

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 21 October 2013

Agenda Item	4
Report No	CIA/52/13

Land Use and Transport Priorities for Inverness

Joint Report by **Director of Planning and Development**
 Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Summary

This report recommends a procedure and process to identify land use and integrated transport priorities for improving the quality of the environment in Inverness City Centre and delivering a long term sustainable transport network. Together these measures aim to maximise Inverness's role as a modern and carbon-clever City, and its contribution to the Seven Cities initiative. The report outlines a process for consulting with key groups and organisations on achieving these outcomes, including proposals/actions identified in existing transport and land use strategies. The findings of the consultation meetings are intended to inform a review of the Inverness City Centre Development Brief, related transport strategies and the wider role of integrated transport throughout the Highlands.

1. Background

- 1.1 Inverness plays a vital role as a hub for the Highlands and Islands in terms of its economy, culture and connectivity, and also as one of Scotland's Seven Cities (<http://scottishcities.wordpress.com/>). The interrelationship between land use and transport planning plays an important role in maintaining and improving the quality of the environment of the City and maximising opportunities for investment and increasing visitor numbers and footfall. The quality and ease of access to services and facilities, and availability of places to visit and socialise has a strong influence on where people choose to spend time and money.
- 1.2 The Council's Programme for 2012 -2017 "Working Together for the Highlands" makes a commitment to prepare a plan for sustainable, integrated transport throughout the Highlands. The main principles and objectives for achieving an efficient and integrated transport network are set out in the Council's Local Transport Strategy (www.highland.gov.uk/lts). The Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (www.highland.gov.uk/imfldp) (approved in September 2013) is the first of three area Local Development Plans which seeks to address the close interrelationship between transport and land use planning. In preparing this Plan, officers from P&D and TECS have worked closely with a number of public and private sector transport stakeholders in identifying transport issues and infrastructure that is needed to support future development. In addition, Policy 1 of the Plan seeks to focus a wide range of uses in our City and town centres. Alongside, the Inverness City Centre Development Brief has looked at key sites and areas in the City that need to be improved or regenerated and where the spaces between buildings could be improved to maximise sustainable movements and create high quality places.

- 1.3 The City of Inverness is already going through a period of transition with numerous projects completed, underway or emerging that will create opportunities for high quality spaces and/or improvements. For example, streetscape in and around Church Street and High Street, the flood alleviation scheme, and benefits brought about by the West Link road project providing relief from transport congestion in the city centre. There is also a range of opportunities for further improving the city centre including:
- key buildings and spaces along Academy Street;
 - prospects for waterfront development;
 - development of a transport hub and active travel network;
 - the potential to better integrate streetscape and pedestrian areas with the city centre; and
 - encouraging the use of public transport through consideration of “Quality Bus Partnerships” and the potential of “Cool Rider “ schemes for the younger sector of society.
- 1.4 Over the winter it is proposed to hold a series of targeted consultation meetings with business organisations such as BID and the Chamber of Commerce as well as other interest groups to obtain feedback on their vision for a modern sustainable city. From these consultations it is proposed to work with Members to identify key action areas where projects can be developed that will achieve our aspirations for an environmentally friendly city that will encourage tourism and economic development. This will provide the framework for a review of the City Centre Development Brief, and other transport strategies, which can fully consider how travel to and from the City, and movements within it, can be made sustainably while maximising investment and footfall in the City. It also sets a precedent for integrating transport and land use across the rest of the Highland area. An outline timetable is set out in Table A below.

Table A

Organisation & Action	Consultation Meeting Timescale
BID and Chamber of Commerce	November 2013
Inverness City Area Members	December 2013
Land Use & Integrated Transport Strategy - draft document preparation	January 2014
Public consultation on draft plan	February 2014
Final Plan Report to City of Inverness Area Committee	Spring 2014

2. Legal, Equality and Resource implications

- 2.1 There are no known direct legal or equality implications arising from this report.
- 2.2 Resources to deliver the projects identified in this report are either committed within the Council’s capital programme or within individual Service budgets.

External sources of funding are also being investigated, including potential investment opportunities for the Common Good Fund.

- 2.3 In regard to equalities, any design development will take into account access requirements for individuals with disabilities and vulnerable user groups.
- 2.4 The plan will encourage sustainable transport and help mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing traffic congestion, improving journey times and support active travel through cycling and walking and thereby reduce the carbon footprint for traffic in and around the City of Inverness.
- 2.5 There are no risks identified at this stage of the plan.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Committee is invited to:

- a) Contribute to the scoping and content of an integrated land use and transport strategy for Inverness City Centre;
- b) Agree that officers consult with key partners and interested groups and organisations as identified in Table A to identify priorities and actions for transport and land use in the City Centre taking account of the opportunities identified in the Inverness City Centre Development Brief; and
- c) Agree that officers take forward outputs from Members and consultation meetings to produce an action plan which can be reported back to this Committee in spring 2014 and incorporated in a review of the Inverness City Centre Development Brief and other Transport Strategies.

Designation: Director of Planning and Development / Director of Transport,
Environmental and Community Services

Date: 8th October 2013

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