

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

NAIRN AND BADENOCH AND STRATHSPEY AREA COMMITTEE - 23 SEPTEMBER 2015

Agenda Item	7.
Report No	NBS 16/15

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FOR NAIRN / NAIRN SOUTH MASTERPLAN

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

SUMMARY

This report sets out the actions required to deliver a new Nairn South Masterplan. The need for a new Nairn South Masterplan follows the recommendations of the Examination Report to the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the recent adoption of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP). The IMFLDP includes the allocation of a number of sites for development, to accommodate the future regeneration and growth of Nairn:

NA1 Former Showfield	NA7 Town Centre
NA2 South Kingsteps	NA8 Nairn South
NA3 Achareidh	NA9 Grigorhill
NA4 Sandown	NA 10 Balmakeith
NA5 Lochloy	NA11 Sawmill Expansion
NA6 Delnies	NA12 South of Balmakeith

The IMFLDP must be accompanied by an Action Programme. One of these actions will be to prepare a delivery strategy for sites in Nairn, looking at current housing demand, available sites and infrastructure requirements. This will be prepared in full consultation with local members and local community groups.

- 1.2 Members will recall the approval of the Nairn South Strategic Masterplan in May 2013 in line with the requirements of Policy 18 Nairn South of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. The site at Nairn South was allocated in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) with the requirement for development of the site to be led by the preparation of a masterplan to guide development requirements. The Nairn South Strategic Masterplan was prepared and approved in May 2013 to support and inform policy contained in the HwLDP and to guide development at Nairn South. The masterplan identified the strategic requirements in relation to progressing phases of development.
- 1.3 Members will also be aware that two planning applications were lodged for the development of land at Nairn South. An application by a consortium of developers for 319 dwelling houses, associated infrastructure and open space was refused by the Planning, Environment and Development Committee in September 2013 over concerns that the roads infrastructure would not support the development and that

the Cawdor Road Railway Bridge underpass would not accommodate additional traffic that the development would create. A subsequent appeal was dismissed on the grounds that the application failed to meet key requirements of Policy 18 Nairn South of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. The dismissal was on a number of grounds:

- lack of mixed use incorporated within the proposal;
- failure to provide a comprehensive transport assessment, underestimating future traffic flows and failing to take account of local road conditions and road capacity;
- inadequate measures to improve the Cawdor Road carriageway and narrow footways on its eastern side; and
- does not incorporate a distributor-type link road or other connector road of a suitable standard.

The Reporter's findings raised concerns as to the competency of the Transport Assessment and this has direct implications on the transport requirements contained in the Nairn South Strategic Masterplan. The Transport Assessment had informed in part the development of the Strategic Masterplan and consequentially there is a need to prepare a revised Masterplan.

The second application submitted by Mr Charles Allenby for 250 houses, transport infrastructure improvements, landscaping and land for business and industry was withdrawn in February of 2015.

- 1.4 The examination of the IMFLDP also took cognisance of the outcomes of the planning appeal and the implications for the existing Masterplan and as a consequence the recently adopted IMFLDP contains the requirement for the Council to prepare a new masterplan based on an updated assessment of all development factors. The IMFLDP maintains the allocation as being suitable for a mixed use development subject to the appropriate infrastructure being put in place.
- 1.5 It can be seen therefore that although the principle of development on this site is established through the Development Plan, the delivery of a new masterplan is essential to reconsider its content in light of the planning history of the site and the status and content of the IMFLDP. An extract from the IMFLDP as it relates to Nairn is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.6 The IMFLDP states that in respect of site NA8 Nairn South: *"The Council will prepare a new Nairn South Strategic Masterplan that the Council may adopt as Statutory Guidance, setting out physical development considerations and requirements including transport requirements in terms of vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to both the Town Centre and the wider area; connectivity within the site; green network and footpath/cycleway connections; phasing; open space provision and developer contributions.*

Applications only to be considered following adoption of the revised masterplan. Developers will be required to produce a transport assessment addressing deficiencies in the transport network in line with the adopted masterplan.

Further requirements notably include landscaping; flood risk; provision of a recreational access management plan; consideration of potential heritage impacts; and the avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar”

- 1.7 The Plan makes it clear that no planning application can be considered for the site until a revised masterplan is adopted. Discussions have taken place with local members and Community Council representatives and it has been proposed that a plan of action be put together which must be:
- set within the context of all housing development sites in Nairn;
 - fully transparent, with Community Council involvement from the start; and
 - infrastructure led, with a robust and credible assessment of transport and housing need and demand requirements.

2 Next steps

- 2.1 In order to progress the masterplan, the Council will undertake a Transport Appraisal (TA) to inform the necessary transport requirements to be contained within the Nairn South Masterplan. The scope of the TA will be to undertake an assessment of the current performance of the road network in relation to pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular traffic. The assessment will further identify constraints to the future improvement and need for upgrade of the transport infrastructure.
- 2.2 The TA will make an assessment of the impact of various phases/scales of development, and also make an appraisal of cumulative transport impacts of development of this site alongside the other development sites in Nairn as identified in the IMFLDP. The TA will consider the opportunities that exist to overcome identified constraints that would support the phased delivery of development with these being identified through a defined list of transport mitigation measures. This will provide clear guidance on the potential development levels achievable on site allied to the measures required to support that level of development. A Project Brief has been prepared to set the scope and expected outputs of the Transport Appraisal are attached in **Appendix 2** to this report. Member's views are sought on the scope of the works.
- 2.3 Beyond the preparation of the transport appraisal, the Council will move forward with a new draft masterplan which will be the subject of further consultation with the wider community, landowner and developer interests. This additional work will include an assessment of the housing need in Nairn, amongst many other factors.

3 Consultation Arrangements

- 3.1 Between September and the end of the year, officers will continue to liaise with local members, community councils, landowners and development interests in order to work together on a consensual basis on a draft masterplan document. Specifically there will be community consultation as early as possible in the process.
- 3.2 A finalised timetable for consultation will follow the delivery of the transport

appraisal, however it is expected that a draft masterplan document will be taken to the next appropriate committee.

4. Implications

4.1 Legal and risk

There are no equality, legal or risk implications arising from this report.

4.3 Resource and Gaelic

There are no additional resource or Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4.5 Equality

Any design for development will take into account access requirements for individuals with disabilities and vulnerable user groups.

4.7 Rural

There are no additional rural implications arising from this report.

4.9 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

There are no climate change or carbon clever implications attached to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Committee is invited to:

- agree for the IMFLDP Action Programme to include an action to prepare a delivery strategy for sites in Nairn;
- agree to the preparation of a Transport Appraisal (as scoped in **Appendix 2**) to guide the revision of a draft Nairn South Masterplan for consultation; and
- agree that Council officials work with the community, landowners and developer interests to prepare a draft Nairn South Masterplan for approval at the next appropriate committee.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 11 September 2015

Author: Malcolm Macleod

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 Nairn extract of Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan

Appendix 2 Transport Appraisal Project Brief

Community

Site: BE7 Fraser Street

Area (ha): 1.1 **Uses:** Community (Residential Institution/Non-Residential Institution/Allotments).

Requirements: Provision of day centre or care home and directly associated small scale development of close care or assisted living units. Mainstream housing will not be supported. Retention of proportion of site for allotment use; compensatory allotment provision equivalent to those lost to alternative development to be provided on site BE2 prior to commencement of development.

Site: BE8 Primary School and Playing Fields.

Area (ha): 4.3 **Uses:** Primary School and Playing Fields

Requirements: Potential to accommodate new or redeveloped primary school and playing fields; Flood Risk Assessment

Nairn

4.34

- Development of Nairn viewed as integral to the A96 corridor expansion and growth strategy.
- Land allocations to meet the housing land requirement with capacity for around 1,900 new homes.
- Develop the role of Nairn as a tourism and employment centre.
- Improvements to transport provision with linkages to the A96(T) and forthcoming bypass.
- Reinforcement of existing rail and road linkages to Inverness and east towards Moray and Aberdeen.
- Medium to long term requirement for improvements to waste water treatment provision.
- Strengthen the historic town centre of Nairn.

4.35

Nairn is located on a raised beach on the coast of the Inner Moray Firth divided by the A96 trunk road, the River Nairn and the Inverness-Aberdeen rail line. The coastal location of Nairn provides a superb setting for the settlement incorporating the extensive seaside links and pleasure harbour that underpinned the town's historic role as a Victorian resort.

4.36

The town centre, lying to the west of the river has declined in recent years. Its regeneration to serve the needs of the growing town is a high priority. The council will work with the local community to implement the Town Centre Masterplan published in 2011 through development of an action plan to highlight options and mechanisms for funding and delivering regeneration of the town centre, harbour and waterfront areas.

4.37

The Fishertown has a unique character and is designated as a Conservation Area. The Council intend to undertake a Conservation Area Appraisal and draft a Conservation Area Management Plan. To aid in the implementation of the Management Plan, the Council intend to prepare Supplementary Guidance which identifies the appropriate scale, massing and location for new development as well as appropriate types of materials to be used for such development and in the alteration, extension and refurbishment of traditional buildings throughout Fishertown Conservation Area. It is the intention that this would be adopted as statutory Supplementary Guidance.

4.38

The potential for settlement growth in Nairn is based around the development of the major development sites, established through the HwLDP, at Delnies, Lochloy, Nairn South and Sandown. The site at Lochloy has been in development for a number of years delivering in excess of 400 dwellings. Other existing allocations at Delnies, Nairn South and Sandown will provide, alongside Lochloy, a choice of development options for delivery of housing alongside employment generating and leisure opportunities.

4.39

The delivery of the A96(T) bypass will address many of the current concerns regarding the capacity of the road network to accommodate all the development opportunities identified in the Plan. Delivery of improvements to the A96(T) may require developer contributions. All major development sites will need to provide evidence that transport issues can be addressed in order to accommodate increased traffic levels. Longer term development options at Nairn South are largely dependent on developers agreeing and delivering suitable improvements to the local road network.

4.40

The growth of the settlement may require the provision of increased capacity at schools within Nairn and will be consideration in determining planning applications.

4.41

Development should contribute towards the delivery of the priority actions identified in the Council's Nairn Active Travel Audit. The provision of upgrades to water supply and wastewater treatment will need to be delivered to support the medium to long term development of the settlement. Whilst capacity exists currently, the cumulative impact of all proposed development within the overall plan on shared treatment assets makes it necessary for early engagement to take place between developers and Scottish Water, to ensure any additional capacity demands in the future can be delivered in line with development.

4.42

There is potential for a number of development sites in Nairn to have an adverse effect on the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone and/or in-combination. The following sites, NA4, NA6 and NA8 may have an effect alone. Therefore to avoid any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail) must be provided.

Nairn



Scale: 1:21,500

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4.43

The following sites have been identified as potentially having an effect in-combination; NA1, NA2, NA3 and NA5. These sites will be required to ensure avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through satisfactory provision and/or contribution towards open space, path and green network requirements, including mitigation associated with the Inverness to Nairn Coastal Trail.

Housing

Site: NA1 Former Showfield East

Area (ha): 1.8 **Housing Capacity:** 30

Requirements: Dependent upon retention of balance of former Showfield as greenspace accommodating a reconfigured but equivalent football pitch; consideration of a potential excambion of land ownership for land at Sandown for a new showfield; access from Lodgehill Road; provision of footpath improvements and assessment of cumulative impact of development on local road network; avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (see para. 4.41).

Site: NA2 South Kingsteps

Area (ha): 6.3 **Housing Capacity:** 90

Requirements: Transport assessment; open space, footpath/cycleway connections and linkages to wider area; landscaping; Flood Risk Assessment; avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (see para. 4.41). The required traffic and flood risk assessments may impact on the capacity of the site reducing the housing capacity below the currently projected capacity of 90 houses.

Site: NA3 Achareidh

Area (ha): 17.9 **Housing Capacity:** 6

Requirements: Developer to prepare masterplan / development brief to be agreed with the Council who may adopt this as Supplementary Guidance. This should address: respect for fabric and setting of Listed building; transport assessment; retention of woodland; avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (see para. 4.41). Constraints to development identified by the masterplan will have a significant effect in determining the numbers of houses able to be accommodated on the site.

Mixed Use

Site: NA4 Sandown

Area (ha): 34.47 **Uses:** 350 homes, business and community.

Requirements: Development in accordance with **Sandown Development Brief**. Developer to prepare detailed masterplan for each phase of site to be agreed with the Council who may adopt this as Supplementary Guidance. This should address: site layout; design of buildings and open areas; housing density; provision of affordable housing; community and education uses; provision of employment-generating uses; phasing; Flood Risk Assessment; infrastructure provision; delivery of the development; provision of an access solution that provides unfettered links to the Delnies development area to the west and shared arrangements wherever possible; avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (see para. 4.40).

Site: NA5 Lochloy**Area (ha):** 21.0 **Uses:** 200 homes, education and community.**Requirements:** Transport assessment; open space provision; primary school land safeguard; footpath/cycleway connections and linkages to wider area; landscaping and woodland replacement; Flood Risk Assessment; avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (see para. 4.41).**Site: NA6 Delnies****Area (ha):** 27.27 **Uses:** 300 homes, Business, Industrial and Community.**Requirements:** Transport assessment; open space provision; primary school land safeguard; footpath/cycleway connections and linkages to wider area; landscaping and woodland replacement; Flood Risk Assessment; avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (see para. 4.40).**Site: NA7 Town centre****Area (ha):** 4.79 **Uses:** Tourism, housing, retail, business and community**Requirements:** Development in accordance with **Nairn Town Centre Development Brief** including uses that: add to commercial vitality and viability; improve physical appearance of area; increase pedestrian links and footfall to the High Street.**Site: NA8 Nairn South****Area (ha):** 25.9 **Uses:** 520 homes, business and community.**Requirements:** The Council will prepare a new Nairn South Strategic Masterplan that the Council may adopt as Statutory Guidance, setting out physical development considerations and requirements including transport requirements in terms of vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to both the Town Centre and the wider area; connectivity within the site; green network and footpath/cycleway connections; phasing; open space provision and developer contributions. Applications only to be considered following adoption of the revised masterplan. Developers will be required to produce a transport assessment addressing deficiencies in the transport network in line with the adopted masterplan. Further requirements notably include landscaping; flood risk; provision of a recreational access management plan; consideration of potential heritage impacts; and the avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (see para. 4.40).**Community****Site: NA9 Grigorhill****Area (ha):** 3.1 **Uses:** New Cemetery.**Requirements:** Improved footpath/cycleway, road connection and parking.**Business****Site: NA10 Balmakeith****Area (ha):** 3.2 **Uses:** Business.**Requirements:** Potential pedestrian/cycle bridge to/from Lochloy housing development.

Industry

Site: NA11 Sawmill expansion

Area (ha): 5.1 **Uses:** Sawmill Expansion.

Requirements: Development in accordance with the Nairn South Strategic Masterplan.

Retail

Site: NA12 South of Balmakeith

Area (ha): 4.4 **Uses:** Non-food Retail.

Requirements: Development in accordance with planning permission 07/00099/NA.

Tornagrain

4.44

- Identified in the Scottish Government's Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative as having potential to deliver green spaces, homes, employment, services and facilities within a compact sustainable new town.
- Tornagrain new town has potential to meet the medium to longer term housing requirements for the area stretching from Inverness to Nairn.
- Underpins the wider spatial strategy for the area.
- Development to deliver a wide range of facilities and services integral to the development of a new settlement.
- Delivery of development in phases as supported by a masterplanned approach.
- Capacity to accommodate around 2,500 new homes till 2031.
- Employment land to support the development of the community.
- Transport, traffic management and access improvements to wider area and key linkages.
- Proximity to Inverness Airport Business Park providing employment opportunity.
- Design code to guide all phases of development.

4.45

The delivery of a new town at Tornagrain forms an essential part of the development strategy for the Inverness to Nairn growth area. The Tornagrain site is located on 259 hectares of land on the A96(T) just south of Inverness Airport and immediately east of the existing hamlet of Tornagrain. The new town is envisaged to have a population of around 10,000 when built out over an estimated 30-40 year period. The proposal will be progressed on a phased basis, comprising 7 main phases of development. The new town is intended to be largely self-sufficient with regard to retail, social and servicing needs. The proximity to the emerging employment opportunities at the Inverness Airport Business Park (IABP) alongside the settlements own employment generating uses and combined with transport linkages at the proposed Dalcross rail halt, combine to deliver the potential for a new sustainable community.

NAIRN SOUTH TRANSPORT APPRAISAL

PROJECT BRIEF

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and description

The site is identified in the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) as NA8 Nairn South and is proposed for mixed use including 520 homes, business and community uses. Immediately to the north is the existing Gordon's Sawmill and a sawmill expansion area identified in the plan.

Other significant sites identified for housing/mixed use development in Nairn are NA6 Delnies, NA4 Sandown, NA5 Lochloy and NA2 South Kingsteps.

1.2 Purpose of Transport Appraisal

The IMFLDP states that a new Nairn South Strategic Masterplan will be prepared by the Council and that this will include transport requirements. The purpose of the Transport Appraisal is to inform the preparation of the Masterplan. Preparation of the Appraisal is to be in accordance with this brief and as agreed with Highland Council. Background information on the preparation of Transport Appraisal is given in the Transport Scotland publication 'Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance'.

2.0 CONTENT OF TRANSPORT APPRAISAL

2.1 Geographical scope of appraisal

The site is bounded on the east side by the B9090 Cawdor Road and to the north west by the Inverness to Aberdeen railway. The B9091 Balblair Road runs through the centre of the site effectively splitting the site into two areas. To the north of the site Balblair Road joins Cawdor Road at a priority junction. Access to the A96 is via Cawdor Road to the north and then via Waverley Road. The northward section of the B9090 is Nairn High Street which is one way southbound. An alternative route to the A96 is via the B9091 and unclassified roads to Delnies and another route to Inverness is via the B9091 and B9006.

The Transport Appraisal should consider the road network from the immediate vicinity of the site to the connection to the A96 at the Waverley Road junction and via the other roads towards Inverness.

2.2 Baseline assessment of current road network

The current performance of the road network shall be assessed in relation to pedestrians and cyclists and vehicular traffic. In particular the Appraisal shall consider the following:

- The existing priority junction between Balblair Road and Cawdor Road including vehicle and pedestrian safety.
- The connection for vehicular traffic from Cawdor road via Waverley Road to the A96
- The Appraisal shall be informed by existing traffic data which is available including adjustment for traffic growth and seasonality.

- Provision for pedestrians and cyclists from the area of the site towards Nairn town centre along Cawdor Road and Balblair Road.
- Impact of heavy traffic accessing Gordon's Sawmill on Balblair Road.
- Accident records for the affected road network.

2.3 Identification of Constraints

Constraints to the future improvement and upgrade of the transport infrastructure shall be identified. This shall include the following:

- The restricted width available between the retaining walls on the south and north approach on Cawdor Road to the railway bridge and the width under the bridge.
- The limited width available in Balblair Road for vehicles including sawmill traffic and pedestrians and cyclists and the limited width between retaining walls adjacent to the railway station.
- The constraints within the built up area of Nairn between Cawdor Road and the A96.
- Constraints on roads to the south and west providing alternative routes to Inverness.

2.4 Impact of Proposed Development

The impact of the proposed development shall be identified in terms of requirements for all modes of transport including:

- Pedestrian access from the development particularly to Nairn town centre, primary and secondary schools.
- Cycle access as above and throughout Nairn
- Access to public transport including rail and bus.
- Traffic impact of development assessed using TRICS and census data taking into account industry best practise and the Council's 'Guidance on the Preparation of Transport Assessments'. Trip rates shall be agreed with the Council.

Impact of the development will depend on the scale and location of development within the designated areas. As it is envisaged that the development will be phased it is appropriate to consider a scale of impacts between minimal impact for a small quantum of development to maximum impact for the full development. The phasing should be adjusted to suit the physical constraints of the site and the practicality of providing suitable mitigation for each level of impact. The phasing to be considered shall be agreed with the Council.

Any cumulative impact with other development areas in Nairn referred to in 1.1 above shall be identified.

2.5 Opportunities to overcome Identified Constraints

Consideration of opportunities to improve the road network by overcoming the identified constraints in order to support phased development referred to in 2.4 above. A hierarchy of measures shall be considered from 'do-minimum' to large scale measures to achieve full compliance with 'standards'. Options to be considered shall include but not be limited to the following:

- Improvements at Cawdor Road/Balblair Road junction including signalisation and improvement of facilities for pedestrians within existing road boundary.
- Reallocation of roadspace within Cawdor Road to improve provision for pedestrians.
- Improvements on Balblair Road to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists while maintaining access to Sawmill. Considerations will include relocation of sawmill access, restricting vehicle use by introducing one way working or prohibition of through traffic, and construction of footway widening on third party land.
- Introduction of 20mph speed limit on Cawdor and Balblair Roads.
- In conjunction with the above redirection of traffic from Balblair Road to Cawdor Road by provision of link road through the development area.
- Provision of a foot/cyclebridge across the railway from the development area to Duncan Drive (adjacent Nairn Academy).
- Upgrade to the road network to improve access from the site towards Inverness.
- Significant improvements to Cawdor road to widen the road and footways in line with proposals indicated in the 'Enquiry by Design' process including increased width through the railway embankment.
- Provision of a 'distributor road' as indicated in the 'Enquiry by Design' process. This could comprise a further level of upgraded to the minor road network as referred to above.

2.6 Pre-Start Meeting

A pre-start meeting will be held with the appointed Consultant with key officers within the Council who are to provide client supplied data.

2.7 Report Output

The report will provide the following deliverables:

- Constraints to the future improvement and upgrade of the transport infrastructure.
- Impacts from the agreed levels of development based on a phasing plan.
- A range of transport mitigations as identified in 2.5 above appropriate to each of the agreed development phases.