

ISSUE DATE: TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2003

CITY VISION TIMETABLE REVEALED

Agreement on a City Vision for Inverness and priorities for spending the £3.1 million allocated over the next three years to the city-region will be ready for submission to the Scottish Executive by the end of May.

This target date was revealed by The Highland Council's Chief Executive Arthur McCourt when he briefed members of the City of Inverness and Area Committee on the outcome of the Review of Scotland's Cities, which aims to put Scotland's cities at the centre of Scotland's economic growth.

The process would commence with Convener David Green and Provost William Smith meeting representatives of the Scottish Executive and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities over the next few weeks to clarify the next steps in the process.

Informal talks would be held with Community Planning partners to put in place arrangements for preparing the City Vision. These would be agreed by the City of Inverness and Area Committee and The Highland Council before the end of February.

This would be followed by discussion of the approach and interim statement with Scottish Ministers in March.

A final report would come back to the City of Inverness and Area Committee on 10 April – at its last meeting before the Council elections on 1 May and a submission of the full statement presented to the Scottish Executive by the end of May.

Mr McCourt also advised the Area Committee members of a number of capital projects that had been identified in the Council's spending programme to help Inverness cope with anticipated expansion. These included the Cross Rail Link between Eastgate and Longman Road; Inverness transport infrastructure improvements and a new access from the A 96 to Inverness Airport, Dalcross.

On top of this the Council was pressing ahead with studies into four major flood prevention schemes, with an estimated total cost of £5.8 million, which would attract 100% funding from the Scottish Executive.

Provost Smith said: "We had a very positive meeting with the Convener and Chief Executive and are content that we will be fully involved in the exciting plans for the future development of our city."

Councillor Green said: "I greatly welcome the review because we now have a wide network of agencies working together in a City Partnership to ensure the planned development of the city region over a 20 year period."

-ends-