

## The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 1 December 2016

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CIA/ 48/16

### Draft Inverness City Centre Development Brief

#### Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

#### Summary

This report presents a draft of the updated Inverness City Centre Development Brief for Members' approval. The draft Brief is contained in **Appendix A**. The purpose of this Brief is to promote and guide opportunities, through planning policy, for regeneration, development and enhancement of Inverness city centre. Its preparation has been informed by public and stakeholder feedback on city centre priorities and how best these should be addressed. After public consultation and further Committee approval the updated Brief will be adopted as a statutory part of the Council's Development Plan.

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Inverness City Centre Development Brief (ICCDB) is supplementary planning guidance that guides decisions on development, including planning applications, in Inverness city centre. The current ICCDB was approved by this Committee as Supplementary Guidance to the Highland-wide Local Development Plan in October 2012 and adopted in March 2013.
- 1.2 This report describes the background and context for updating the Development Brief, making reference to feedback from recent public consultations on city centre regeneration that have informed the new draft.

#### 2 City centre priorities

- 2.1 At its meeting on 3 June 2014, this Committee noted the outcome of a recent public consultation seeking feedback on how best to maximise city centre footfall through changes to land use and transport infrastructure. The consultation identified three key priorities to attract people to visit, live, work and invest in the city centre:
  1. Improvements to City Centre access and connections.
  2. Development of Academy Street and its surroundings.
  3. Redevelopment of key sites to create visitor and cultural attractions.The Committee also noted that feedback from the consultation produced an overarching vision for:

“a vibrant and unique city centre on the river, well connected and accessible, and valued as an attractive place to live, work and visit.”

2.2 As agreed by this Committee, these priorities have been incorporated into and highlighted in the draft Brief.

2.3 The draft Brief also takes account of feedback on current city centre priorities from:

- the workshop with Members of this Committee that took place on 16 May 2016; and
- discussions with sectoral interest groups that took place in September 2016.

### **3 Approach to development**

3.1 To realise the vision and priorities recorded in public feedback, the Draft Brief is focussed on creating or promoting opportunities for high density, flexible, mixed use development that:

- enables more people to live and work in the city centre;
- showcases and expands the range of visitor, leisure and cultural attractions;
- maximises the role of the River Ness as an important civic asset;
- brings vacant or underutilised space back to active use;
- makes it convenient and attractive to access city centre destinations on foot or by bicycle or public transport; and
- delivers high quality development, including an attractive public realm.

3.2 The Brief adopts an outcomes-based approach focussed on ensuring that, by 2030, the city centre will be:

- a great place for business;
- a great place to visit;
- a great place to live;
- accessible, easy and safe to move around; and
- distinctive and attractive.

### **4 Transformational projects**

4.1 The Brief also highlights key projects already underway or in development that will deliver transformational change in the city centre:

- transformation of Inverness Castle into a significant new visitor/cultural attraction;
- regeneration of Academy Street through the Inverness Townscape Heritage Project;
- Inverness Rail Station upgrading and improvements;
- the Inverness Justice Centre (Longman Road);
- River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Art Project;
- creative Hub/ artists' studios (former Inverness College, Midmills);

- city centre public WiFi; and
- significant new residential developments proposed for Glebe Street and Rose Street.

## 5 Structure and content of the updated Draft Development Brief

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the Draft Brief presented in **Appendix A**.
- 5.2 Sections 1 and 2 identify the background and context for updating the brief and introduce the outcomes-base approach to planning policy.
- 5.3 Sections 3-7 address the delivery of individual outcomes in terms of:
- rationale and priorities for development and regeneration;
  - type and location of development needed to support the outcome;
  - criteria for development that will be applied in determining planning applications; and
  - relevant action.
- 5.4 Section 7 also identifies key placemaking principles emphasising the importance of the location, layout and design of development. These principles address: impact on key views; appropriate height, scale and massing; building design; block structure and permeability; frontages; elevational treatment; materials and colour; access and servicing; public realm design; open space; and planting.
- 5.5 Section 8 sets out typical requirements for Developer Contributions to deliver necessary infrastructure such as affordable housing, schools, community facilities, open space, car parking, and active travel and public realm improvements.
- 5.6 **Appendix A** presents development guidelines for the following key sites addressing site-specific considerations such as height, massing, materials, elevational treatment, and access:

<b>Station Quarter</b>	<b>Castle Hill</b>	<b>Crown</b>
1. Inverness Rail Station	5. Inverness Castle	10. HM Prison, Porterfield
2. Royal Mail	6. Bridge Street	11. Viewhill House
3. Victorian Market	7. Castle Street	
4. 36-40 Eastgate	8. Raining's Stairs	<b>Eastern Gateway</b>
	9. 47-53 Castle Street	12. Longman Road

## 6 Next steps

- 6.1 Subject to Committee approval, the Draft Brief will be formatted for public consultation. The text will be supplemented with illustrations as appropriate.

6.2 The draft Brief will be published online via the Development Plans' consultation portal. The consultation period will run for a minimum of six weeks. During the early stages it is intended to hold at least one afternoon drop-in public exhibition at Inverness Town House, followed by an open evening meeting. The consultation will be widely publicised in press releases and on social media. In addition, individual messages will be sent to businesses, community councils, sectoral interest groups and individuals who took part in previous city centre consultations, and relevant stakeholders on the Development Plans' mailing list.

6.3 The milestones and timescales for finalising the updated Development Brief are as follows:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Public consultation on draft development brief	January – March 2017
Report back findings of consultation and present finalised Development Brief to City of Inverness Area Committee for adoption as statutory Supplementary Guidance.	16 September 2017

6.4 Once finalised and adopted as Supplementary Guidance it will form part of the Council's Development Plan.

## **7 Implications**

### **7.1 Equality**

The Brief's development criteria and parameters will take into account access requirements for individuals with disabilities and vulnerable user groups.

### **7.2 Environmental**

The Brief has been screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Appraisal (HRA), resulting in confirmation from the relevant Consultation Authorities that SEA and HRA will not be required.

### **7.3 Resource**

Resources to deliver the Development Brief are available from the Development and Infrastructure Service budget.

### **7.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever**

The Development Brief promotes active travel improvements that make it convenient and attractive to access city centre destinations on foot or by bicycle or public transport. This should increase walking and cycling levels, and discourage car use, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of the city and fulfilling wider carbon clever objectives.

### **7.5 Legal, Rural and Gaelic implications**

There are no known direct legal, rural or Gaelic implications arising from this report.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to:

- agree the draft Inverness City Centre Development Brief, as set out in **Appendix A**, for a six week public consultation commencing at the end of January 2017; and
- note the timescale for adoption of the updated Brief set out in para 6.3.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 17 November 2016

Author: Malcolm Macleod; Una Lee