

Agenda item	<b>9</b>
Report no	<b>RC/005/19</b>

## **THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** **Ross and Cromarty Committee**

**Date:** **30 January 2019**

**Report Title:** **Development Infrastructure Dingwall**

**Report By:** **Director of Development and Infrastructure**

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The capital programme review, approved at full Council in March 2018 identified funding for Development Infrastructure in Dingwall. This allocation of funding was made to enable consideration of traffic measures that may be introduced to allow limited development to occur in recognition that the full build out included within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) is predicated on the delivery of Kinnairdie Link Road (KLR) which is not funded in the current 5 year capital programme. To allow this to be considered traffic modelling of scenarios and mitigation was required.
- 1.2 This report advises Committee of the findings of a transport study commissioned to understand the implications of potential housing development on the transport network in Dingwall. Based on the findings of the study this report also provides recommendations for mitigating and managing the transport implications of development sites and the further mitigation measures to be considered as development applications are considered. The recommendations arise from meetings of a multi-disciplinary group of officers that have considered the study's findings and how they should be taken into account alongside the requirements set out in the Council's IMFLDP.
- 1.3 The transport study and modelling work has considered impacts of various levels of development and associated mitigation measures to establish a potential level of residential development prior to the construction of KLR.

## 2.

### Recommendations

#### 2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. Note that full delivery of the housing allocations contained in the IMFLDP of c470 additional residential homes is still predicated on the delivery of KLR,
- ii. approve the updated threshold for the delivery of housing development in advance of the KLR to allow construction of 150 additional houses, subject to the actions set out in sub paragraph iii;
- iii. agree the actions for mitigating the transport impacts of developments in Dingwall, as detailed in section 5 of this report, including:-
  - A. short term improvements to key junctions including early delivery of schemes (see section 5A);
  - B. Traffic management measures (see section 5B); and
  - C. Active travel infrastructure requirements (see section 5C);
- iv. approve the early delivery of the junction improvements identified in paragraph 5.1 at Bridgend Avenue Junction (see figure 1) and Dochcarty Road Junction (see figure 2), and the traffic signal works at Mart Road Junction identified in paragraph 5.2;
- v. agree for the contents of this report to become a material consideration for relevant planning applications and pre-application advice noting that this represents an update to development requirements set out in pages 75-79 of the IMFLDP;
- vi. Note that detailed consideration of development and associated mitigation measures will be undertaken as planning applications are submitted – informed by this report and the associated transport study, (which shall be made public) and taking account of any implemented traffic mitigation measures; and
- vii. Agree that by investing in the above infrastructure improvements the Council is enabling future housing development and will therefore seek reasonable and proportionate developer contributions from these developments towards their funding including developments approved after the construction of infrastructure improvements.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (available to view online at [www.highland.gov.uk/imfldp](http://www.highland.gov.uk/imfldp)) allocates a number of development sites in Dingwall for housing development. Paragraph 4.58 of the plan states: “growth in Dingwall is likely to be constrained by the need to deliver improved transport infrastructure in the form of the Kinnairdie Link Road” (KLR) which was envisaged to be delivered in two phases:-
- Phase 1 – improvements to County Building Junction and the link from Dingwall Academy to Back Road; and
  - Phase 2 – link from Back Road to Strathpeffer Road.
- 3.2 The IMFLDP also states that delivery of the KLR is seen as a requirement to “unlock the development potential of sites at Dingwall North which are currently limited to 90-100 houses prior to completion of phase 1 of the Kinnairdie Link Road”. Phase 1 was expected to enable the release of a further 100 houses. (Note phasing of the Kinnairdie Link Road construction is no longer being considered because signalisation required at the Strathpeffer Road/Bridgend Avenue Junction is not possible due to concerns expressed by Network Rail regarding the possibility of traffic queuing back to affect the safe operation of Mill Street Level Crossing).
- 3.3 Improvement to the County Buildings Junction, forming the initial phase of KLR has been completed but the remainder of KLR is outstanding.
- 3.4 The Council’s 5 Year Capital Programme approved in March 2018 does not include the delivery of the KLR. It does, however, in recognition of the potential impact on development in Dingwall, include for ‘Development Infrastructure Dingwall’. As a result a multi-disciplinary group of officers was formed to investigate how to continue to proactively address housing needs and to consider alternative approaches to mitigation from that set out in the IMFLDP, and identify mitigation measures which can be developed to release some residential housing development prior to the completion of KLR.
- 3.5 The results of the transport study commissioned are outlined in section 4 below. The working group has considered the findings and the resulting recommendations are set out in Section 5 and 6. These recommendations will allow the Council to consider housing development applications through the planning process on an ongoing basis. As the recommendations relate solely to the mitigation requirements for future development, and do not change the capacity or proposed uses of IMFLDP development sites, it is not proposed to subject these changes to public consultation. It is proposed that approval of the report by Committee would allow consideration of infrastructure requirements or other mitigation sought for relevant applications and pre-application advice in Dingwall.

### **4. Dingwall Transport Study**

- 4.1 The study was commissioned in recognition that development has now reached the point where, under the current IMFLDP, further development is constrained pending the construction of KLR.
- 4.2 The report investigates the potential traffic impacts of development scenarios and also considers a number of potential mitigation measures which could be implemented to mitigate traffic impacts.

- 4.3 It should be noted that one significant improvement has already been delivered as part of the approved Kinnairdie Link Road Scheme. County Buildings Junction improvement was completed in Spring 2016. Traffic counts and modelling has demonstrated that this traffic intervention has been successful, and additional capacity has been released allowing additional traffic levels to grow before pre-construction traffic impacts are reached.
- 4.4 Traffic counts were taken in early summer of 2018, allowing the traffic model to be updated to reflect current conditions and including an allowance for development which was considered acceptable without the KLR. As development was linked to the KLR, it was determined that the benchmark traffic situation for acceptability should be that without the County Buildings Junction. The County Buildings junction improvement was removed from the model to give a base model for development comparison purposes – referred to in the modelling report as ‘The Comparator’.
- 4.5 The report looks at various network performance indicators, average delay per vehicle, average speed and latent demand to show how the network as a whole performs. It also reports on queue lengths at junctions and changes to flow on various roads so that more detailed analysis can be undertaken.
- 4.6 The improvement carried out at the County Buildings Junction and the relocation of Dingwall Academy mean that when looking at the network as a whole, the 10 year predicted/anticipated build out, established by the officers working group of c250 houses over that already constructed, can be accommodated on the road network. The model does identify individual junctions and flows on road links have specific issues. In particular, the initially modelled build out results in an unacceptably high increase in flow on Tulloch Castle Drive in close proximity to the Primary School. Alternative build out scenarios which access some of this development potential from Dochcarty Road is included in the report to minimise traffic increases past the school – but this recognises that this will increase volumes on Mill Street. To address traffic issues mitigation measures such as traffic management or calming may have to be considered. The traffic study concludes that c150 houses can be accommodated.
- 4.7 The modelling does confirm that to achieve the development contained in the IMFLDP of c470 houses will require the construction of the KLR.
- 4.8 Additional modelling will continue to review scenarios to determine whether additional housing can be accommodated – and if this is found to be the case then this shall be reported to a future committee.

## **5. Infrastructure Improvements**

### **A. Improvements to road junctions**

- 5.1 To support the delivery of development, the study has explored options for mitigating the transport impacts. The study considers two junction improvements to mitigate for the envisaged increased traffic at these junctions, at Bridgend Avenue Junction and at Dochcarty Road (Mackay’s Garage). It is recommended that these improvements are implemented earlier than allowed for by the capital programme if alternative funding sources can be established.

## **B. Traffic Management**

### Traffic light controls

- 5.2 The improvement to the Council Buildings Junction has realised significant additional capacity at this junction. There is potential to further improve traffic flow at this location by linking the signals with those at the nearby Mart Road junction and it is recommended that this be done as early as funding permits
- 5.3 The study has highlighted that improvements will be needed at the Station Road Junction and further traffic modelling will be undertaken to investigate alternative solutions which may involve alterations to the road layout associated with re-signalling. Recommendations will be brought to a future Committee.

### Traffic Calming/Traffic Management

- 5.4 The Committee has previously approved the publication of a 20mph speed limit across Dingwall (report RC/2/18). The delivery of the speed limit requires the installation of traffic calming measures, this has not been progressed due to lack of funding. Consideration of speed limits, traffic calming and traffic management (such as parking restrictions) will be given as developments come forward, funded from both the capital allocation and/or developer contributions from future housing development, which will enable strategic elements of infrastructure to be delivered.

## **C. Active Travel**

- 5.5 It is also proposed to investigate opportunities for additional active travel improvements required to support future development. A review and update of the existing Active Travel Audit for Dingwall will be undertaken. Delivery of active travel measures, funded from both the capital allocation or developer contributions from future housing development will be considered.

## **D. KLR**

- 5.6 The study confirms that to facilitate the full anticipated build out of potential housing land at Dingwall North included within the IMFLDP will require the construction of the approved KLR.

## **6. Implementation**

- 6.1 Approval of this report will allow consideration of build out potential of 150 additional houses, subject to the mitigation measures detailed. Each development application will be considered on its merits and impacts and mitigation measures, given the content of this report, the transport study and the mitigation measures implemented or conditioned for each application.
- 6.2 Capital funding allocated will be used to fund the mitigation measures approved and deemed desirable to mitigate impacts of future development in Dingwall – noting that developer contributions will continue to be sought to aid in the funding of their delivery.

## **7. Implications**

- 7.1 Resource - All works delivered by the Council will be funded from the approved capital budget and associated developer contributions.

- 7.2 Legal – traffic management and calming measures shall be progressed in accordance with statutory processes – with advertisement and objection periods as appropriate.
- 7.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – the submission and determination of planning applications will include opportunities for public scrutiny of the mitigation of development impacts.

The development and mitigation measures will have regard to existing sensitive receptors such as the primary school. The development and implementation of an active travel plan will aid in modal shift.

- 7.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – developments through their construction and occupation will have a carbon impact, all development will be in accordance with associated planning conditions and building warrant processes.
- 7.5 Risk - Network Rail has recently delivered upgrades to two of the three rail level crossings in Dingwall. Network Rail will continue to be consulted on housing development planning applications. Network Rail have confirmed that any development impacts on traffic flow will have to be considered as part of the level crossing risk factor and priority for upgrade considered accordingly.

The Dingwall Transport Study confirms that without the completion of the Kinnairdie Link Road the full build out of the overall designated housing sites in Dingwall will be constrained.

- 7.6 Gaelic – No implications

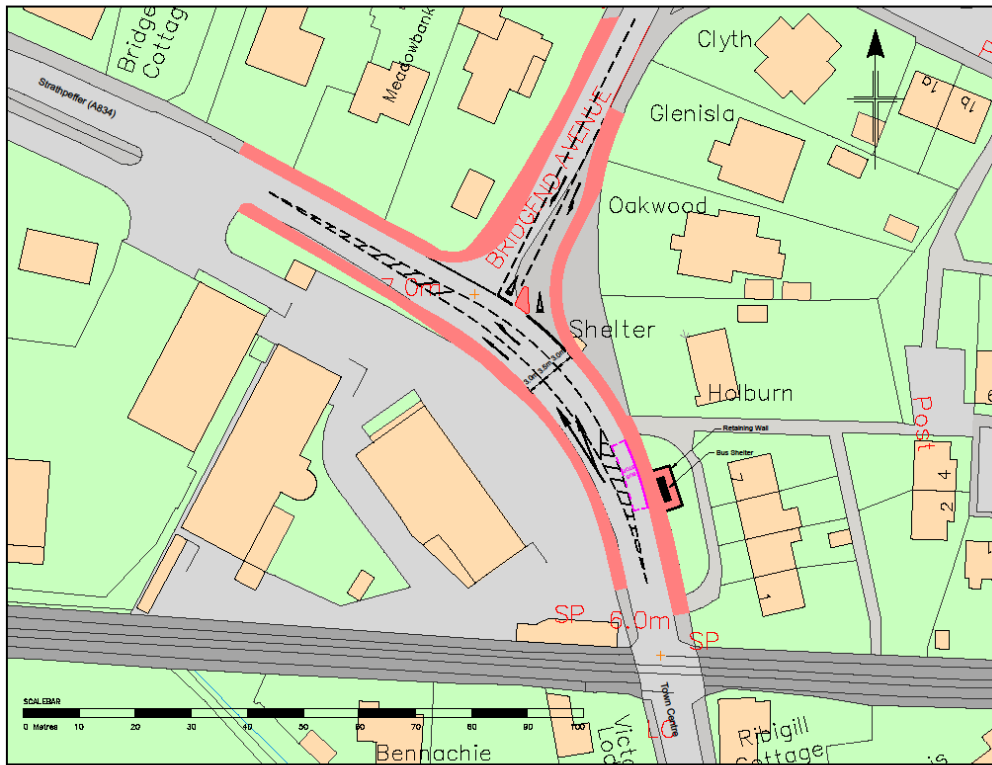
Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure

Date: 11 January 2018

Author: Colin Howell, Head of Infrastructure

Background Papers: IMFLDP HC/2/18 – Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23

**Figure 1 – Bridgend Avenue Junction Improvements**



**Figure 2 – Docharty Road Junction Improvements**

