

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CIA/18/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area

Date: 14 September 2022

Report Title: Inverness Strategy Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposed approach to developing, communicating and consulting upon an overarching strategy for Inverness, with a particular emphasis on the City Centre. The aim will be to confirm and clearly communicate partners' shared responsibilities and actions for delivering this Strategy. Through this work, it is proposed to apply and tailor the place-based approach to Inverness, as outlined in the December 2021 report to [Full Council](#) and a City Members briefing held in May 2022.
- 1.2 The strategy also aims to improve the coordination, funding and delivery of existing and emerging strategies, plans, workstreams and projects; thereby reinforcing Inverness' regional and national role and ensuring the City Centre remains Highland's premier destination for residents, visitors and investment.
- 1.3 The engagement, which is proposed to be undertaken from September, will seek views on the benefits and impacts that projects should deliver - known as shared outcomes or vision – and consolidate and refine existing strategies (including the One City One Vision statement prepared by the Inverness Futures Group). It will also provide details of the projects that are key to addressing these now and, in the future, further details of which are set out in Section 8 and **Appendix 1** of this report.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
 1. **Note** the progress made to date, including the commitment to appointing a Project Manager to coordinate place-based work across Inverness;
 2. **Note** and discuss the list of delivered, live and emerging projects set out in **Appendix 1**;

3. **Agree** for officers to undertake engagement on the Inverness Strategy incorporating outcomes / vision, the key projects, and a new masterplan for the City Centre, with feedback and next steps to be reported to a future Committee;
4. **Agree** that the Inverness One City, One Vision as set out in **Appendix 2** is integrated into the overall vision for the city and that the projects being taken forward will be viewed in that context, and timescales, subject to funding opportunities being identified.
5. **Note** that in advance of the consultation officers will brief the Community Planning Partnership on the work to date and the proposed consultation to ensure a collaborative cross-Council and cross-sector approach; and
6. **Note** that in partnership with Corporate Communications and Digital Services, Officers will develop a branding and communications strategy for the Inverness place-based work, including the development of a dedicated 'Inverness portal' webpage for all Inverness workstreams and consultations.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – The work undertaken to date has involved a range of Officers across a broad range of Council services. Going forward, the project support that has already been agreed through the transformation project will help drive forward projects and external funding opportunities will be capitalised on wherever possible.
- 3.2 **Legal** – No direct implications.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – Public consultation will form a central element of preparing and finalising the strategy, including active engagement with local communities, other stakeholders and the Inverness CPP. Moreover, a key strand of this work is to improve the way the Council collectively engages with Inverness' communities and shares information on live and emerging projects.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – There are no implications arising directly from this report. However, various projects will be developed with the climate and ecological emergency central to the ethos of the project.
- 3.5 **Risk** – There are no implications arising directly from this report. However, the place-based approach is fundamentally a new approach for service and project delivery across the Council
- 3.6 **Gaelic** – There are no implications arising directly from this report. However, in accordance with the Council's Gaelic policy, all reports, strategies and vision documents will include headings in Gaelic. Additionally, the project teams will encourage the use of Gaelic in stakeholder documents and there is likely to be Gaelic elements to some of the projects.

4 Background

- 4.1 In November 2021 the City of Inverness Area Committee committed to developing a bold and ambitious strategy for Inverness which was to be taken forward through a combination of the emerging Local Development Plan and associated Transport Strategy, a City branding report, and by applying a coordinated place-based approach across partners.
This strategy aims to promote the City as the hub of economic, social and cultural activity across the Highland region - whilst also leading the transition to net zero - and fulfil the place-based approach to investing in our communities as outlined in the December report to Full Council: [Ambitious Highland - Health and Prosperity Strategy](#).
- 4.2 Following this commitment, a verbal update on this work, the 'Inverness Strategy', was provided to members of the City of Inverness Area Committee in May 2022 and a further commitment to bring back a more formal update in due course. This report now delivers on this latter commitment.
- 4.3 Significant investment is already underway including delivery of 50 high-quality residential units and new commercial units in the City centre and the recently completed AC Hotel. A further 60 residential units and 7 new/refurbished commercial units are under construction. The Council ambition is that a much more joined up strategy, with clear outcomes and a plan for investment is developed which clearly identifies when projects will be delivered and by whom.
- 4.4 The place-based approach will be developed as two interconnected tiers, one at the City-wide scale, which will distil the outcomes from a combination the 'Inverness - One City, One Vision' document coordinated by the Inverness Futures Group, and the relevant outcomes and priorities taken from the new Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) and the Highland Regional Spatial Strategy, as well as the emerging National Planning Framework 4. The second tier focuses purely on the City centre and will be based on a new 'Inverness City Centre Vision' masterplan, which has already been approved for consultation, along with relevant aspects of the new IMFLDP and other plans and strategies.

5 Proposed Coordinated Engagement

- 5.1 In essence, the place-based approach is more about the communication and coordination of projects and service delivery. Furthermore, it also seeks to reduce the number of different community engagement exercises and consolidate them into a more managed and coordinated approach to achieve more meaningful engagement.
- 5.2 This will be achieved in several ways including:-
- ensuring the 'place-based approach' is clearly understood and is a guiding principle of the new Programme for Council, thereby achieving 'buy-in' from Members, senior management and the Community Partnership;
 - the commitment to appointing a full-time Place Plans Project Manager to oversee and lead the Inverness place-based approach;
 - the development of a branding strategy that encapsulate and imagines what Inverness could be like in the future. Once developed this branding will be applied

across all projects and be utilised as part of an enhanced communication strategy, delivered by the Council Corporate Communication Team;

- engagement with authors of all current strategies, visions and workstreams, in order to consolidate and bring them into a single consolidated approach to the strategy for Inverness;
- ongoing regular discussions with all key partners across the City including the private sector, Inverness BID, Loch Ness BID, Eastgate Shopping Centre, housing associations, Network Rail, Stagecoach, Hi-trans, Highlife Highland, Inverness Chamber of Commerce and the Castle Hill and City Region Deal project teams.
- the advancement of a web-portal which will act as a central point of interaction of all projects, strategies, funds and programmes happening across the city. This portal will act as a live and dynamic way to provide meaningful updates to all partners and communities. The portal will be delivered in partnership with the Council Digital Services Team; and
- the adoption of a single easy to use and navigate online consultation software package, which it is hoped all future Inverness based consultations will utilise, thereby reducing the number and providing a corporate and consistent approach to community engagement across Inverness.

5.3 A key attribute of the place-based approach is to consolidate engagement activity and find simple ways of sharing information on the city now and in the future, and to seek views from the widest possible cross-section of the community. It is proposed to hold a series of both in-person and online engagement events in Q3 & Q4 of 2022, based on the approach outlined to Members of the Committee in May, and learning from previous place-based exercises in Fort William 2040, the Skye & Raasay Future and North West 2045 projects.

5.4 Put simply the engagement process will share information and seek views on:-

- the strategy and outcomes for the City and the City Centre – described further in Section 6;
- the range of projects both complete, underway and proposed, and the funding opportunities that can help to address these outcomes – as described in Sections 7 and 8 and shown in **Appendix 1**; and
- how partners can work better together to deliver against these outcomes.

5.5 Following these events, the key issues identified within each will be fully considered and a further report will be presented to this committee, outlining the consolidated set of actions and recommendations.

6 Consolidating Strategies

6.1 A key purpose of the proposed engagement is to agree a set of shared outcomes that all parties can sign up to as the prioritises for the city. To achieve this, the Council will consult upon all outcomes which are derived from the consideration and consolidation of existing plans and strategy

6.2 Inverness City Centre Vision

A Council commissioned vision document previously approved by the City of Inverness Area Committee that highlights 5 key outcomes for delivering a net zero, greener and high-tech city centre with a vibrant day and night-time economy, and a more attractive place to live for all generations.

It aligns with this wider coordination effort for the City by outlining current and emerging developments and seeks views on a number of 'What-ifs' representing aspirational ideas and concepts which the city could adopt. This document is currently being refreshed and updated and will form the basis of the main consultation.

6.3 Inverness – One City, One Vision

This new vision for the City was prepared with input from a range of organisations facilitated by Drew Hendry MP and has received contributions from a range of partners to a document that envisages how Inverness could look by 2035 and has the stated aims of starting a conversation and posing important questions about the direction the city should evolve. A briefing for Members was carried out on 29 August 2022. This work is a critical part of setting out the longer term aspirations for the city as a whole, and the document is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The important work already undertaken through this group has helped move forward the vision for the city as a whole, and members will note the overall aspiration to create “A welcoming, successful, green, sustainable city at the heart of a thriving Highlands”. The key purpose of the work that is the subject of this report is now to turn to how the Council, working with partners, communities and the private sector can turn that vision into a deliverable strategy.

6.4 Local Development Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy

The proposed Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan will be the second land use planning framework for planning applications and decisions across the inner-moray firth area, including the City of Inverness. The consultation has just closed on the proposed plan stage and Officers are currently reviewing the comments received and will report the issues raised in Inverness to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 24 November.

6.5 The new plan aims to deliver defined, ambitious and appropriate outcomes for the environment, employment, communities and connectivity, through two overarching aims of tackling the climate and ecological emergency and enabling post pandemic economic recovery. This new plan will take forward the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy that Members have approved for the Highland region that is hoped will be reflected in Scottish Government's new National Planning Framework 4 to be published in the next few weeks.

6.6 Transport Strategy

A new Transport Strategy is being prepared to ensure Highland can decarbonise transport and deliver the urgent change needed address respond to the Climate and Ecological Emergency. This work will ensure the Council is best placed to harness current and emerging major funding streams: Scottish Government has committed 10% of the annual Transport budget (£320M) to Active Travel by 2024/25; set a national target to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030 and has already awarded The Highland Council initial funding of £2.7M to unlock up to £50M for public transport; £10.6M for the Inverness City Active Travel Network; £1.6M for Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes for 2022/23, and £109M for transport through the City and Region Deal.

Prioritising Sustainable Transport



6.7 A government review of how the major increase in national active travel funding should be distributed locally is also expected to report at end of 2022. The Transport Strategy review will first focus on providing the overarching framework for transport decision-making, reporting in Spring 2023, with a second phase to follow, preparing delivery plans for individual elements. This approach will evidence the Council's commitment to sustainable transport, attract external funding, and will shape decision-making for the future management, maintenance, and investment in the network.

6.8 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans

Highland CPP published in October 2017 the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP). The HOIP's main ambition is to tackle the issues that lead to inequalities. In doing so, it aims to make the Highlands a fairer place, so that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the region. It sets out important outcomes and issues for the City and the City Centre that will need to be carefully factored into and taken forward through this work.

7 Shared Outcomes Addressed through Funding and Delivery

7.1 The process of consolidating the above strategy documents will establish a clear set of outcomes for the City and the City centre. These outcomes are intended to provide a solid foundation for partners working together and a structure for understanding and communicating the benefits that projects and funding streams are expected to deliver individually and cumulatively.

7.2 To more clearly organise and communicate updates now and in the future, four categories of project will be identified as set out in **Appendix 1: delivered, live, emerging and longer term**. A selection of these projects and funding opportunities are summarised below, illustrating the breadth of recent, current, and future activity. These

will be described in more detail and consulted upon through the engagement proposed. It is important to note that these projects are in draft stage and Member input into this will form an important part of the project going forward. In particular, the development of future projects will be informed by decisions made in respect of the Council's capital programme, external funding opportunities and private sector investment.

- 7.3 In addition to seeking views on the outcomes for the City and City Centre, and the new City Centre Vision, it is proposed to use the public engagement to share information on the progress being made in delivering projects and consult upon them wherever timescales allow. To this end, it is important that projects are grouped within specific time periods to ensure that progress is maintained and that future opportunities are prepared for early. The list in Appendix 1 is a **draft** of the work undertaken on this so far and illustrates the positive work undertaken to date, with the pipeline of projects that will come forward over the 2025-30 period and the 2030-35 period. This will be constantly reviewed and added to as wider consultation and engagement is carried out. However, the core purpose is to develop a working strategy document that has full transparency and commitment from all stakeholders. It will also help to support our funding applications and efforts to leverage private sector investment to the city.

8 Inverness Projects and Opportunities - Refer to Appendix 1 for a full list

As set out above, progress is being made on a large number of projects throughout the city, and in particular within the city centre. The following section sets out work underway at present for Member's information and input.

8.1 Inverness Castle Phase 1 (Project Number 18)

The transformation of Inverness Castle is supported by £15m Scottish Government funding, a £9m Highland Council investment and £3m UK Government funding through the city region deal. The first phase of development will see the castle transformed into a world-class attraction for visitors and locals. It is anticipated that over 5000 visitors a day will visit the castle once the refurbishment is complete and it will create a gateway for Highland tourism and contribute to reinvigoration of tourism across the area.

8.2 Inverness Station Masterplan (Project Number 44)

Major 30-year Masterplan looking at the redevelopment of a large area of land around the station, including the existing station buildings, freight yards and maintenance depots, the bus station/Farraline Park, the Rose Street Multi-storey Car Park and the former Royal Mail buildings amongst others.

- 8.3 The programme objective is to provide a world class arrival experience for users of the public transport network, which acts as a catalyst for wider urban regeneration of the area to provide new commercial, office, leisure and residential spaces and delivering on modal shift in transport and accessibility.

8.4 Commercial & Residential redevelopment on Castle Street (Project Number 21)

Highland Housing Alliance led project redeveloping the dilapidated building into 8 new flats and 1 new commercial unit. The work includes the rebuilding or the original façade

using the original stone. The completion of this project has been delayed due to COVID but is now scheduled to be completed in Q4 of 2022.

8.5 **Commercial & Residential redevelopment of the former Arnott's Building, Union Street (Project Number 2)**

Transformational project converting the former department store into 7 new commercial units and 53 residential units. The development is restoring original features and the original façade to Union Street and Baron Taylor's Street. Work on site is at an advanced stage and is programmed to be completed late 2022/early 2023.

8.6 **Bus Partnership Fund Inverness**

To enable Councils to invest in facilities infrastructure such as bus lanes, traffic light priorities and measures designed to promote bus use, the Scottish Government introduced the Bus Partnership Fund, with a cash value of £500m over 5 years. In the first round of funding the Highland Council secured an initial £2.3m from the Fund for projects in Inverness.

8.7 These projects consist of a mixture of quick win projects and projects that require further assessment through the STAG Appraisal process. There is potential to secure up to a further £47m worth of funding for future phases of the fund specifically by delivering the initial Phase 1 projects.

8.8 The Inverness Phase 1 quick win projects are:-

1. Raigmore Bus gate (**Project Number 8**) - Highland Council working with NHS Highland to identify a suitable route and this route will be taken to the NHS Highland Board to seek approval before moving to the next stage;
2. Rose street Bus Link completion including enforcement camera – **Delivered**; and
3. Barn Church Road Bus Priority (**Project Number 3**) - project delivery report due 31 August 2022.

8.9 The projects that require further assessment through the STAG Appraisal process are:-

1. Millburn Corridor STAG Appraisal for Active Travel & Bus Priority (**Project Number 12**) – consultant appointed, and inception meeting held expected completion date 15 December 2022;
2. B9006 STAG Appraisal for Bus Priority (**Project Number 13**) - consultant appointed and inception meeting held expected completion date 13 March 2023;
3. Inverness City Bus Traffic Light Prioritisation (**Project Number 4**) - Awaiting third party supplier quote to carry out configuration work estimated completion 31 October 2022; and
4. City Centre/A82/Rose Street Bus Priority and North Kessock Park & Ride STAG Appraisal (**Project Number 10**)

8.10 **Academy Street (Project Number 16)**

Public consultation is currently live for proposed route improvements to Academy Street. The Council's Project Design Unit have created proposed designs for this corridor which are funded by Sustrans' *'Places for Everyone'* to enhance the safety and experience of those walking, wheeling and cycling in the city centre.

- 8.11 There is £800k allocated for all design phases from concept to technical design. These designs include significant pavement widening and narrowing of the carriageway, this and two alternative cycle routes have been presented for public comment.
- 8.12 The Commonplace page for public engagement has been open since May 2022 and has received 395 public comments. In addition, there was an Inverness BID Business Breakfast event on 13 July 2022 where local businesses were invited to comment. This has been augmented by a Survey Monkey business survey which has been open since July 2022 and has received 30 responses.
- 8.13 Businesses have been broadly supportive with 67% of survey respondents agreeing that the pavements should be widened, and traffic flows reduced. However, they have raised queries about issues such as the impacts of bus access on congestion and potential issues with deliveries. There was also a consultation event for groups with protected characteristics with 12 attendees which took place on 19 July 2022.
- 8.14 Feedback from this event included detailing inclusive street design for mobility and visually impaired users accessing businesses there, and challenges for those wheeling in the area. There are two further events planned, one with cycling groups at Velocity Café on the evening of 31 August and a public Zoom meeting on 1 September 2022.

8.15 **Inverness Active Travel Network**

The construction of Raigmore Active Travel Link is now **delivered**, and it was opened on 8 March 2022. There is a sum of £60k remaining for contractor Pat Munro to cover landscaping costs and any emerging issues over the next five years.

- 8.16 This link adjoins with the Raigmore Interchange Active Travel Improvements (**Project Number 2**), for which developed design is being produced by Jacobs to improve provision and safety for non-motor vehicle users on the interchange and links to both the Raigmore Active Travel Link and Millburn Road Bus and Active Travel Corridor (**Project Number 12**). An Equality Impact Assessment for the proposed design is being produced currently. There is an estimated spend of £100k on this phase of the project. Technical Design is forecasted to cost approximately £66k and should commence in January 2023. £950k is allocated for construction, which is due to commence in April 2023, subject to all relevant consents being in place following full consultation with the local community.
- 8.17 Development of the Millburn Corridor is currently subject to STAG process with consultants Stantec to appraise Public Transport and Active Travel provision on the Millburn Corridor. The project timeline will be updated following this process, but £5.6m is allocated to the development of this route between RIBA stages 3 and 6.
- 8.18 The Riverside Way enhancement (**Project Number 15**) is in the process of developed design with consultants Aecom and is due for completion in December 2022 at a cost of

£100k. Technical Design should commence in January 2023 with an estimated cost of £50k. Construction would be due to commence in spring 2023 with a sum of £1.1m forecasted for this stage.

8.19 Inverness' Victorian Market Food Hall Development (Project Number 17)

Work started in January 2021 on the £1.7 million refurbishment of the market to provide a new food hall. Work is progressing on site, with initial occupant currently undertaking their individual units 'fit-outs' and are expected to starting trading this autumn.

8.20 Hi-Bike expansion (Phase 2) (Project Number 41)

The first phase of the scheme has seen 30 electric bikes for hire in the city, with three charging stations located at the Falcon Square entrance to the railway station, behind the Inverness College UHI building on Inverness Campus, and at Great Glen House and three virtual stations. In the first 6 months, 361 users have made over 2000 trips, travelling over 6,000 miles!

8.21 HITRANS is working in partnership with Highland Council to expand the scheme over the next year to bring additional 20 bikes and 3 new docking stations locations to the city, giving a wider geographic spread and providing access to the bikes from more residential areas.

8.22 Castle Street Energy Centre (Project Number 60)

The project initially involved building a wastewater energy centre, with back up gas boilers, but after the feasibility works were undertaken it was no longer viable to continue with the wastewater solution. The revised solution is to use an air source pump solution with gas back up boilers. The design for the air source heat pump method is progressing well and is on programme to meet the building warrant submission in February 2023. UK Government Officials have agreed to this change.

8.23 Northern Meeting Park (Project Number 22)

The project is currently in RIBA Stage 3 Design Development and on programme to submit a planning application in August 2022. The full design team is now commissioned and in place and working to the programme that has been set. The mechanical and electrical engineer is currently working through the energy solution and drawing up early calculations of what is required and how this can be met. The quantity surveyor is working through the revised cost estimates.

8.24 Bught Park (Project Number 23)

The project is currently in RIBA Stage 3 Design Development and on programme to submit a planning application in August 2022. The major update to this project from the original funding application is a change from the initial designs. It was originally planned to upgrade the existing toilet and changing room facilities at the rear of the existing stadium. After initial studies undertaken by the design team, it was found this would not be possible to meet the current standards, which means that the existing provision

needs to be demolished and new facilities built in their place. This will increase the construction cost.

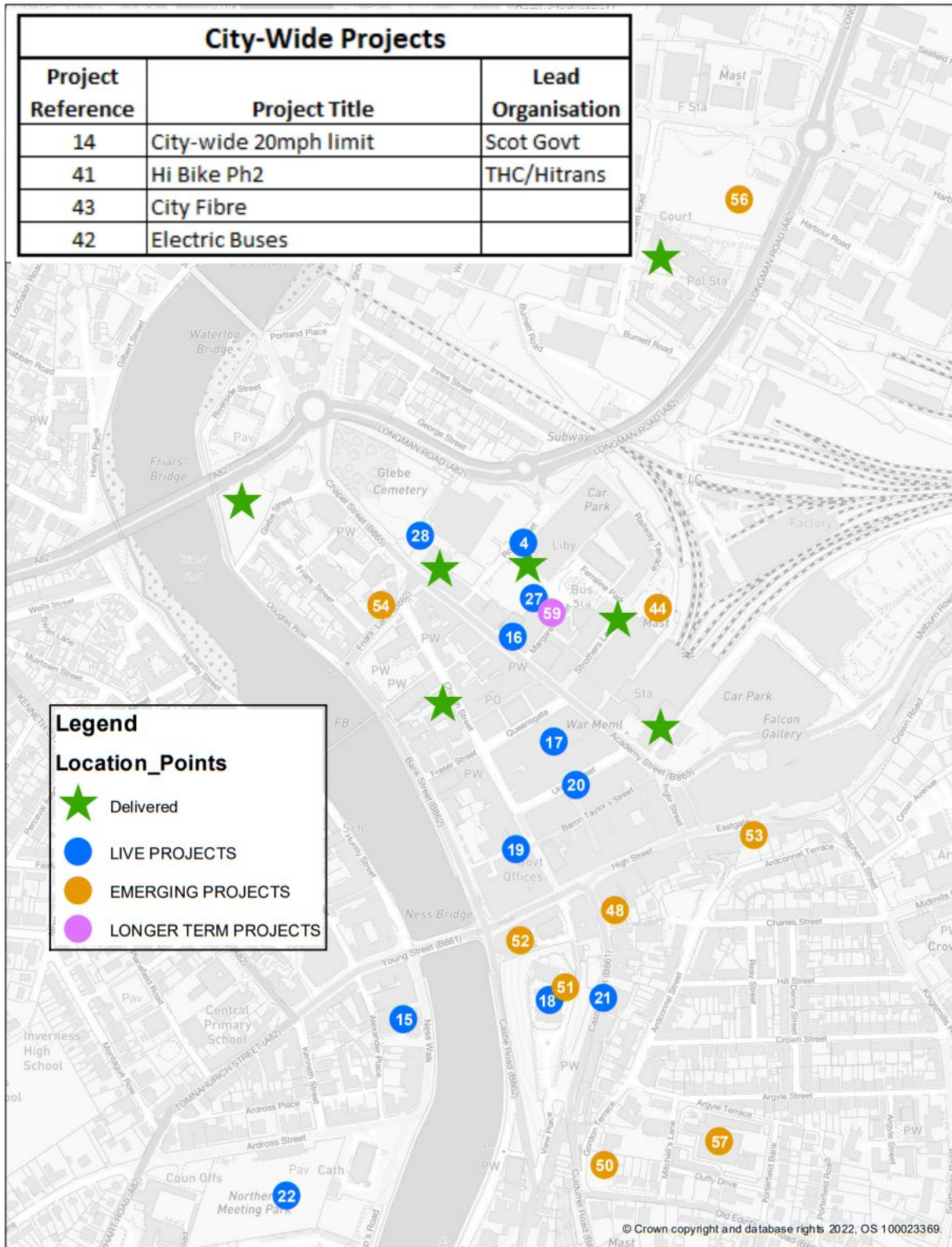
- 8.25 For the Castle Street Energy Centre, Northern Meeting Park & Bught Park projects revised cost estimates remain within the LUF funding profile. The Castle Street Energy Centre costs have reduced due to the change in design technology and the repurposing of an existing building. The Bught Park costs have increased due to the design change of the changing facilities and construction cost inflation. UK Government officials have agreed to both the design changes and to the reallocation of the budget between the three projects. It is important to note that pre-planning consultation has been carried out, with a number of suggestions made by partners, community groups and individuals. These suggested changes are being considered through the Levelling Up Fund Programme Board.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 29 August 2022

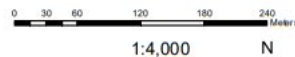
Authors: Scott Dalgarno (Development Plans Manager)
Matthew Hilton, Planner/Urban Designer

Inverness Strategy - Projects and Opportunities

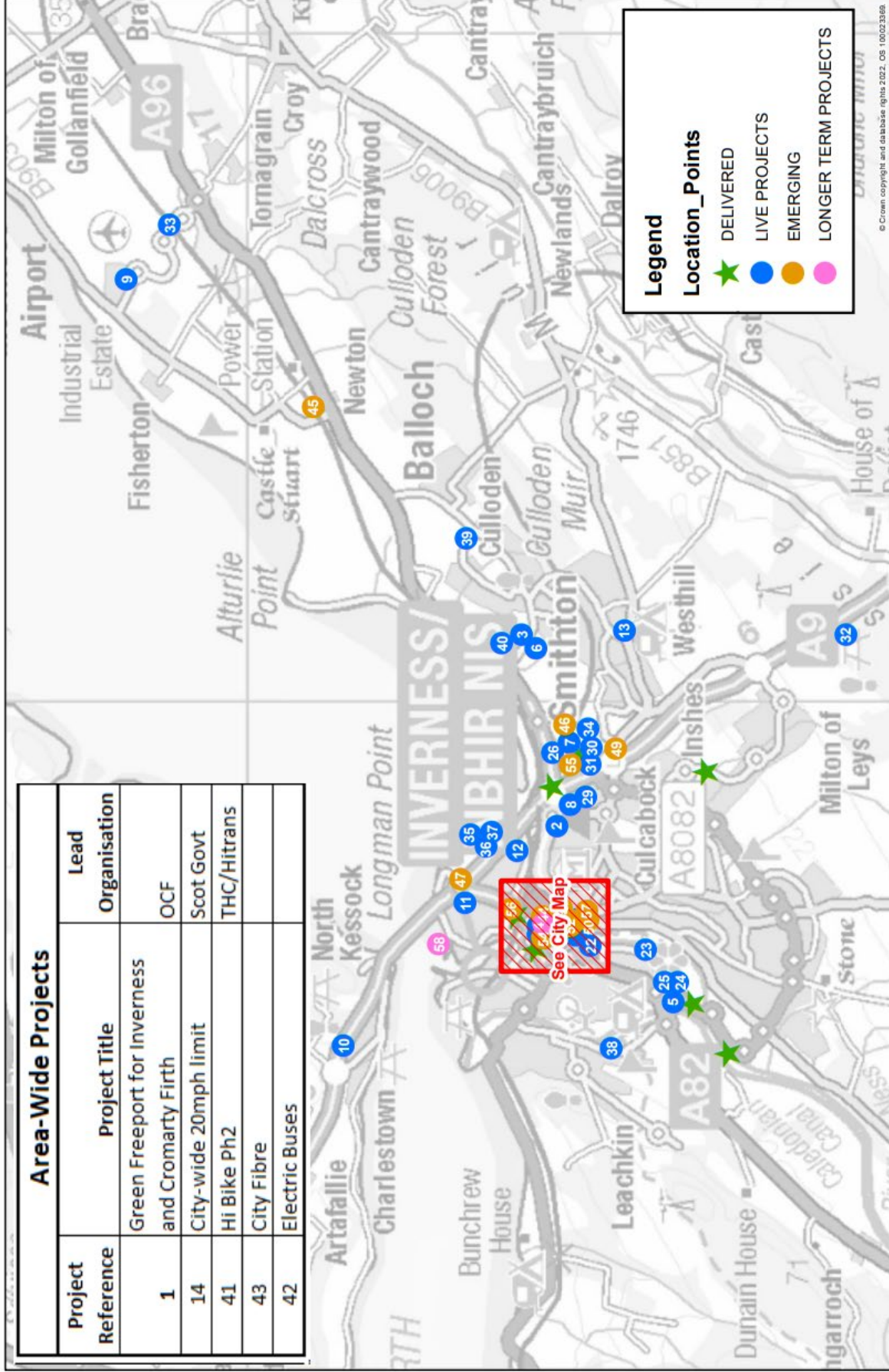


**Inverness Strategy
Projects Map (City Centre)**

Ref: Inv_Strategy_City
Date: 31/08/2022



Area-Wide Projects		
Project Reference	Project Title	Lead Organisation
1	Green Freeport for Inverness and Cromarty Firth	OCF
14	City-wide 20mph limit	Scot Govt
41	Hi Bike Ph2	THC/Hitrans
43	City Fibre	
42	Electric Buses	



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Inverness Strategy Projects Map

DELIVERED PROJECTS (since 2018)

Project Title	Lead Organisation	Project Type	Relevant Outcome(s)
AC Hotel, Glebe Street	Private Investment		
West link Road & Active Travel improvements Phase 2	The Highland Council		
Inshes Park Active Travel Links - Phase 3	The Highland Council		
River Ness Hydro Scheme	The Highland Council		
Wyvern House, Academy Street	The Highland Council		
Commercial & Residential redevelopment, Church Street	The Highland Council		
Town House Refurbishment	The Highland Council		
Rose Street Foundry Bar	Private Investment		
Inverness Justice Centre	Scottish Government		
Raigmore Active Travel Link	The Highland Council		
Rose street Bus Link	The Highland Council		
Raining Stairs Housing (2018)	The Highland Council		
Hi-Bike Phase 1	THC/HiTrans		
Driverless bus introduced			
www.investhighland.com webpage	THC		

LIVE PROJECTS (planned to be delivered by 2025)

Ref	Project Title	Lead Organisation	Project Type	Relevant Outcome(s)
1	Green Freeport for Inverness and Cromarty Firth	Opportunity Cromarty Firth		
2	Raigmore Interchange Active Travel Improvements	The Highland Council /Transport Scotland		
3	Barn Church Road Bus Lane	The Highland Council		
4	City Centre Traffic Light prioritisation for buses (21 sites)	The Highland Council		
5	Mobility Hub (Park and Ride: Torvean- West)	The Highland Council		
6	Mobility Hub (Park and Ride: Stratton/East Inverness)	The Highland Council		

7	Inverness Campus further incubator space	HIE		
8	Raigmore Bus Gate	NHS Highland		
9	Inverness Airport Business Park	IABP/HIAL/HIE/ The Highland Council		
10	Mobility Hub (Park and Ride: North Kessock-Tore+ A82 priority measures)	The Highland Council		
11	Longman Mobility Hub- Options appraisal	The Highland Council		
12	Millburn Road Bus and Active Travel Corridor	The Highland Council		
13	B9006 Bus Priority STAG and Delivery	The Highland Council		
14 (CW)	City-wide 20mph limit	Scottish Government		
15	Riverside Way Enhancement (1-way vehicle traffic flow & Cycle contraflow)	The Highland Council		
16	Academy Street Transformation	The Highland Council		
17	Victorian Market Food Hall	The Highland Council		
18	Inverness Castle Phase 1 - Castle & grounds Redevelopment	The Highland Council		
19	Redevelopment of the former Service Point Building Church Street / Bank Lane to a hotel	Private Investment		
20	Commercial & Residential redevelopment of the former Arnott's Building, Union Street	The Highland Council		
21	Commercial & Residential redevelopment on Castle Street	The Highland Council		
22	Northern Meeting Park	The Highland Council /HLH		
23	Bught Park - Facility improvements, new shinty and function pavilion, enhanced events infrastructure	The Highland Council /HLH		
24	Replacement of Inverness Botanic Gardens Green Houses	The Highland Council /HLH		
25	Inverness Leisure – Expansion and improvement programme	The Highland Council /HLH		
26	HMP Highland (new Prison)	Scottish Prison Service		
27	Redevelopment of the former car park on Farraline Park / Margaret Street to a hotel	Private Investment		

28	Redevelopment of the Iron Works to provide a new hotel	Private Investment		
29	National Treatment Centre - Highland	NHS Highland		
30	New Management School and School of the Rural Economy at UHI	UHI/HIE		
31	Centre for analysis of space and satellite data	UHI/SFC/HIE		
32	A9 Dualling Perth to Inverness	Transport Scotland		
33	Inverness Airport Rail Station	Network Rail/Transport Scotland		
34	Sports Pitch at Inverness Campus (and options appraisal for East Inverness Sports Facility)	Highland Council/ High Life Highland		
35	Land remediation at East Longman to create new business park and potential hydrogen refuelling centre	The Highland Council		
36	Longman Waste Transfer Station	The Highland Council		
37	Longman energy from waste facility options assessment	The Highland Council		
38	Charleston Academy redevelopment/ replacement	The Highland Council		
39	Culloden Academy redevelopment/ replacement	The Highland Council		
40	New school Inverness east	The Highland Council		
41 (CW)	Hi-Bike Phase 2	THC/HiTrans		
42 (CW)	Fleet of 5 state-of-the-art electric buses for Inverness City			
43 (CW)	City Fibre			
60	Castle Street Energy Centre	The Highland Council		
61	Ness Castle Primary School provision	The Highland Council		

EMERGING PROJECTS (planned to be delivered between 2025 – 2030)

Ref	Project Title	Lead Organisation	Project Type	Relevant Outcome(s)
44	Inverness Rail Station Masterplan (including bus station, Farraline Park & Rose Street Car Park)	Network Rail		

45	A96 dualling: Inverness to Nairn including Nairn Bypass	Transport Scotland		
46	A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton	Transport Scotland		
47	Longman Junction Improvements	The Highland Council		
48	Long-term Reuse of the Townhouse	The Highland Council		
49	Inshes Junction Improvements	The Highland Council		
50	Viewhill House re-use	Private Investment		
51	Inverness Castle Phase 2- Redevelopment of the town House Car Park	The Highland Council		
52	Inverness Castle Phase 3 - Redevelopment of Bridge Street, Castle Road & Castle Wynd Buildings	The Highland Council		
53	Redevelopment of the former Eastgate Hostel	Private Investment		
54	Reuse of Fraser House (BT Building), Friars Lane	Private Investment		
55	Hotel School, UHI	UHI/SFC/HIE		
56	Former Inverness College Site	UHI		
57	Porterfield Prison Site	Scottish Prison Service		

LONGER TERM PROJECTS (planned to be delivered after 2030)

Ref	Project Title	Lead Organisation	Project Type	Expected Delivered Outcome(s)
58	Port of Inverness redevelopment and land reclamation and Maritime Heritage Trail	Inverness Harbour Trust		
59	Spectrum Centre, Margaret Street	The Highland Council		

INVERNESS
FUTURES
GROUP

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35

INVERNESS
ONE CITY, ONE VISION



01

Inverness 2035

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- [3] Part of a Thriving Highlands
- [4] City of Opportunity 2021
- [5] A Vision for 2035
- [6] Creating a Shared Vision
- [7] **A Welcoming City**
- [8] An Arrival to Remember
- [9] An Attractive City Centre
- [10] Family-Friendly First
- [11] **A Successful City**
- [12] Success Where it Matters
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Why We Need A City Vision

02

Wherever you look in Inverness, you will discover magnificent work being done to enhance Inverness as a city to live in and as a place to visit.

The physical and mental health and wellbeing of our people has rarely, if ever been more important. Whether it is public sector projects, private investment or community initiatives, you don't have to look far to find innovative ways of providing uplifting and inspiring ways to improve the wellbeing of people who live in Inverness and the visitors who arrive here.

This paper does not intend to bypass all that excellent work or aim to replace economic development plans and sectoral projects currently underway.

Instead, it seeks to highlight the need for a shared vision and a way to connect current, planned and future projects to deliver a welcoming, successful, green, sustainable city at the heart of a thriving Highlands.

This paper also aims to be a starting place for partners and invested parties to come together to work towards a common goal – to create an Inverness vision that is unapologetically ambitious.

Only when we know where we are going can we map out the route to getting there.

In setting out what that vision may look like, this paper does not intend to answer the challenges and obstacles that may arise from setting a shared vision.

This paper is a starting point for us to describe what is possible for Inverness and what it could look and feel like in the future, and the steps we need to take to get there.

**INVERNESS
FUTURES
GROUP**

03

Part of a Thriving Highlands

When considering the economic and social future of Inverness, it is impossible to separate the city from the rest of the Highlands. The future of the city and the wider Highlands will always be interlinked, and to succeed, each must work in step.

Organisations concerned with the future of the City of Inverness have within their remit responsibility for the development of the Highland region. This means that Inverness is often seen as a part of the whole picture rather than the picture itself. Understandably, this results in a region-wide approach and dilutes any city-specific vision.

The Highland Council sets out a Programme for Administration for the local authority area. At the same time, Highlands and Islands Enterprise is concerned with the development of the region. Still, there is currently no public or shared vision for the City of Inverness.

This is not a criticism of any partner organisations or any approach taken; however, it does highlight the absence of and need for a specific Inverness City approach.

The question must be: why should Inverness be different from any other city with its own unique identity?

If we want Inverness to realise its potential as a modern city - to be attractive to visitors and investors alike - then we must recognise that Inverness requires a distinct vision.

The role of Inverness as the gateway to the region or the capital of the Highlands is a crucial part of its unique offering and always will be, but for Inverness to thrive, we need a vision for the city that is more than its geographical location.



City of Opportunity 2021



This is an exciting time for Inverness, with several developments changing the landscape and social fabric of the city.

The £315m Inverness City Region Deal unlocked transformational projects in and around the city.

It enabled partners to develop the connectivity through the construction of critical roads and active travel infrastructure, realising the opportunity to free up land for housing and commercial development.

The City Region Deal set out the ambition to position Inverness as a place of digital opportunity. The public investment in this aim opened the door for partnership opportunities resulting in over £20m private sector investment in digital infrastructure across Inverness.

Without a doubt, full fibre networking across the city is a gamechanger for Inverness, but if it is not part of a wider strategy, it is just technology.

Inverness is already a popular base for businesses. Lifescan Scotland, Norbord Europe, Capgemini, Orion and the Global Energy Group are just some of the major companies that have a significant Inverness base.

The University of the Highlands and Islands changed more than the landscape of Inverness; it has enabled more young people to study and live here.

Respected education institutions and research programmes in the heart of the City allows us to retain talent in the region, increasing opportunities for inward investment well into the future.

The establishment of the UHI campus has set the foundations for a thriving jobs market in the future.

Several new hotel developments are elevating the city's tourism offering. As the retail sector continues to struggle in the face of changing shopping trends, the city centre sees growth in the food and drink sectors.

The ongoing development of Highlife Highland facilities offers modern leisure and social facilities accessible to all in the community and across the city. The Bught Campus area, linked to the city by the Active Travel route offers huge potential for additional cultural and sporting activities for locals and visitors of all abilities and groups.

The continued development of Eden Court's programme offers visitors and residents the opportunity to enjoy culture and arts in the centre of Inverness.

05

INVERNESS 2035

**A welcoming
successful
green
sustainable
city at the
heart of a
thriving
Highlands.**

Creating a Shared Vision

06

The vision of Inverness - a welcoming, successful, green, sustainable city at the heart of the Highlands - is an opportunity to create an anchor point for all strategic plans for the city moving forward.

How this might look will be different to us all, and that is why this exercise is so important. Whatever the answer to what Inverness will be in 2035 may be, it needs to have Inverness's people at its heart.

In the pages that follow, this paper will set out some of the policy decisions that may be required, aspirational goals and statements of intent that could form part of the plans to achieve our shared vision.

Hopefully, these options will inspire a collaborative approach to the next chapter of Inverness - one of Europe's fastest growing cities and the city in the heart of the Highlands.



07

INVERNESS 2035

A
welcoming
city at the
heart of a
thriving
Highlands.

An Arrival to Remember

08

Inverness will be a welcoming city for visitors from near and far. Shops, businesses, tour operators and residents will be proud of Inverness's world-renowned reputation as the welcoming city. It will be a statement of intent turned into reality by the people of Inverness. Their pride in our welcoming city will make Inverness a great place to live and visit.

Whether visitors arrive by bus, train, car, or flight, their first impression of Inverness will be consistently that of a welcoming city. When they leave, they will do so, with a warm recollection of the Highland welcome they enjoyed throughout their visit.

It will be an experience that stays with them and brings them back time and time again. The airport will be a blend of modern amenities coupled with the warmth of a Highland welcome. The city will be accessible by hub airports, enabling visitors and residents to travel seamlessly across the globe.

When people arrive, they will have access to rail links, eco bikes, electric buses, and self-drive rentals – getting to Inverness City from the airport will be quick, clean and connected.

Visitors will be able to avoid the elements by accessing city transport links all under one roof.

Public transport will be modern, proudly eco, well maintained and clean. Timetables and tickets will be fully accessible online and via apps.

All transport links will be fully integrated with the ability to buy a single pass to that final destination. People arriving by bus will disembark in an attractive sheltered bus station that will be well be maintained and sympathetically designed to suit its surroundings.

Visitors will experience an effortless transition to their destination accommodation, having already accessed the urban trail on their app and aided by the helpful staff and locals they encounter as they move throughout the city.

09

An Attractive City Centre

Visitors will be attracted to walking or cycling to their destination because of the beautiful pedestrian streetscapes.

They will marvel at our historical architecture, there to enjoy because of the extensive and regular cleaning of city centre buildings and street cleaning.

Visitors will be able to mentally map out their activities for the days ahead because of well thought out directional signs, pointing them to the world-class Inverness Castle experience, the beautiful riverside trail and all those fantastic culture and sports hot spots in and around the city.

Every entry to Inverness is attractive and welcoming as part of the City's ongoing work to fulfil its promise to be the world's most welcoming city.

Inverness won't just be a city for visitors – it will be a place to enjoy for those who live here. The city centre will be attractive, accessible for all and most importantly family-friendly with a focus on creating a place and atmosphere that has a positive and enriching effect on wellbeing.

Gone will be a city centre prioritised for cars and buses – instead, priority will be given to pedestrians and cyclists. Streetscapes will be designed for active travel, supported by park and ride zones on the city's outskirts. Street furniture will be minimal, and where it can be found, it will be sympathetically designed to ensure disabled people are not hindered by it.

Our streets will be bustling with families enjoying the 'what's on' features of the day or finding their way along the digital urban trails, supported by our gigabit Wi-Fi infrastructure throughout the city.

Independent businesses and retailers will be supported by independent retailer enterprise zones. Our high street will be a blend of retail, office, housing and hospitality.

Inverness's charm will be its people – in its shops, restaurants, businesses and on the streets. Food and drink will be at the heart of the design of our city centre, with restaurants and bars for locals and visitors alike to enjoy.



Family Friendly First

10

Inverness will be the best city to grow up in, a claim that will be backed up by being an accredited UNICEF Child-Friendly City and local political commitment to creating nurturing social and school environments – ensuring no child is left behind.

The city infrastructure will be constructed to create family-friendly active travel routes, parks and outdoor public spaces for activities. Inverness will be a growing city where green space is prioritised in every planning development.

The city will be awash with colour because of a citywide partnership between local schools and council services.

Whether it is joint streetscape projects or expressive art adorning walls along the river, when people visit Inverness, they will feel the city's children at its heart.

Thanks to the pedestrianisation of Inverness city centre, families will enjoy spending time in the centre and the local economy benefits significantly from their presence. Making the city centre accessible to all will increase footfall for shops.

Public areas – once considered unattractive – will be reimaged to make them family-friendly routes or parks. These public areas won't be only places to take children, they facilitate much needed social interaction between different generations – purposefully engage with a wide variety of partners to create events that bring together the youngest and oldest residents and visitors.

A long-standing commitment to new housing – both affordable and social rent – will ensure every family has a safe home to live in. The most vulnerable in our society will feel part of a community and be supported.

Care in the community extends beyond public services, and community groups will be leading the efforts in their local area. Schools will be modern, inclusive campuses that reflect our ongoing commitment to nurturing the city's children. Active travel routes and integrated transport links will ensure travelling to and from school is safe and enjoyable.

Often described as the Safe City, Inverness continues to have the lowest crime rate of any city in Scotland.

A
successful
city at the
heart of a
thriving
Highlands.

12

Success Where it Matters

There will be shared commitment to the vision to be a welcoming, successful, green, sustainable city at the heart of a thriving Highlands.

People living in Inverness will be connected to this vision and will be central to its journey. The physical and mental wellbeing of the city's people will be at the core of all public policy decisions, with clear success metrics.

All strategic planning will stem from this vision and form a blueprint to attain and sustain this vision.

A collaborative policy approach between public organisations, commerce and communities put the people who live, work and study here at the centre of all development planning.

This blend of the public sector, private and community support, along with strategic infrastructure and development plans, means Inverness will be a city that knows where it is going.

As a result of local policy, cooperatives and community ownership initiatives will bring tired public assets to life across the city.

Communities will have an active role in planning and development.

There will be a shared asset register for the city - detailing the public assets, buildings and land. This will be fully accessible online.

Public policy and investment are concerned with creating a thriving economy and a thriving well-being economy. Development will be sustainable, inclusive and resilient.

Inverness will be a well-regarded incubator for start-up companies, bringing a range of sectors together, creating a sustainable and resilient economy.



Connected Communities & Commerce

13

Inverness will be a city that connects businesses to trading partners, workers to jobs and people to places.

The Gigabit connectivity across the city will make Inverness an attractive place to do business. Investment in infrastructure will support economic and social productivity.

Inverness will be the home of start-up businesses, supported by enterprising public policy and a proactive campaign to attract start-ups to the city. Incubator zones will enable small to medium businesses to share resources as they grow.

Flexible and equipped working spaces across the city will make it an attractive and low-cost place for small to medium-sized businesses.

The connected public transport infrastructure and traffic control measures allow workers to travel quickly and safely to work.

The city will be welcoming and attractive to multi-national corporations.

All new homes will be connected via fibre to the premises internet connection, thanks to planning policy that incorporated fibre to the premises as a supply requirement in planning consents.

The city's modern gigabit infrastructure will enable health services to use smart technologies to deliver care in the community and will help build communities.

The use of SMART technologies will support people where they live, socialise and work.

The city will boast a reputation as a STEM centre of expertise, providing well-paid jobs for young people and the research facilities at UHI will be considered world-class.

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Culture, Arts & Leisure

As a successful city with wellbeing at its heart, Inverness will be a showcase for Art, Leisure, Culture and Music, bringing to life Highland heritage through artistic expression in physical art and spaces.

A world-class visitor experience, Inverness Castle will cement the city's reputation for tourism, heritage and arts.

Urban trails will be well planned and engaging.

Venues will keep reimagining the city's entertainment through the extensive augmented reality experiences interwoven across the city.

Eden Court, Scotland's largest single-site, award-winning arts venue, will be one of Scotland's best-loved experience venues, bringing an excellent artistic programme to residents and visitors alike.

Local culture, art and music will be at the core of city plans, nurtured and supported by creative funding.

An ongoing commitment to culture and the arts will grow the city's night economy and ensure Inverness's reputation as an experience city.

Highlife Highland will be leading peer organisations in attracting the best in culture, learning, sport, leisure, health and wellbeing, along with engaged partners, such as SportsScotland, Creative Scotland, Visit Scotland and Scottish Canals.

Every corner of the city will boast modern sport & leisure facilities that are accessible and welcoming.

The riverside will be brought to life with market stalls and activities for the family to enjoy. The walk routes around the city will be engaging and informative. People will enjoy reading about Inverness's history while walking along the canal, visiting the marina or discovering the woodland areas.

Inverness's location in the heart of the Highlands, community-led development and popularity as a place to live and visit will ensure an experience for every style, budget, and taste.



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INVERNESS 2035

A

green

city at the

heart of a

thriving

Highlands.

16

Creating Green Spaces

Inverness will be a carbon-neutral city and will boast the lowest air pollution of any Scottish city.

Inverness is at the heart of a thriving Highlands. It will attract visitors from across the world eager to enjoy the outdoor pursuits and beautiful scenery to be found across the region. Nurturing our nature will be at the heart of Inverness in 2035.

Unused public spaces will be turned into community assets and supported with funding to create green spaces.

Projects, such as Edible Inverness, will have ensured the city's green spaces feature edible areas.

The city centre will be reimagined to create green spaces in the heart of the city. The city will be home to multiple community allotment areas.

Public parks will be created with each new large housing development, along with seating areas.

There will be an extensive programme of investment in active travel and bike infrastructure throughout the entire city area.

Inverness will have more pedestrians and cyclists than cars travelling along popular routes. Inverness will be Scotland's cycling city, active travel routes will be well-thought-out and visiting the city centre is a pleasant experience.

Our local economy will benefit from the increased footfall in the city centre because it will be easy to get to and move around. Public transport will be interconnected, green and reliable, making it a preferred mode of transportation to get around the city.

All public vehicles will be electric or hydrogen-powered.

Electric car infrastructure will be well maintained, accessible at all park and rides and in public car parks.



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INVERNESS 2035

A

sustainable

city at the

heart of a

thriving

Highlands.



A Sustainable Culture

18

Promoting education on the importance of sustainable living will not be confined to schools; it will be available to all.

Active travel will be the preferred mode of transport for people travelling around the city to work and study.

Recycling will be an embedded culture with residents of the city.

Renewable energy projects will not only generate power but will also act as educational tools to embed a culture of sustainability.

The Archimedes Screw on the river Ness will be one such example of a popular tourist destination using renewable energy to power buildings.

UN sustainability goals will be incorporated into local public policy and will be at the heart of city planning.

New housing developments will be environmentally friendly with innovative green spaces.

As part of planning consent, new housing and business developments will be required to install solar or renewable infrastructure to a specified standard.

Solar panels will be installed in all new public buildings, schools and homes.

Urban development will be innovative, solar-powered buildings that incorporate green space in the plans.

Sustainable urban agriculture will form part of public planning and there will be a fund to support urban agriculture projects in and around the city.

If Not This, Then What?

19

A
welcoming
successful
green
sustainable
city at the
heart of a
thriving
Highlands.

This paper has set out what Inverness 2035 could look like at the heart of a thriving Highlands; as a welcoming, successful, green, sustainable city, with physical and mental health and wellbeing at its core. In doing so, it also provides a picture of how policy decisions, aspirations and collaborative working might achieve this.

While no one organisation is responsible for the delivery of Inverness's vision, this vision cannot be delivered without cooperation between public organisations, businesses and communities that will need to work in collaboration.

The vision for Inverness also needs to be resilient to political cycles and changes in leadership. This can be achieved by creating a One City, One Vision stakeholder group.

The question to be posed from this paper is; if this is not the Inverness we should aspire to be, then what is it, how do we describe it and, perhaps most importantly, how are we going to get there?