

Agenda Item	9
Report No	DSA11/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Dingwall and Seaforth

Date: 22 August 2022

Report Title: Development Infrastructure Dingwall Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Members may recall a paper taken to the Ross and Cromarty Committee on 30 January 2019. This approved the release of constrained housing development in advance of the delivery of Kinnairdie Link Road (KLR) and was subject to certain mitigation measures. This allocation threshold of 150 houses, in terms of planning consent, is now exhausted and members are asked to consider again releasing additional housing subject to mitigation measures.
- 1.2 Additional traffic modelling has been undertaken, considering differing scenarios to inform potential housing build out impacts.
- 1.3 National Transport Strategies and Recommendations from the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland has provided a revised hierarchy of travel with walking and wheeling, cycling, public transport and then cars being the sustainable hierarchy. As the move towards sustainable travel gains pace, the basis of the predict and provide scenarios of traffic modelling is brought into question.
- 1.4 Traffic modelling considered the impacts of the construction of St Andrews to Chestnut Road Link. This modelling, together with active travel and sustainable travel options that it provides, demonstrated a benefit and as such funding from the Infrastructure Loan Fund was approved at the Economy and Infrastructure Committee of 5 May 2021. It is recognised that such funding is linked to increasing housing provision – and as such the construction of this link must be considered in the context of wider housing build out.
- 1.5 This report, having considered the above, is making recommendations on the release of additional housing – subject to mitigation measures as described below.
- 1.6 Notwithstanding the release of housing recommended in this report, Kinnairdie Link Road will be considered for capital funding at the next review of the Capital Programme at Full Council.

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Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. note that full delivery of the housing allocations contained in the IMFLDP of c470 residential homes is still predicated on the delivery of Kinnairdie Link Road;
- ii. approve the updated housing threshold to 250 homes for the delivery of housing development in advance of the KLR to allow construction of a further 100 homes over and above that constructed, under construction or consented shown at figure 1 subject to the actions set out in sub paragraph iv;
- iii. agree the actions for mitigating the transport impacts of developments including:-
 - a) construction of the St Andrews to Chestnut Road Link;
 - b) essential mitigation on Mill Street and Burn Place - by reducing speed limits, traffic calming control/restrict parking and improve pedestrian crossing facilities;
 - c) active travel infrastructure requirements; and
 - d) Station Road Junction Signal upgrade.
- 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 Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (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 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 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - All works delivered by the Council will be funded from the approved capital budget and associated developer contributions.
- 3.2 **Legal** - traffic management and calming measures shall be progressed in accordance with statutory processes – with advertisement and objection periods as appropriate.
- 3.3 **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.

3.4 **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, active travel options will aid in the move towards sustainable travel.

3.5 **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.

3.6 **Gaelic** – No implications.

4 Background

4.1 The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (available to view online at 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.

4.2 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).

4.3 Improvement to the County Buildings Junction, forming the initial phase of KLR has been completed but the remainder of KLR is outstanding.

4.4 The Council’s 5 Year Capital Programme approved in March 2018 and updated in January 2021 did 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 measures which can be developed to release some residential housing development prior to the completion of KLR.

- 4.5 The results of the transport study commissioned are outlined in section 5 below. The working group has considered the findings and the resulting recommendations are set out in Section 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.
- 4.6 It is also recognised that traffic impacts of housing and the associated traffic modelling is based on existing and forecast growth in traffic. The change in the hierarchy of travel and the move towards more sustainable travel options may have a positive impact on either, reducing the growth or actually reducing the existing levels of traffic within Dingwall.
- 4.7 Since consideration at committee in January 2019, improvements have been completed at Docharty Road Junction (Mackay's Garage) and temporary 20mph speed limits and associated temporary traffic calming measures have been rolled out under the Spaces for People initiative to enhance sustainable travel options during the covid pandemic.
- 4.8 Consultations are currently ongoing regarding the promotion of the permanent 20mph scheme and associated traffic calming, to be considered as a separate report to this Committee.

5 Dingwall Transport Study

- 5.1 The further study was commissioned in recognition that development has now reached the point where residential development is constrained.
- 5.2 The traffic modelling takes cognisance of the existing road layouts and constructed and consented housing as a base line for growth. The transport model investigates the potential traffic impacts of development scenarios and distribution and growth of this traffic.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The modelling does confirm that to achieve the development contained in the IMFLDP of c470 houses will require the construction of the KLR.
- 5.5 The traffic modelling has also considered the impact of with and without the St Andrews Road to Chestnut Road Link.
- 5.6 The traffic modelling shows acceptable traffic distribution around Dingwall with a revised development threshold of 250 homes (150 of these have already been built, consented or in the process of being consented), utilising the St Andrews Road to Chestnut Road Link and Station Road Signal upgrades.

- 5.7 The modelling demonstrates that there will be a decrease in traffic using Tulloch Castle Drive, thereby reducing traffic flows near the school, but does show an increase in traffic on Mill Street and Burn Place.
- 5.8 For such additional traffic and the redistribution of traffic to be successful it needs to be mitigated against.

6 Housing Growth Mitigation Measures

- 6.1 Construction of the St Andrews to Chestnut Road Link opens up access for housing, provides alternative travel routes, gives an opportunity for a new bus route and decreases traffic using Tulloch Castle Drive. This route together with the modelled traffic growth from the revised housing threshold increases traffic on Mill Street/Burn Place.
- 6.2 Mitigation is required to address the increased traffic on Mill Street and Burn Place. This would be achieved by reducing speed limits (see ongoing consultation), traffic calming control/restricting parking and improving pedestrian crossing facilities.
- 6.3 To aid in the move towards sustainable travel and also mitigate against the traffic growth, active travel measures are proposed, and these are as detailed in **Figure 2**. Active travel measures are proposed to be funded from the allocated capital fund and also by developers as consents are considered. The effectiveness of the mitigation measures shall be monitored over time to assess the impact of the measures.
- 6.4 Traffic modelling demonstrates that an upgrade to the signals at Station Road will also aid traffic distribution around Dingwall.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 18 July 2022

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Background Papers: Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23 [Report](#)
Development Infrastructure Dingwall [Report](#)
Capital Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23 Update [Report](#)

Figure 1

Development Plan Areas

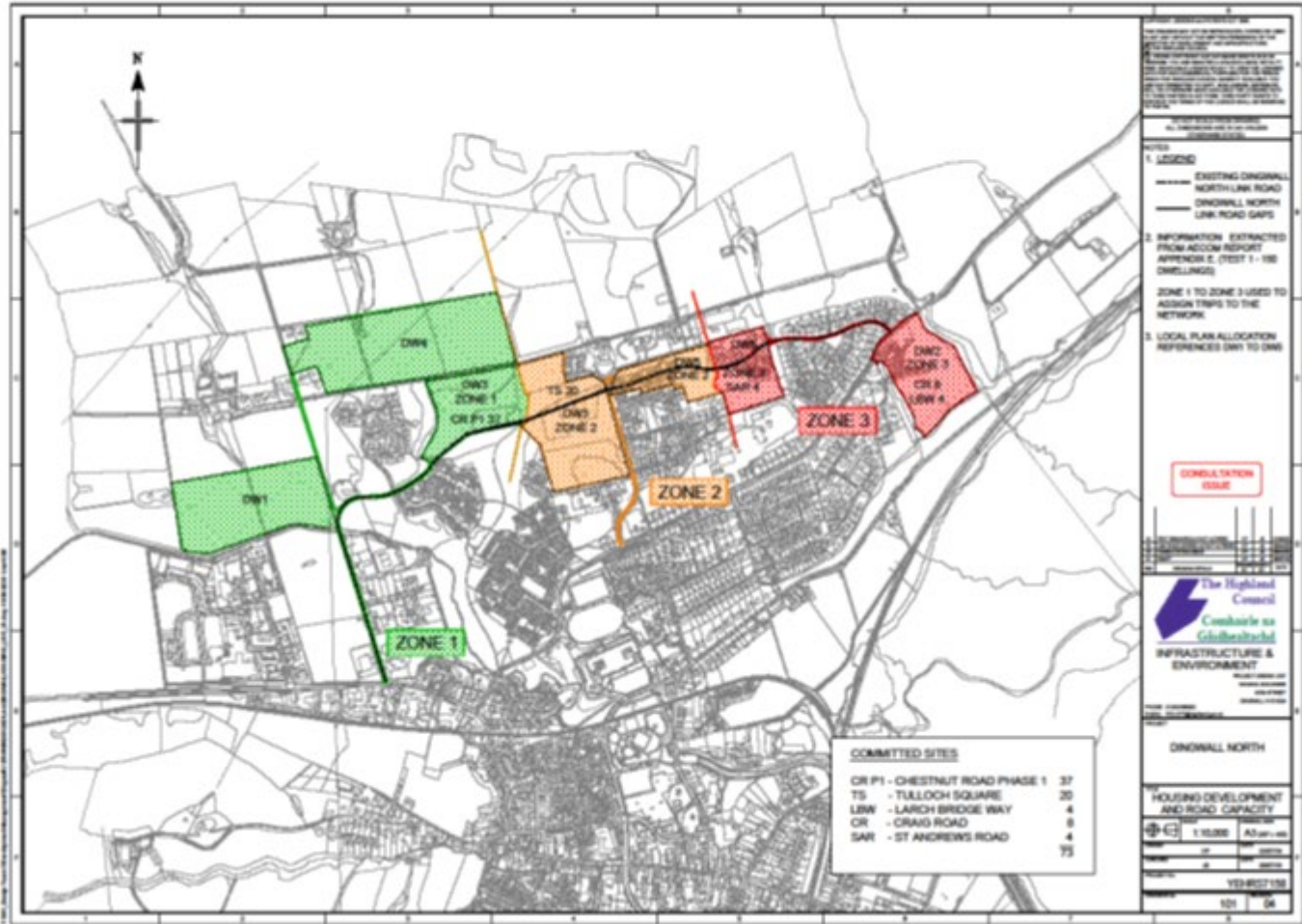


Figure 2

Mitigate the Traffic Growth and Encourage Modal Shift

