

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CITY OF INVERNESS AREA COMMITTEE

2 DECEMBER 2014

Agenda Item	4
Report No	CIA/56 /14

DRAFT MUIRTOWN AND SOUTH KESSOCK DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

This report outlines the content of a draft development brief for the Muirtown and South Kessock area of the city of Inverness. This planning policy document is required to guide land use and regeneration opportunities in the area. The draft brief is contained in Appendix A for Members approval. Its preparation has been informed by charrette workshop events held in February and April this year. The workshops provided opportunity for local people to shape the future of the area and to discuss the priorities for regeneration. The outcomes of the charrette workshops have been brought together in the draft development brief. After a round of consultation and further Committee approval process, it is intended that the brief will be adopted as a statutory part of the Council's Development Plan. The development brief presents the agreed regeneration priorities for the area and can be used to assist in any future bids for funding.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (2012) provides a spatial strategy for Inverness. It identifies Muirtown and South Kessock as a regeneration area in the city where opportunities exist for the development of mixed residential, employment and recreational uses. The HwLDP sets out the need for a development brief to be prepared for this area in order to guide development and allow a co-ordinated approach to regeneration and infrastructure delivery. A draft development brief (enclosed in Appendix A) has now been completed and is presented to this Committee for approval for public consultation. The preparation of the draft development brief has been informed by earlier charrette events undertaken in the area.
- 1.2 The content of the draft brief is outlined in section 3 of this report.

2. Charrette Workshops

- 2.1 At the Inverness City Area Committee meeting of 9 December 2013 members endorsed the proposal for further work on the preparation of development briefs for regeneration sites in Inverness including at Muirtown and South Kessock.
- 2.2 Stage One charrette design workshops were run to help prepare the brief with interactive workshops being held on 26 and 27 February 2014. These workshops gathered views on development opportunities and ideas for general improvements

in the area. The charrette events were widely publicised in a number of ways:

- by writing to residents and businesses in and around the area covered by the development brief;
- by placing notices in local press;
- by circulating posters; and
- through social media.

2.3 The design workshops were well attended, with a range of interested parties, including members of the public, Councillors, landowners, developers and agents in attendance. Day one was built around a public working session to develop the issues and themes for the regeneration and development of each of the discrete sub-areas covered by the development brief area. This session led to an expansion of the brief area to be considered in acknowledgement of the close ties of Clachnaharry and Merkinch to the originally defined extent of the brief. On day two technical sessions were held to draw up more detailed proposals for the area and discuss how they might be delivered.

2.5 A second stage of charrette events took place at the start of April 2014 as part of the development of the brief. The events consisted of 3 sessions over 2 days where the materials that had been developed since the Stage One event were presented. This provided opportunity for the community and stakeholders to discuss the proposals and to provide comment.

2.6 The initial projects from the earlier work were further scrutinised to determine the potential for delivery acknowledging the restrictions to funding and the availability of land and buildings. It was also noted that other projects such as those relating to walking, cycling and transport were dependant on the outcomes of further work in relation to commissioning transport studies. Flood Risk also presents a challenge to the development of sites across the area and further Flood Risk Assessment work will be required to identify any mitigation measures.

2.7 The draft development brief sets out the main projects identified from the charrette events and outlines next steps for progression of projects or progress to date.

3 Content of Draft Development Brief

3.1 The draft Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief, attached as Appendix A, builds upon the outcomes of the two charrette events principally:

- Clachnaharry
 - provision of traffic calming/crossing measures on A862
 - opportunity of tourism/residential development at old quarry site
 - improve footpath linkages
 - redevelopment at old sawmill site
- South Kessock
 - improvements to footpath network and signage
 - development of coastal footpath trail
 - increased profile of attractions in area
 - housing development opportunities to increase tenure mix
 - consider redevelopment of buildings to provide further retail

- opportunities
- Merkinch Local Nature Reserve
 - improve accessibility to and from Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
 - consider extension of LNR to Dolphin Point (Carnarc Point)
 - introduce wider range of recreational/leisure opportunities
- Merkinch
 - improve access to area across Black Bridge
 - return vacant buildings to use
 - consider expansion of primary school
 - improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes
 - investigate potential to improve railway bridge junction layout
- Muirtown Basin
 - promote water-based leisure activities in basin
 - consider potential for basin located residential/business opportunities
 - addition of further moorings to canal basin
 - delivery of gateway structure at firth entrance to basin
 - potential restaurant opportunities at firth entrance to basin
- Muirtown
 - investigate redevelopment opportunities at former B&Q and Textile World sites
 - development of further car parks to support Muirtown Basin activities
 - provide stronger linkages between basin and retail park
 - Muirtown swing bridge improvements for vehicular and pedestrian/cycle traffic
 - improved road and footpath conditions and connections

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The development brief will establish the Council's detailed planning policy for the area and it will be vital to future planning decisions in the area. Once finalised and adopted as supplementary guidance it will form part of the Council's Development Plan. It is intended to be used to support any future bids for funding to deliver the proposals.
- 4.2 The proposed consultation period for the draft Brief will run for a minimum of six weeks. The consultation will be widely publicised by writing to residents and businesses within and adjacent to the brief area as well as those who participated in the charrette events and those on the development plans team mailing list, by placing notices in local press and by using social media.
- 4.3 The milestones and timescales for preparing the development brief are outlined in the table below.

Milestone	Timescale
Public consultation on draft development brief	January – February 2015
Report back findings of consultation and final development brief to City of Inverness Area Committee; begin statutory adoption procedures	Spring 2015
Adoption as statutory supplementary guidance at Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee	Summer 2015

4.4 As shown above the feedback from the consultation will be fed back both to this Committee along with any suggested amendments to the development brief.

5. Implications

5.1 The brief will be required to undergo due process with regards to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Appraisal. These processes have commenced and will be concluded at an appropriate time. There are no known direct legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 Resources to deliver the development brief are available from the Development and Infrastructure Service budget.

5.3 In regard to equalities, any design for development will take into account access requirements for individuals with disabilities and vulnerable user groups.

5.4 The development brief looks at the wider active travel connections from Muirtown and South Kessock to other key areas in the city and wider active travel routes. This will help to mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing traffic congestion, improving journey times and supporting active travel and cycle routes thereby reducing the carbon footprint of the city and contributing to the carbon clever initiatives. The proposals contained in the development brief aim to improve key sites in the Milton and South Kessock areas and will in turn improve quality of life and improved conditions for investment.

Recommendation

Committee is invited to agree Appendix A as the content of the Draft Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief to be subject to public consultation.

Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure

Date: 20 November 2014

Authors: Scott Dalgarno/Brian MacKenzie

Background Papers:

- 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