

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CITY OF INVERNESS AREA COMMITTEE

2 SEPTEMBER 2014

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| Agenda Item | 5 |
| Report No | CIA/33/14 |

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL RESPONSE TO TRANSPORT SCOTLAND'S A9/A96 CONNECTIONS STUDY

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

This report sets out the background to Transport Scotland's A9/A96 Connections Study and describes the route options currently being considered. It provides an overview of the public comments on these options received by Transport Scotland and a recommended Council response to the Study. The Committee is asked to agree Appendix A as the Council response to the Study.

1 Background

- 1.1 Over a period of almost 10 years, the Council and Transport Scotland have been working together to formulate practicable solutions to increase trunk and local road network capacity in the eastern part of the City of Inverness. This additional capacity is crucial to the growth of the City, the wider A96 growth corridor and if Inverness is to be an engine of growth for the Highland economy. Accordingly, successive Council development plans have embodied the principle of significant growth in this area but have recognised that much of this growth is dependent upon increased road capacity. The latest approved document, the Council's Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012), identifies an eastern link between the A9 and A96 and other transport improvements as the key to unlocking development opportunities in the eastern part of the City.
- 1.2 This report concentrates on Transport Scotland's route options for connecting the A9 and A96 and this link with the local road network. Its commitment to progress a road scheme for this area stems from the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) 2008 proposal to upgrade the A96 from Inverness to Nairn including a Nairn Bypass and an A9/A96 "East Link" road at Inverness. In February 2012, initial proposals for a dual carriageway trunked link road between A9 at Inshes and A96 at Barn Church Road were presented at public exhibitions. Following feedback querying the benefits and impacts of this scheme, Transport Scotland commissioned further work to look at other ways to mitigate wider traffic issues associated with the Inshes, Raigmore and Longman junctions on the A9, A96 and A82.
- 1.3 As a result, three new route options (in addition to the 2012 solution now classified

as Option A) have been presented for public consultation as part of a renamed project - the A9/A96 Connections Study. The consultation ran from 30 May to 31 July 2014 and was held in tandem with the Council's related projects – Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief and Inshes Junction Improvements Phase 2. **Transport Scotland has requested that the Council provide formal comments on the route corridor options currently being considered.** It should be noted that these routes are corridors rather than definitive road schemes and part of an initial options appraisal stage. More detailed assessment and design work will commence when a broad corridor has been chosen.

- 1.4 The recommended response to the Study is contained in Appendix A to this report. Section 2 below describes the new routes (mapped in Appendix B), Section 3 provides details of the public consultation process and an overview of public comments received by Transport Scotland, Section 4 contains a summary of the recommended Council response and Section 5 explains next steps.

2 Description of Route Options (New Routes Mapped in Appendix B)

2.1 *Longman Junction*

All options propose to replace the existing A9 / A82 Longman Junction with a new grade separated junction. The existing roundabout would be enlarged at ground level, with approaches from the A82 and Stadium Road altered. Slip roads would be constructed to the side of the existing A9 and the A9 would be raised on an embankment over the new roundabout. The A9 between the Raigmore Interchange and Longman Junction would be widened.

2.2 *Option B*

This option includes two separate sections of single carriageway local distributor road. The Inshes to A96 link road section commences at the secondary access junction to the new Inverness Campus at Caulfield Road North and runs in a north easterly direction crossing the Perth to Inverness Railway to connect to the proposed new A96 / Barn Church Road junction. The Stevenson Road to Culloden Road section connects to the eastern leg of the existing roundabout on Stevenson Road at Wester Inshes and runs north-east crossing the A9 dual carriageway on a new over bridge. The new link connects to a realigned four arm signalised junction with Culloden Road.

2.3 *Option C*

Option C is a single carriageway local distributor road that connects to the existing roundabout (adjacent to Aldi) at Inshes Retail Park and runs east and then north-east, crossing the A9 dual carriageway and then Culloden Road on over-bridges to a new roundabout at Caulfield Road North. The new link then extends runs in a north-east direction crossing the Perth to Inverness Railway to connect to the proposed new A96 / Barn Church Road junction. With this option, the existing A9 southbound slip roads at Inshes remain open.

2.4 Option D

Option D is a single carriageway local distributor road that connects to the existing roundabout (adjacent to Aldi) at Inshes Retail Park and runs east and then north-east, crossing the A9 dual carriageway on an over-bridge to a new roundabout on the east side of the A9 with new, southbound diverge and merge slip roads. The new link then extends in a north-east direction crossing Culloden Road on an over-bridge to a new roundabout at Caulfield Road North. The new link then extends in a north-east direction crossing the Perth to Inverness Railway to connect to the proposed new A96 / Barn Church Road junction. The existing A9 Inshes southbound merge and diverge would be closed and the proposals suggest that the existing Inshes A9 overbridge would need to be replaced with a wider span structure to accommodate the new southbound carriageway slip road.

3 Public Consultation and Summary of Responses

3.1 The public consultation period for the Transport Scotland A9/A96 Connections Study ran from 30 May to 31 July 2014. Transport Scotland has agreed to provide an extension to the Council to allow the response to be presented to this Committee. This consultation was held jointly with the Council's consultation on the Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief – Issues and Options and the Inshes Junction Improvements Phase 2. During the consultation period two public exhibitions/drop-in sessions attended by Transport Scotland and Council Officers were held. These events were held on:

- 30 May 2014 at Inshes Church (12 noon till 7pm)
- 3 June 2014 at Old High Church Halls, Academy Street, Inverness (12 noon till 7pm)

3.2 The consultation events were well attended, with approximately 300 interested parties, including members of the public, Councillors, landowners, developers and agents in attendance. Transport Scotland received around 50 direct, written responses to the A9/A96 Connections Study. The majority of the feedback from the public exhibitions revealed that attendees preferred the new options to those previously considered. Many have raised issues which can only be properly assessed at the next, detailed design stage.

3.3 Several respondents comment on the **principle of the road scheme** as follows:

- the scheme has no sound economic justification, will have serious environmental and social impacts and should therefore be abandoned;
- the need for the scheme because few long distance journeys flow from A9 to A96 and vice versa;
- the need for the scheme given its primary purpose is to open up development land, prime farm land will be lost and flood risk will be an issue (Westhill Community Council [WCC]);
- local traffic flows would better be dealt with by slip lanes into the Campus and improved access to the West Seafield Retail Park;
- more detailed traffic modelling is needed to prove that traffic flows will be better post than pre scheme completion;

- disruption associated with each scheme will outweigh its benefits and therefore another alternative (undefined by respondent) should be formulated;
- congestion will simply move to different bottlenecks;
- money should also be put into public transport alternatives such as park and ride and a rail halt at Sunnyside of Culloden; and
- some residents simply urge early completion of any scheme.

3.4 Many **directly affected property owners** have made comment concerned about property depreciation, blight of development potential, increased traffic generation, increased noise pollution and adverse impact on heritage features within their property boundaries. **Landowners** make comment to support the principle of any link that will facilitate (better) ransom free access to their (allocated) development land. They offer joint discussions with Transport Scotland and the Council to progress amendments that will create additional road network capacity but also serve their particular development interests. The possibility of developer contributions towards road improvements is stated.

3.5 Several local residents have offered **local opinions on better road designs and solutions** as follows:

- simplified (less/no Gaelic), cheaper and co-ordinated road signage;
- more serpentine road alignments;
- more landscaping;
- more effective road drainage;
- a dual carriageway would be more effective in traffic terms;
- a cut and cover tunnel, grade separated junction at Inshes Roundabout;
- reduce number of traffic light controlled junctions;
- more left in/out slip lanes particularly from the A9 into / out of Campus (x3 including WCC);
- more effective measures for active travel through the Raigmore Interchange junction and generally within Inverness;
- gaps in disabled compliant active travel networks should be joined up;
- resurrecting the Cross-Rail link road between Millburn Road and the A82 at Longman Road would take a considerable amount of local traffic movements off the trunk road network and should therefore be supported by Transport Scotland;
- dualling of the B9006 along its busiest section;
- opposition to the apparent closure of the connection between Caulfield Road North and Castlehill Road under Options C and D because of the lack of a suitable alternative route;
- more road connections are required to open up allocated development land at East Inverness;
- a suggestion for an Option E – a single carriageway connection between Inshes (Aldi roundabout) and the A96 via an A9 over-bridge and an at grade roundabout connection with the B9006 at Caulfield Road North junction plus an A9 southbound slip from this junction;
- grade separation of the A96 / Eastfield Way junction with effective active travel crossing routes of the new junction;

- a road connection between the Raigmore Interchange and the Campus;
- a connection through the Campus would have been far more effective; and
- a bypass connecting the A82, A9 and A96 away from the City (x3).

3.6 The following **route preferences** have been expressed.

Longman A9/A82 Junction

- consensus support because this will ease congestion on all three trunk roads but one request for part time lights to control peak time flows, one for effective active travel links under and linking to the elevated A9 and one for a temporary low cost solution of removing the traffic lights and adding left turn slips for all other routes

Option A

- support because best deals with A9 queuing safety issue, relieves pressure on Inshes Roundabout and doesn't require costly rebuilding of Culloden over-bridge (the respondent has made an incorrect assumption as this option does require a replacement bridge) as envisaged under Option D but with an amendment to make it single carriageway;
- support as a better component of a bypass; and
- opposition as detrimental to landowner interests at Dell of Inshes

Option B

- support as least impact on local resident (x3);
- support but with a grade separated, full, all routes connection to the A9;
- support as least impact on landowner at Inshes;
- support as best at offering an alternative to crossing Inshes Roundabout and therefore reducing congestion at this location;
- support as offering most effective connection to SDR and West Link (x3);
- support as least cost and least adverse impact;
- support provided junctions have adequate capacity for anticipated traffic flows;
- opposition - no reason stated;
- opposition because scheme close to residents' properties and Stevenson Road inadequate to function as safe distributor road (x2);
- opposition because of direct impact on resident's property;
- opposition because it will not relieve congestion at Inshes Roundabout and has adverse heritage and road safety impacts (at Inshes Primary School);
- opposition because of loss of greenspace;
- opposition because it would not solve the A9 queuing safety problem;
- opposition because it will add to traffic congestion on Culloden Road (x3 including WCC);
- opposition because it will exacerbate surface water drainage problems on Drumossie Brae;
- opposition because it will draw commercial trade away from Inshes Retail Park;
- opposition because it will not improve access to the Campus; and
- opposition as adverse impact on UHI Campus because more traffic on B9006, construction disruption to Campus secondary access, lack of

roundabout junction at Ashton Farm to serve Campus expansion area.

Option C

- support but needs coupled with Council widening carriageway of existing Culloden Road A9 over-bridge;
- support – no reason stated;
- support from UHI Campus because most access benefits for least construction disruption;
- support as most likely to create spare road capacity and open up development land;
- opposition because of impact on heritage value of Castle Hill House;
- opposition because it will simply channel more congestion onto Inshes Roundabout;
- opposition because it will adversely impact on residential areas east of the A9;
- opposition because of loss of greenspace including trees, construction impact and pollution post opening;
- opposition because it would not solve the A9 queuing safety problem;
- opposition because of adverse impacts on residents' properties and environment and will channel more traffic to Inshes and Dell of Inshes area (x4);
- opposition because of closure of private accesses, severance of farm land and operations, inadequate pinch point width at Dell of Inshes, property depreciation, blight of development potential; and
- opposition because of adverse impact on road safety through Inshes Retail Park (x2).

Option D

- support - no clear reason stated (x2);
- support but with full (all routes connected) grade separated roundabout (x3) (one party favours an additional link to Stevenson Road and one to the Campus);
- support because delivers best traffic flow benefit and resolves A9 queuing safety issue (x4);
- support and should be combined with Council widening of the Culloden Road over-bridge (x4 including WCC);
- support as most likely to create spare road capacity and open up development land;
- opposition because this will put too much traffic past Inshes Church and School;
- opposition because of impact on heritage value of Castle Hill House;
- opposition because it will adversely impact on residential areas east of the A9;
- opposition because of loss of greenspace including trees, construction impact and pollution post opening;
- opposition as adverse impact on UHI Campus because of construction disruption associated with replacement of Culloden over-bridge;
- opposition because direct impact on resident's property and will be an effective trunk road link and will therefore attract heavy good vehicles to the

- detriment of local residents;
- opposition because of closure of private accesses, severance of farm land and operations, inadequate pinch point width at Dell of Inshes, property depreciation, blight of development potential;
- opposition because of adverse impacts on residents' properties and environment and will channel more traffic to Inshes and Dell of Inshes area (x4); and
- opposition because of adverse impact on road safety through Inshes Retail Park (x2).

Of those that expressed an opinion on the matter, there is unanimous support for a second access to the rear of West Seafield Retail and Business Park.

4 Summary of Recommended Council Response

4.1 The full recommended response to the A9/A96 Connections Study is provided in Appendix A. A summary of the content of the response is provided below. This response has been compiled with input from the following Council Officers: Planners, Transportation, Access, Historic Environment, Environmental Health, Flooding, Landscape, Forestry, Contaminated Land and Waste Management. It also takes account of the public and other interested party comments set out in Section 3 above however it should be noted that these representations are made to Transport Scotland as the decision maker not to the Council. Moreover, Members will note that the representations summarised in Section 3 do not reveal a clear route preference.

4.2 Officers recommend the Council fully **supports** the following.

- Transport Scotland's aim of increasing trunk road network capacity for this part of the City of Inverness as this will benefit the economy and future growth potential of the City and wider Highlands;
- The grade separation of the Longman A9/A82 junction and any widening between the Longman and Raigmore Interchange junctions;
- A distributor road connection to the rear of the West Seafield Retail and Business Park as this will relieve congestion at the existing single access and provide other connectivity improvements; and
- The need for Transport Scotland and the Highland Council to continue to work together to formulate and implement co-ordinated solutions to local and trunk road network capacity issues including the commissioning of further detailed traffic modelling to demonstrate the effectiveness of the chosen solution.

4.3 Appendix A also recommends that the Council seeks **further clarification or information** on the following issues and works with Transport Scotland to help resolve them.

- the status of the road scheme – i.e. will this trunk roads authority led scheme ultimately form part of the local road network;
- a timetable for route selection and implementation; and

- at the next, detailed design stage, further information on the following matters
 - active travel and bus connections including an offer of Council and bus operator discussions on these matters
 - the nature and effectiveness of construction phase alternative routing for all road users
 - detailed junction and link capacity traffic modelling to quantify net betterment
 - a signage and routing strategy
 - how allocated development land can best be activated including an offer of Council co-ordination of developer contributions discussions with landowners
 - visualisations to better illustrate visual and landscape impact
 - an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and details of mitigation
 - a flood risk and drainage impact assessment including modelling of affected watercourses and the possibility of net betterment to existing problem areas
 - contaminated land assessment particularly in respect of the former Longman Landfill area
 - a developer contributions framework and protocol

4.4 Officers reach the following conclusions on **route preference(s)**:

- Options C and D are better than B in terms of the balance of positive and adverse impacts on allocated and permitted development land;
- Options C and D are marginally better than B in terms of the balance of positive and adverse impacts on outdoor access;
- Option D (with suitable construction phase traffic flow mitigation works) is better than B and C in terms of road capacity and safety;
- Option C is better than B in terms of future public transport routing and better than D because of the latter's adverse construction phase impacts;
- Options C and D are better than B in terms of lesser historic environment adverse impact;
- Option B is marginally better than C and clearly better than D in terms of lesser visual and landscape adverse impact;
- Options C and D are marginally better than B in terms of tree / woodland impact; and
- The impacts of the three route Options are judged to be similar or unknown at present in terms of flooding, contaminated land and impact on residential and community amenity.

Accordingly, it is recommended that Options C and D are investigated in further detail by Transport Scotland. Option D should be subject to further cost benefit analysis and assessment of cost reduction measures including a shorter, A9 diverge slip lane which would avoid the need to replace the B9006 Culloden Road over-bridge. Option C is worthy of further analysis if coupled with a solution to the A9 queuing safety issue.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 Transport Scotland will take into account feedback received to the consultation, including the response from the Council contained in Appendix A as part of its appraisal. This will inform the decision about which option will be progressed to the next stage of assessment. Transport Scotland have not committed to any firm timescale for announcing a preferred route.
- 5.2 Transport Scotland and the Council have agreed, at the next, detailed design stage, to undertake further traffic modelling work on the proposals. At the public displays, as advised in Section 3.1, modelled traffic flows for each of the Transport Scotland's options were shown. Further work is required, which may involve gathering more data on current traffic flows and destination data, to fully assess the impact of the proposals on the local and trunk road networks.
- 5.3 In terms of the related Council projects, due to the layout of the Inshes Junction Improvements Phase 2 Scheme being linked to the preferred option selected by Transport Scotland in respect of the A9/A96 link, a detailed timetable for the project delivery can only be established on confirmation of a preferred route. Once the preferred A9/A96 route has been announced by Transport Scotland a paper on the Inshes Junction Improvement Phase 2 proposals will be brought to committee for approval. Officers are considering public responses to the Phase 2 Scheme in the interim.
- 5.4 The Draft Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief is also being presented to this Committee on 2 September 2014. It identifies a "safeguard from development" area for the Council's Inshes Junction Improvement Project and considers the potential impact of Transport Scotland's A9/A96 Connections Study. The Brief will be subject to public consultation and a finalised brief taking account of comments received will then be brought back to this Committee on 2 December 2014.

6 Implications

- 6.1 Legal and risk implications
It is not anticipated that there will be any legal or risk implications for The Highland Council since Transport Scotland are the responsible authority for the A9/A96 Connections Study.
- 6.2 Climate Change implications
Environmental assessment of the proposals is a matter for the scheme proponent to undertake and it is understood Transport Scotland are progressing this work. Any adverse climate change implications should also be mitigated by enhancements to active travel connectivity.
- 6.3 Resource implications
Financially, there may be implications for the Council in terms of Transport Scotland's route choice but these cannot be quantified at this stage given the uncertain division between local and trunk road network improvements and funding thereof.

6.4 Carbon Clever, rural and Gaelic implications

There are no Carbon Clever, rural or Gaelic implications from this report.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to agree the Council response to Transport Scotland's A9/A96 Connections Study contained in **Appendix A**.

Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure

Date: 20 August 2014

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Background Papers:

(available via Council's website www.highland.gov.uk)

- Highland Council committee report HC-33-07
- Highland Council committee report TEC-03-09
- Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012)
- Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (2013)
- Report to City of Inverness Area Committee on 9 December 2013 - Update on Development Briefs for Regeneration of Sites in Inverness
- Report to Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 14 May 2014 - Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief – Issues and Options and Inshes Junction Improvements Phase 2 Consultation
- Transport Scotland A9/A96 Connections Study Exhibition Overview Leaflet

APPENDIX A

DRAFT HIGHLAND COUNCIL RESPONSE TO TRANSPORT SCOTLAND'S A9/A96 CONNECTIONS STUDY

1 Introduction

1.1 Thank you for inviting The Highland Council to provide comments on the Transport Scotland A9/A96 Connections Study. The Council welcomes the progress made and the opportunity to work closely with Transport Scotland in developing the A9/A96 Connections Study as well as the Council's projects Inshes Junction Improvements Phase 2 and Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief. Our response is set out below and begins by providing an overview of the implications of the routes for planned development followed by an outline of potential environmental impacts. This response has been compiled with input from a range of specialist officers within the Council.

1.2 In general, the Council fully supports Transport Scotland's aim of increasing trunk road network capacity for this part of the City of Inverness. Over a period of almost 10 years, the Council and Transport Scotland have been working together to formulate practicable solutions to increase trunk and local road network capacity in the eastern part of the City of Inverness. This additional capacity is crucial to the growth of the City, the wider A96 growth corridor and if Inverness is to be an engine for the Highland economy. Accordingly, successive Council development plans have embodied the principle of significant growth in this area but have recognised that much of this growth is dependent upon increased road capacity. The latest approved document, the Council's Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012), identifies an eastern link between the A9 and A96 and other transport improvements as the key to unlocking development opportunities in the eastern part of the City.

1.3 This response is limited to comments on the Longman Junction upgrade and route options B, C, D on the understanding that Transport Scotland do not intend to consider Option A any further.

2 Development Plan and Planning Permission Implications

2.1 The extant development plan relevant to the areas affected by the route options comprises the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012) and the Inverness Local Plan (as continued in force, 2012). Whilst the preparation of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan is at an advanced stage, the comments below are focussed on the potential impact of the proposals on the extant development plan. The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan is expected to be adopted by the Council in early 2015. Once adopted, it will provide the up to date position on development allocations in the Inner Moray Firth area.

2.2 The Highland Council, as planning authority, must assist in the delivery of allocated development land by helping to ensure that infrastructure proposals do not prejudice the delivery of sites and ideally facilitate adequate, ransom free access to them. The comments below assess the compatibility of the development plan with the route options proposed in the A9/A96 Connections Study.

Longman Junction

2.3 The Council fully supports the proposal for replacing the Longman Junction with a new grade separated junction. There are recognised capacity issues with this junction, particularly at peak times.

2.4 Policy 5 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan allocates the former Longman Landfill Site for mixed use development. Policy 5 of the plan explains that the Council currently favours a range of uses including: waste management and other renewable uses including energy from waste; commercial and industrial uses; and community/public open space. A new grade separated junction at this location will enhance the capacity of this junction therefore assist in the delivery of land allocated for development at the site. The Council is also supportive of the potential improvements to active travel connections that the new junction should bring.

A9/A96 Connections Study Route Options B, C and D - East Inverness

2.5 The alignment of each of the route options being considered pass through areas of east Inverness that are identified for major housing and mixed use expansion in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. This includes allocations at Stratton Farm, Ashton Farm, Inverness Retail and Business Park and the Beechwood Campus. These land allocations are shown in Figure 1 below.

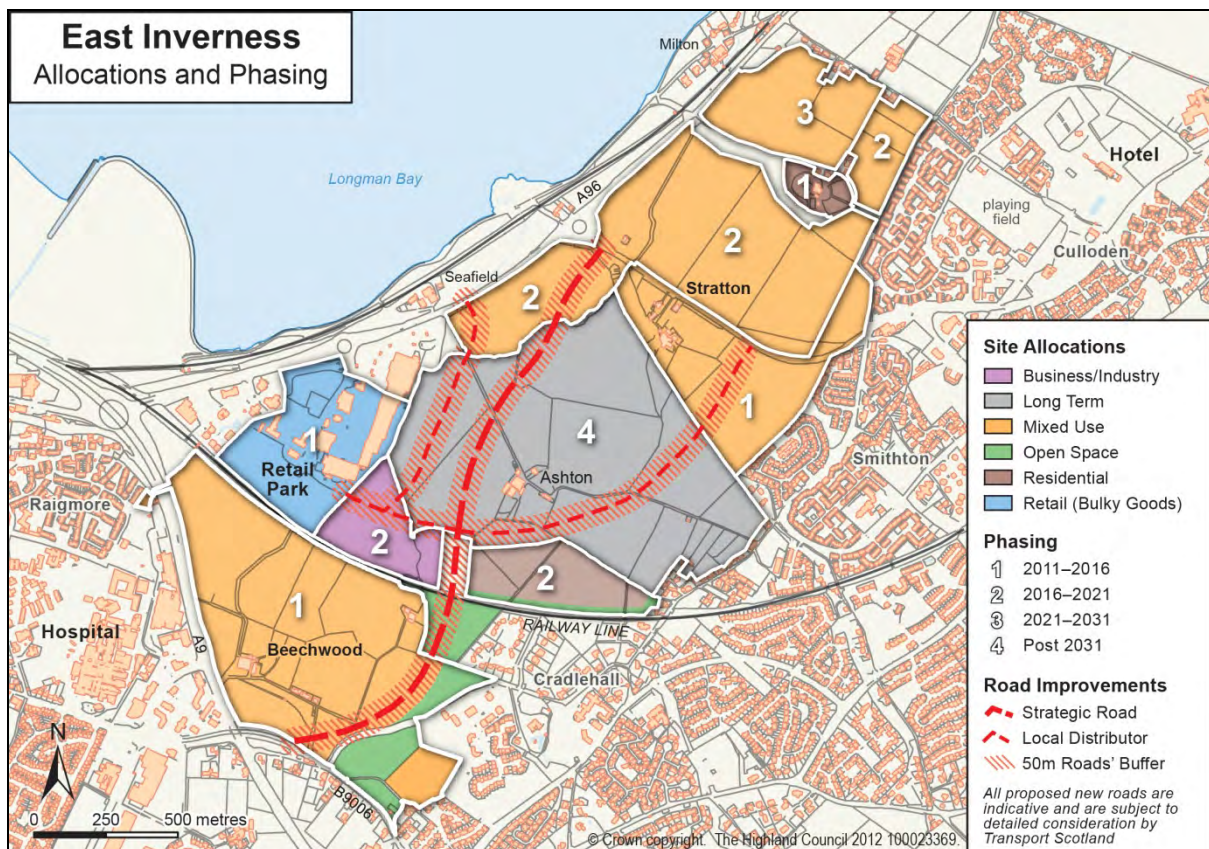


Figure 1: East Inverness Allocations and Phasing - Extract from Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012

2.6 From a development plan perspective the Council is generally content with the proposed alignment of the route options between the A96 / Barn Church Road Junction and the Inverness-Perth Railway. The Council's preference would be for a roundabout junction to the east of the retail park as proposed by options C and D as this provides increased

vehicular capacity and greater potential for additional connections in the future. In particular the Council would wish the design of this roundabout to allow for a connection to the east to allow for access to allocated land at Ashton Farm and a connection to other land further east. Given that developer contributions will be required, the number and location of junctions should be determined, partly, by the requirements to provide ransom free access to allocated development land.

2.7 Policy 12 of the HwLDP allocates Stratton Farm as a mixed use development. Planning permission (reference: 09/00141/OUTIN) was granted in 2011 for a new town comprising town centre, housing and commercial development. The masterplan for this development was developed to allow flexibility to accommodate a future A9/A96 Connection. It is therefore not expected that any of the route options would be incompatible with the Stratton Farm proposal, provided the applicant, the Council and Transport Scotland continue to work together.

2.8 Ashton Farm is allocated for long term development (post 2031) in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. However, a change in land availability may release part of the Ashton landholding earlier than expected and therefore it will be for the Council, Transport Scotland and potential developers to consider the future road network implications of this. It is understood that the relevant owner/agent has lodged a representation to Transport Scotland in this regard. The Inner Moray Firth Proposed Development Plan commits the Council to producing a masterplan/development brief for Ashton Farm and adjoining land which it will adopt as statutory supplementary guidance. The masterplan/development brief will safeguard green parkland corridors and safeguards for transport corridors. The Council anticipates beginning preparation of the masterplan/brief in early 2015 or whenever Transport Scotland confirms a route for the A9/A96 Connections Study.

2.9 Policy 10 of the HwLDP allocates the Inverness Campus as a mixed use allocation. This development is currently under construction and the first phase is scheduled to open in 2015. The Council understands that Transport Scotland has been working closely with Highlands and Islands Enterprise in the development of the new campus to ensure an appropriate safeguard for an A9/A96 connection is maintained.

2.10 The area to the south east of the Inverness Campus site is allocated as open space in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan partly to allow an eastern link but just as importantly to protect the setting and separate identity of Cradlehall neighbourhood. The route alignment and design should respect this aim in terms of maximising setback and minimising noise and adverse visual impact.

2.11 Policy 11 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan supports the expansion of Inverness Retail and Business Park for bulky goods retailing. A planning application (reference: 08/00788/OUTIN) for non-food retail development was reported the Council's planning committee in October 2011. At this meeting the Committee agreed to grant planning permission subject to a legal agreement. The legal agreement is expected to be finalised in the near future. All the route options being considered further propose a link to the retail park from the distributor road proposed A96 / Barn Church Road junction as part of the A96 Inverness to Nairn dualling scheme until reaching the Caulfield Road/ Culloden Road area. The Council strongly supports this new connection to Inverness Retail and Business Park to help improve connectivity in the area and to reduce capacity issues with the existing single access to the Retail and Business Park. The Council would also expect this link to include active travel provision (see further active travel comments in section 3 below).

A9/A96 Connections Study Option B

2.12 Option B would also have implications for a number of sites allocated for development in the Inverness Local Plan (as continued in force, 2012).

2.13 The section of this route between Culloden Road and the B9177 passes through the northern part of housing allocation 97(iii) shown in the plan as Easterfield. Two planning applications have been submitted to the Council for development within or adjacent to this site. A planning application (reference: 06/00513/FULIN) for nine houses has the benefit of a “minded to grant subject to conclusion of legal agreement” Committee decision. This decision was made in October 2006 but the legal agreement has yet to be concluded and therefore there is no extant permission. The layout is incompatible with Route B. The other application, for a single house received a permission but this has since lapsed. The site has been carried forward to the Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (reference: IN73) with the exclusion of the area where one house was previously permitted; it is proposed to have a capacity of 21 units. Option B would have a significant impact on the capacity of this site.

2.14 The section of the route between the proposed A9 over bridge that connects to the eastern leg of the existing roundabout on Stevenson Road passes through site 38(i) Inshes. The western part of this site has been granted planning permission for housing development and this permission remains live at the time of writing. The approved site layout has been provided to Transport Scotland previously. The road alignment proposed by option B and the approved layout differ. There will be an impact on layout if not capacity. There are no current planning applications pending on the eastern part of the site but a pre-application enquiry has been lodged by a house-builder. Option B would sever this eastern section and also reduce its capacity. This site (broken up into several smaller sites) has been carried forward to the Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (references IN42, IN43, IN44 and IN45).

A9/A96 Connections Study Options C and D

2.15 Policy 7 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan allocates Inshes and Raigmore for mixed use, including a site at Dell of Inshes. Route options C and D lie close to the southern boundary of Dell of Inshes and may affect the site. However, these routes would bring increased traffic into the Inshes Retail Park as well as residential areas of Inshes. These impacts would need to be carefully managed including an integrated approach to active travel network improvements.

3 Active Travel

3.1 The current proposals do not clarify the scope and nature of new infrastructure that will be provided to support and encourage greater cycling and walking in the area. Whichever route is chosen it should incorporate new pedestrian and cycling infrastructure designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and, where these facilities tie-in with local transport networks, in accordance with the Highland Council Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments. The Council wish to seek clarification that the new road would be designed to include walking and cycling routes running parallel, including where the road crosses the Inverness – Perth railway and any crossing of the A9. It is also important that whichever route is chosen that existing and proposed active travel corridors are designed in, in terms of the positioning and design of crossing points. Grade separated crossings for pedestrians and cyclists are preferred.

3.2 At the very least, the chosen route should not create severance to existing or proposed active travel routes. For example, the long section of road embankment north of the Inverness to Perth Railway will create a constraint to active travel connectivity. The Council would welcome an opportunity to work with Transport Scotland to establish the most appropriate form and location of new facilities for walkers and cyclists. The new link crosses existing footpaths and a National Cycle Route running through the area.

3.3 As well as the advice provided in the DMRB on assessing the impact of a roads scheme on the environment Scottish Natural Heritage's Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment offers good advice on assessing a scheme's effect on outdoor access, this can be found in Appendix 5 of this document.

Longman Junction

3.4 The grade separation works at the Longman Junction should also allow improved facilities to be incorporated for cyclists and pedestrians. The Longman Junction is a key node on the cycling network for Inverness and the paths on either side of the A9 are promoted as 'Paths Around Inverness' for active travel. Furthermore, land use changes at the former Longman Landfill site as outlined in Section 2 above will mean that movement across the A9 axis will become more prevalent.

3.5 It is not always easy to provide sufficient and safe facilities for cyclists and walkers at uncontrolled roundabouts, as crossing the junction can prove to be difficult. At the next, detailed design stage, consideration should be given to providing new traffic signals into the grade separation proposals that incorporate controlled crossing facilities for use by pedestrians and cyclists. Appropriate footpaths and cycle lanes should also be provided that connect satisfactorily into wider networks in that area.

3.6 Similarly, future consideration should be given to the demand for a new active travel connection alongside the A9 between the Longman and Raigmore Interchange roundabouts. The Raigmore Interchange remains a problem for people trying to walk or cycle safely between Millburn Road and Stoneyfield, Inverness Retail and Business Park or Barn Church Road.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option B

3.7 Option B may enable the delivery of the benefits listed below for outdoor access:

- Delivering an aspirational route between the Scretan Burn and Barn Church Road;
- Delivering another route between Scretan and the Inverness Retail and Business Park; and
- Introducing a new railway crossing.

3.8 The potentially negative effects on outdoor access for option B listed below would need to be carefully managed:

- Bisecting the Ashton Farm road which is a public right of way and core path;
- Increasing traffic at the planned roundabout at Barn Church Road which is used as an active travel route by walkers and cyclists. It is also to be one of the north-south links in the A96 Green Network; an element of our own Supplementary Guidance on Green Networks;
- Increasing traffic on Caulfield Road North which serves as an active travel route, NCN 1 & 7 and part of the Paths Around Inverness network;
- Increasing traffic to the junction of Culloden Road and Caulfield Road North;

- Introducing a new junction to Culloden Road/Caulfield Road where Culloden Road is used as an active travel route;
- Introducing new traffic to the B9177 at Drumossie which is used by cyclists and walkers;
- Bisecting an aspirational route between Cradlehall and Scretan Bridge;
- Bisecting the minor road between Inshes and the A9 which is part of the wider paths network; and
- Taking up and bisecting land over which access rights apply.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option C

3.9 Option C may enable the delivery of the benefits listed below for outdoor access:

- Delivering an aspirational route between the Scretan Burn and Barn Church Road;
- Delivering another route between Scretan and the Inverness Retail and Business Park; and
- Introducing a new railway crossing.

3.10 The potentially negative effects on outdoor access for option C listed below would need to be carefully managed:

- Bisecting the Ashton Farm road which is a public right of way and core path;
- Increasing traffic at the planned roundabout at Barn Church Road;
- Introducing a new roundabout on Caulfield Road North interrupting active and recreational travel;
- Increasing traffic on Caulfield Road North which serves as an active travel route, NCN 1 & 7 and part of the Paths Around Inverness network;
- Increasing traffic to the junction of Culloden Road and Caulfield Road North;
- Bisecting an aspirational route between Cradlehall and Scretan Bridge;
- Introduce traffic to the quiet road / cycleway at Ardachy; and
- Taking up and bisecting land over which access rights apply.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option D

3.11 Option D may enable the delivery of the benefits listed below for outdoor access:

- Delivering an aspirational route between the Scretan Burn and Barn Church Road;
- Delivering another route between Scretan and the Inverness Retail and Business Park; and
- Introducing a new railway crossing.

3.12 The potentially negative effects on outdoor access for option D listed below would need to be carefully managed:

- Bisecting the Ashton Farm road which is a public right of way and core path;
- Increasing traffic at the planned roundabout at Barn Church Road;
- Introducing a new roundabout on Caulfield Road North interrupting active and recreational travel;
- Increasing traffic on Caulfield Road North which serves as an active travel route, NCN 1 & 7 and part of the Paths Around Inverness network;
- Increasing traffic to the junction of Culloden Road and Caulfield Road North;
- Bisecting an aspirational route between Cradlehall and Scretan Bridge;
- Introduce traffic to the quiet road / cycleway at Ardachy; and

- Taking up and bisecting land over which access rights apply.

4 Traffic and Engineering

Longman Junction

4.1 The creation of extra capacity by grade separation of this junction is welcomed. However, the construction phase impacts of the scheme will need to be carefully managed and suitable alternative routes provided.

4.2 The A9 / A82 Longman Junction proposals include extensive embankments to create the grade separation, which remove the existing laybys on each side of the A9 immediately north of the junction. The proposed embankments also appear to encroach into non-highway land on either side of the A9. The existing A9 is already raised above the surrounding ground on the approach from the north, which means that the embankments needed for the grade separation are likely to be significant and may require some form of retaining structures to limit their impact on adjacent private land, including the football ground.

A9/A96 Connections Study Route Options B, C and D

4.3 The Highland Council requests confirmation of its understanding that Option B, C or D would be taken forward as a trunk road scheme but that the single carriageway distributor link(s) would not form part of the trunk road network.

4.4 It is noted that the new options no longer provide a direct all-movements connection to the A9, with only Option D providing any direct connection purely for southbound traffic. This reduced level of connectivity with the A9 is likely to reduce the traffic benefits at the existing Raigmore Interchange. However, more detailed traffic modelling will be required to fully understand the scale of benefits that a preferred solution will generate.

4.5 A clear direction signing and routing strategy will be required as part of considering the impacts from changes in traffic movements on both the local and strategic road networks. For example, a decision will be required whether longer distance trips travelling between the A9 and the A96 will be directed via the new link, or whether it would be more appropriate to maintain this type of traffic using the existing Raigmore Interchange.

4.6 Should either Option B or C be favoured ahead of D, further investigations should be undertaken to determine whether the existing southbound slip road at Inshes has sufficient stacking capacity to avoid a safety issue on the A9 during peak periods.

4.7 Option B appears from the projected flow figures to increase traffic across Inshes junction and may increase traffic passing close to local primary schools at Cradlehall and Inshes. The scale of such impacts and their appropriateness, including any necessary mitigation measures, needs to be fully understood if Option B was to be considered further.

4.8 Similarly, the potential adverse traffic impacts of Options C and D on routes through Inshes Retail Park need to be fully understood via detailed traffic modelling, if either of these options were to be considered further.

4.9 The Highland Council accepts that its Inshes Junction Improvements Phase 2 Outline Proposals should also be re-assessed in terms of further detailed traffic modelling. The Council would welcome a joint approach to this modelling, including assumptions about the key variables being agreed between Transport Scotland and the Council.

4.10 The Council recognises that Option D includes for the demolition and replacement of the existing Culloden Road, Inshes over-bridge. This would have significant implications to the traffic movements in this area and the ability to access local communities, facilities and the new Campus Site whilst these works were being undertaken. Accordingly, if Option D is pursued then the Council would urge earlier discussions as to how the construction period impact of these works on local traffic flows can be minimised. If Option D is pursued then there should be a prior assessment of amendments that remove the need to replace the Inshes over-bridge. This should include consideration of a shorter, departure from standards, diverge slip lane from the A9.

Inverness Campus Access

4.11 The Council understands that the proposal previously considered to replace the existing southbound off-slip with an alternative off-slip directly into the new Inverness Campus site was rejected by Transport Scotland due to its non compliance with Transport Scotland's technical standards. There is non compliance in terms of the proximity and spacing of the relocated off-slip to the adjacent southbound on-slip from the Raigmore Interchange. It is recognised that TD22/06 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) covering the Layout of Grade Separated Junctions defines a minimum weaving length for a rural all-purpose road as being 1km between the ends of slip roads (para. 4.36), which is not achievable at this location. However, it will ultimately be for Transport Scotland to consider the new representations received in terms of the appropriateness of alternative, direct access between the A9 and the Campus.

5 Public Transport

Longman Junction

5.1 The harbour area of the city would benefit greatly from having bus priority measures to and from the north. The bus lane at the roundabout has been well received but if this could be extended through the harbour it would be of great benefit.

A9/A96 Connections Study

5.2 A new link would create opportunities for enhancing local bus services in the area, particularly to the new Inverness Campus and Inshes Retail Park. Reduction in journey times are crucial to the public transport network and therefore the highest time saving would be welcomed. The Council would welcome discussions with Transport Scotland and local bus operators to maximise the advantages that will come from the new link.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option B

5.3 The projected higher flow of traffic across Inshes junction would be a negative impact of Option B for the many cross City bus services that take in this part of the City. These projected flow figures, if confirmed by further detailed modelling work, would not be attractive for public transport unless bus priority measures were incorporated.

5.4 A commercially viable bus service needs to take people where they want to go (Raigmore Hospital, new Inverness Campus and potentially the A96 and Inshes Retail Park). Option B only offers one shorter route to a destination (Culloden district residents to the Asda store at Slackbuie) and is not therefore likely to be attractive to bus operators unless worsening congestion at Inshes junction affects the relative journey times to other destinations.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option C

5.5 From a public transport perspective Option C provides the most advantages in terms of reducing journey times and accessing existing and planned development.

Option D

5.6 This option has the potential to severely disrupt public transport during the construction period, particularly due to the disruption caused by the demolition of the Inshes Overbridge.

6 Historic Environment

Longman

6.1 The Council's Historic Environment Team has no concerns with the proposed works at the Longman Junction. There is a very low probability of impacting built heritage features in this area.

A9/A96 Connections Study East Inverness

6.2 Regardless of option, the Inshes to A96 Link will cross an area of high archaeological potential and there is a significant risk of encountering buried remains across this area. It is noted that all options presented for this section bisect the Scheduled Monument known as 'Ashton Farm Cottages, ring ditch 415m SW and pit circles 460m WSW of (HS Index 11535)'. The final alignment of whichever option is taken forward including its embankments should avoid any direct impact on the Scheduled areas. These nationally important remains should be preserved in situ and intact. Closer and more detailed non-intrusive examination (i.e. geophysical survey) of the Scheduled Monument may help define areas within the scheduled boundary where significant archaeological remains are not present (the scheduling covers a wider area than the identified features to account for other associated buried features not readily observable from aerial photography) and this may enable the link road to be sensitively sited in this area. In any event, further archaeological investigation and construction works within the scheduled boundary will require consent from Historic Scotland.

6.3 Options C and D will inevitably and unavoidably result in major adverse impacts to the setting of Castlehill House. Measures to mitigate these options should be pursued if they are taken forward.

6.4 Regardless of option, a programme of archaeological mitigation will be required for the Inshes to A96 link (including the additional routing of Option B if selected) as there is considered a high probability of impacting buried archaeological features, remains and/or deposits. This risk is especially acute where the road runs between the ring ditch and pit circles to the south of Ashton Farm and also to the north of Ashton Farm where other archaeological remains have been identified from aerial photography.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option B

6.5 Option B requires an additional link at Stevenson Road. The Stevenson Road option will require ground works to be undertaken c.2-3 metres from the boundary of a Category A and Category B listed building and c.40m from the boundary of a Category C Listed Building. The completed road would be located only 40-50 metres from the boundaries of all three

listed buildings. This option will, therefore, have a significant adverse and major indirect impact on the settings of a Category A, B and C listed building. There is also a high potential of encountering sub-surface archaeological remains across this area. Accordingly, from a historic environment perspective Option B is the least preferred option.

7 Noise and Vibration

7.1 In terms of noise and vibration and air quality, the Council's Environmental Health section would expect that an environmental assessment is carried out by Transport Scotland in accordance with the criterion detailed in the "Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, November 2011" and that the information obtained from this assessment should determine potential mitigation options, for each of the proposed road options. The environmental assessment should consider both temporary (construction) impacts, permanent impacts and cumulative impacts.

8 Landscape, Visual Amenity and Trees

8.1 The degree of adverse visual impact will largely be related to the number, length, height, gradient and landscaping of the embankments and other earthworks and buffer areas required for the road scheme. The Council accepts that all the over-bridges are inevitable for the respective options and therefore there is little or no scope for reducing the number of embankments. Similarly, the gradient of the side slopes is a difficult compromise between land take and constructing a more natural landform.

8.2 Further visualisations from other key public viewpoints and the most adversely affected properties should be prepared in taking forward any preferred option. The Council's officers would be happy to assist in identifying these viewpoints.

8.3 The Council's landscape officer requests that further work is undertaken on the landscape character of the A9 corridor and the potential impacts on the experience of arrival in Inverness. The key, A9 northbound, arrival panorama that may be affected by the Options is that to the north and north east when descending into Inverness. Option B crosses the A9 far enough up the Drumossie Brae for it and its earthworks not to have a significant impact on this panorama. In contrast, Option C and particularly Option D will have an adverse impact on the quality and openness of these views largely as a product of their associated earthworks.

8.4 The Council's forestry officers advise that all route options will have adverse impacts on trees / woodland (as mapped and defined by Tree Preservation Orders, Ancient Woodland Inventory, Native Woodland Survey of Scotland and Council records of trees holding high amenity value).

8.5 Option B passes through c. 90m of mature, mixed broadleaf woodland of high visual amenity value at Stratton/ Cairnlaw then cuts through an avenue of mature trees of high visual amenity value on either side of Ashton Farm Road then cuts past the edge of mature trees on side of Scretan Burn (Retail Park spur) then cuts through mature trees of high visual amenity value on side of Scretan Burn to west of Cradlehall Meadows. From the Caulfield Road/ B9006 junction it cuts through mature mixed broadleaves within the Inshes Woodland TPO on the west side of B9177 then cuts through semi-mature landscaping on west side of A9 then cuts through mature mixed broadleaf ancient inventory woodland at Inshes Dell and then cuts through mature mixed broadleaves in Wester Inshes TPO.

8.6 Options C and D pass through c. 90m of mature, mixed broadleaf woodland of high visual amenity value at Stratton/ Cairnlaw then cut through an avenue of mature trees of

high visual amenity value on either side of Ashton Farm Road then cut past the edge of mature trees on side of Scretan Burn (Retail Park spur) then cut through mature trees of high visual amenity value on side of Scretan Burn to west of Cradlehall Meadows. They then cut through mature mixed broadleaves of high visual amenity value at Castlehill House then through A9 landscaping at Simpsons Garden Centre and would require the removal of mature, mixed broadleaves of high visual amenity value on the east side of the old Wester Inshes farm road at Dell of Inshes.

8.7 Overall and on a very difficult balance, options C and D potentially offer a more limited but still significant impact. Mitigation will be a critical consideration. In relation to progressing any option it is recommended that an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to BS5837:2012 Trees be carried out in relation to design, demolition and construction and its recommendations implemented.

9 Water, Drainage and Flood Defence

9.1 All options will require a detailed flood risk assessment including modelling of any watercourses affected by the proposals, written in accordance with SEPA's Technical Guidance and The Highland Council's Supplementary Guidance on Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment. All options would also require a Drainage Impact Assessment to demonstrate the implementation of SUDS and the management of post development runoff. Consideration should be given at an early stage as to how the drainage for the road layout will work and where basins will be located.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option B

9.2 The proposed roads appear to impact on the following watercourses- pre and post flood modelling of all watercourses would be required to demonstrate the impact on flooding and culverts/ bridges will need to be sized to carry the 1:200 year (+ climate change) flows:

- Scretan Burn- x2
- Scretan Burn Tributary- x2
- Muckovie Burn- x3
- Dell Burn- x1
- Dell Burn Tributary- x1

9.3 Any development within existing functional fluvial or pluvial flood plain would require compensation storage or demonstration that the flows have been managed such that there is no (or acceptable) increase in residual flood risk.

9.4 The crossing of the railway (northwest of Caulfield Road North) is likely to affect predicted pluvial flooding. The impact and mitigation should be investigated.

9.5 The separate crossing of the A9 may impact on predicted pluvial flooding. The impact and mitigation should be investigated.

9.6 The alignment is likely to require a diversion of Scretan Burn Tributary, Cairnlaw Burn and Muckovie Burn.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option C

9.7 The proposed roads appear to impact on the following watercourses- pre and post flood modelling of all watercourses would be required to demonstrate the impact on flooding and culverts/ bridges will need to be sized to carry the 1:200 year (+ climate change) flows:

- Dell Burn- x1
- Beechwood Burn- x2
- Scretan Burn- x2
- Scretan Burn Tributary- x2
- Cairnlaw Burn- x2

9.8 Any development within existing functional fluvial or pluvial flood plain would require compensation storage or demonstration that the flows have been managed such that there is no (or acceptable) increase in residual flood risk.

9.9 The embankment adjacent to the A9 is likely to affect existing runoff and flooding experienced in Inshes Smallholdings. The cause of the existing flooding should be investigated and the development should not make flooding worse. Betterment would be desirable.

9.10 The crossing of the railway (northwest of Caulfield Road North) is likely to affect predicted pluvial flooding. The impact and mitigation should be investigated.

9.11 The alignment is likely to require a diversion of Cairnlaw, Muckovie and Dell Burn.

9.12 The diversion of the Dell Burn, for the length approaching the tie-in to the Inshes Retail Park roundabout, will require careful early consideration given the proximity to the existing houses and the proposals for development of the immediately adjacent land.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option D

9.13 The proposed roads appear to impact on the following watercourses- pre and post flood modelling of all watercourses would be required to demonstrate the impact on flooding and culverts/ bridges will need to be sized to carry the 1:200 year (+ climate change) flows:

- Beechwood Burn- x3
- Scretan Burn- x2
- Scretan Burn Tributary- x1
- Muckovie Burn- x3

9.14 Any development within existing functional fluvial or pluvial flood plain would require compensation storage or demonstration that the flows have been managed such that there is no (or acceptable) increase in residual flood risk.

9.15 The large roundabout is likely to affect existing runoff and flooding experienced in Inshes Smallholdings. The cause of the existing flooding should be investigated and the development should not make flooding worse. Betterment would be desirable.

9.16 The slip road down to Dell of Inshes area is likely to require a crossing/ diversion of the Dell Burn.

9.17 The crossing of the railway (northwest of Caulfield Road North) is likely to affect predicted pluvial flooding. The impact and mitigation should be investigated.

9.18 The alignment is likely to require a diversion of Cairnlaw Burn, Muckovie Burn and Dell Burn.

9.19 The diversion of the Dell Burn, for the length approaching the tie-in to the Inshes Retail Park roundabout, will require careful early consideration given the proximity to the existing houses and the proposals for development of the immediately adjacent land.

10 Contaminated Land

10.1 The assessment summary tables provided by Transport Scotland make reference to the term 'contaminated land'. The Council considers that this should be referred to as 'potentially contaminated land' as the term contaminated land should only be used under the legal definition in Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (inserted by section 57 of the Environment Act 1995).

Longman Junction

10.2 Former Refuse Tip (Our Ref: IN-WDS-1011) centred at NGR 267269: 847082. Our records indicate that this former landfill was estimated to be in operation between at least 1919 and 1965. Land is currently owned by the Inverness Common Good Fund (Highland Council).

10.3 Former Longman Airfield (Our Ref: IN-AIR-1002) centred at NGR 266924: 846528. This potentially contaminative source is not shown on our historical maps. The airfield polygon on our GIS Database slightly impinges on the A9 road however given the absence of historical map data, the exact boundary may not be completely accurate.

10.4 Former Rifle Range (Our Ref: IN-MIL-1014) centred at NGR 266978: 846856. The former rifle range slightly impinges on the area of interest. The 'targets' area of the former rifle range is also shown to impinge on the area of interest from inspection of our historical maps.

10.5 Longman Landfill (Our Ref: IN-WDS-1009) centred at NGR 267959: 846426. This site is currently licensed by SEPA through a Waste Management Licence and the site is currently owned by the Inverness Common Good Fund (Highland Council). The small scale of the drawings provided means that it is not possible to ascertain whether the proposed works fall within, or outwith, the Waste Management Licence boundary of Longman landfill site (the boundary is certainly very close to the works area). The licence boundary is linked to the boundary shown on planning permission drawing IN/1983/720, and does not necessarily correspond with boundary features, such as fence lines that currently exist on site. If the proposed works fall within the licence boundary of the landfill site, then details of the works will need to be approved by the Council's Waste Management Team and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency prior to commencement – Transport Scotland are advised to undertake early consultation with these parties as the proposals are developed.

10.6 Irrespective of whether the works fall within, or outwith, the licensed boundary of the landfill site, it is highly likely that the works will encounter contaminated land associated with former landfilling activities in this vicinity – the licence boundary does not denote the limit of historic landfilling activities, as landfilling in this area pre-dates the Waste Management Licensing regime. The designers will need to take account of the likely presence of contaminated land in their engineering design. Any contaminated land encountered during the works will not be able to be disposed at the Longman landfill site – the site is now closed and restored and is unable to accept waste of this nature.

10.7 The Council's Waste Management Officer has advised that when the slip-lane from Stadium Road onto the A9 was installed in at the roundabout as part of the Kessock Bridge resurfacing works in 2013, the Council was informed at a very late stage in the process.

This resulted in the Council and SEPA being under pressure to ascertain whether or not that scheme fell within the licensed boundary of the site. It is imperative that this time the designer comes to the Council and/or SEPA in good time with their proposals so that these issues can be worked through and, if the works do impinge on the licensed site, the necessary approvals can be granted prior to works commencing.

10.8 Should an application for consent be submitted for the Longman Junction the Council would issue an informative to highlight the potential sources of contamination. The informative would state that workers onsite should use appropriate personal protective equipment during the construction phase and adopt relevant health and safety regulations to protect themselves.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option B

10.9 The Council has not identified any potentially contaminative sources of contaminated land in either the Culloden Road – Barn Church Road or Stevenson Road – Barn Church Road sections of route option B.

10.10 The draft assessment summary tables received from Transport Scotland make reference to potentially contaminative sites in the areas from Inshes to Barn Church Road/Stratton. However the Council considers that because these lie offsite they would pose an issue.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option C

10.11 The Council has not identified any potentially contaminative sources of contaminated land in the Dell of Inshes – Barn Church Road section of route option C.

A9/A96 Connections Study Option D

10.12 The Council has not identified any potentially contaminative sources of contaminated land in the A9/ Dell of Inshes – Barn Church Road section of route option D.

11 Summary and Conclusions

11.1 The Council fully **supports** the following.

- Transport Scotland's aim of increasing trunk road network capacity for this part of the City of Inverness as this will benefit the economy and future growth potential of the City and wider Highlands.
- The grade separation of the Longman A9/A82 junction and any widening between the Longman and Raigmore Interchange junctions.
- A distributor road connection to the rear of the West Seafield Retail and Business Park as this will relieve congestion at the existing single access and provide other connectivity improvements.
- The need for Transport Scotland and the Highland Council to continue to work together to formulate and implement co-ordinated solutions to local and trunk road network capacity issues including the commissioning of further detailed traffic modelling to demonstrate the effectiveness of the chosen solution.

11.2 The Council seeks **further clarification or information** on the following issues and wishes to work with Transport Scotland to help resolve them.

- The status of the road scheme – i.e. will this trunk roads authority led scheme ultimately form part of the local road network
- A timetable for route selection and implementation
- At the next, detailed design stage, further information on the following matters
 - active travel and bus connections including an offer of Council and bus operator discussions on these matters
 - the nature and effectiveness of construction phase alternative routing for all road users
 - detailed junction and link capacity traffic modelling to quantify net betterment
 - a signage and routing strategy
 - how allocated development land can best be activated including an offer of Council co-ordination of developer contributions discussions with landowners
 - visualisations to better illustrate visual and landscape impact
 - an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and details of mitigation
 - a flood risk and drainage impact assessment including modelling of affected watercourses and the possibility of net betterment to existing problem areas
 - contaminated land assessment particularly in respect of the former Longman Landfill area
 - a developer contributions framework and protocol

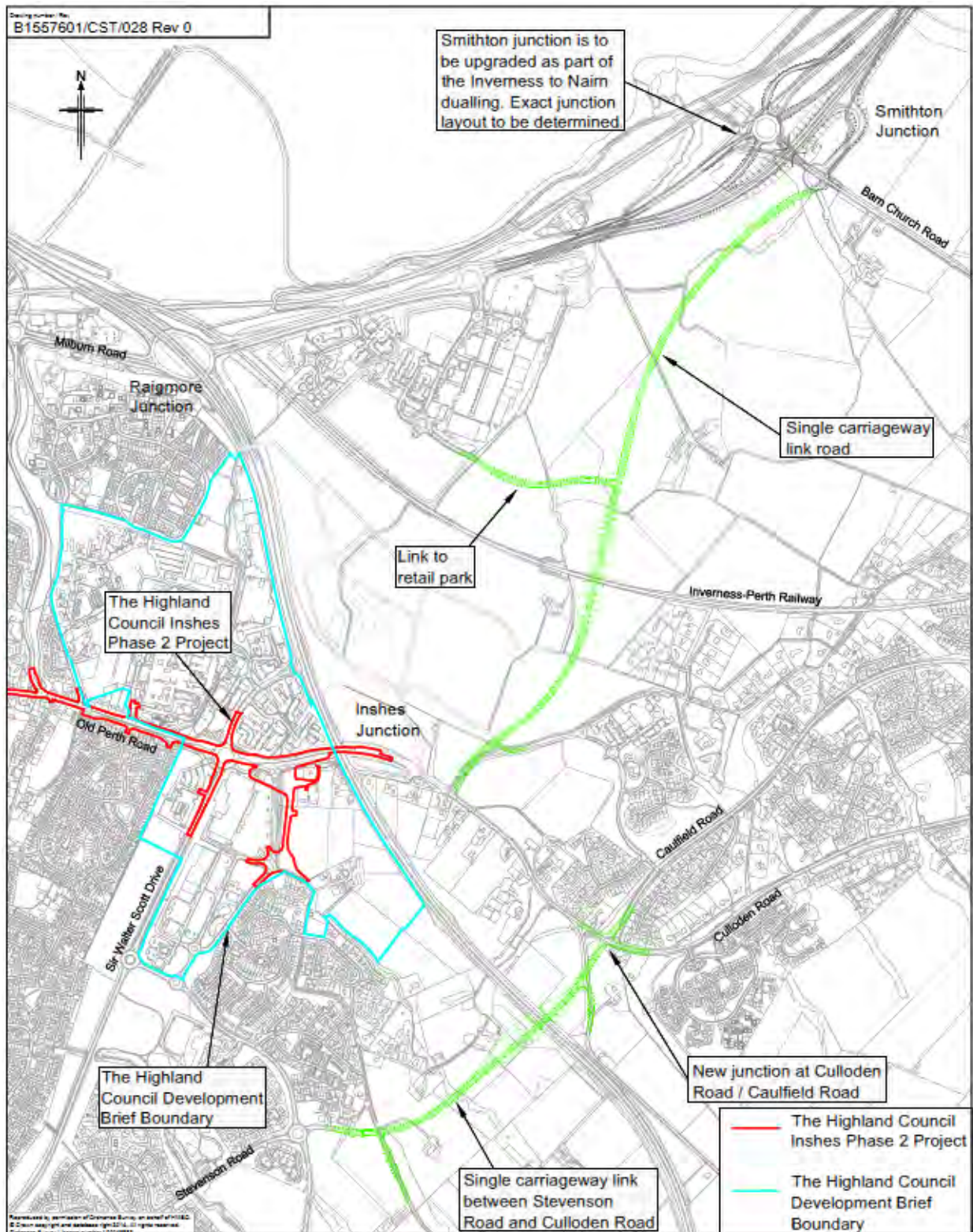
11.3 The Council has reached the following conclusions on **route preference(s)**.

- Options C and D are better than B in terms of the balance of positive and adverse impacts on allocated and permitted development land
- Options C and D are marginally better than B in terms of the balance of positive and adverse impacts on outdoor access
- Option D (with suitable construction phase traffic flow mitigation works) is better than B and C in terms of road capacity and safety
- Option C is better than B in terms of future public transport routing and better than D because of the latter's adverse construction phase impacts
- Options C and D are better than B in terms of lesser historic environment adverse impact
- Option B is marginally better than C and clearly better than D in terms of lesser visual and landscape adverse impact
- Options C and D are marginally better than B in terms of tree / woodland impact
- The impacts of the three route Options are judged to be similar or unknown at present in terms of flooding, contaminated land and impact on residential and community amenity

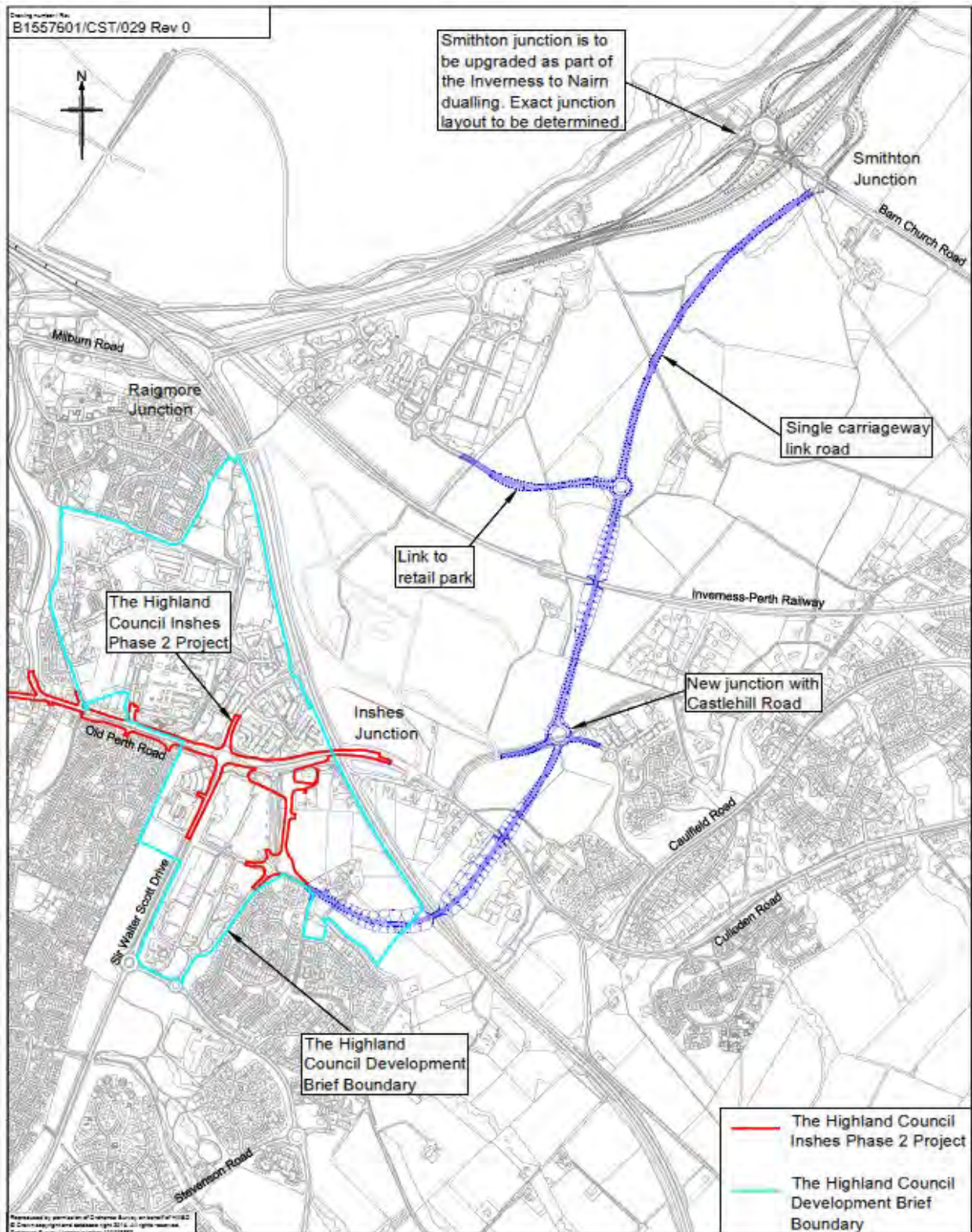
Accordingly, it is recommended that Options C and D are investigated in further detail by Transport Scotland. Option D should be subject to further cost benefit analysis and assessment of cost reduction measures including a shorter, A9 diverge slip lane which would avoid the need to replace the B9006 Culloden Road over-bridge. Option C is worthy of further analysis if coupled with a solution to the A9 queuing safety issue.

APPENDIX B: MAPS OF PRINCIPAL ROUTE OPTIONS

OPTION B



OPTION C



OPTION D

