmarked for Life Sciences uses, and these will benefit from the enterprise area incentives detailed in paragraph 2.2. Plans are being taken forward by HIE for the creation of a 1,000sq.m. "advance" unit for Life Science on plot 8. Plots 6 and 7 have been earmarked for the development of student residences, and the feasibility work will commence on this shortly in partnership with UHI. The remaining plots will be available for a variety of business, research and education related uses. The Council, as part of its Scottish Cities Alliance activities, is working closely with the Campus management to bring the development to a wider national and international developer/investor market.

### **3. Future Proposals**

- 3.1 A further two phases are proposed for the development of the Campus however, detailed plans have yet to be finalised.

### **4. Implications**

- 4.1 **Legal and Risk Implications**

4.2 There are no legal or risk issues for the Highland Council arising from this report.

4.3 **Equality and Climate Change Implications**

4.4 It is not anticipated that there will be any equality or climate change implications for the Highland Council.

4.5 **Resource Implications**

4.6 There are no resource implications for the Council.

**5 Recommendation**

5.1 The Committee is invited to:

- (i) endorse the work the Council is pursuing in partnership with HIE to attract inward investment to the campus; and
- (ii) note the progress with the development of the Inverness Campus Project

Designation: Director of Planning & Development

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Date: 15 May 2013