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## INVERNESS CITY-VISION STATEMENT

The City of Inverness Partnership, a grouping of eight key agencies, has produced its Vision Statement bid to draw down £3.1 million over the next three years, set aside in the Scottish Executive's Cities Growth Fund. The Vision will be sent to the Scottish Executive at the end of this month for its approval. The Highland Council will consider the document at its full meeting on Thursday (29 May). Click [here](#) to view the full document.

The Vision details a programme of costed activities based on the priorities highlighted in the Highland Community Plan – the adopted Structure Plan – and the new Inverness Area Local Plan and builds on discussions from the seminar – "Organising the City Region" – held following the award of city status in 2000. The programme identifies four benchmark projects, which the document says can make a real difference to the appearance of the city and how it functions. They are the:-

- ✚ Upgrading of the landscaping, walks and public grounds around the Castle, the Riverside and proposed Cultural Quarter;
- ✚ Creation of a "Wired City" – with a "real time" public information system and the installation of broadband in social housing schemes;
- ✚ Improvement of the streetscape and building conversion in Castle Brae, High Street West and the North Castle Tower;
- ✚ Installation of a waste management scheme for the city centre and the development of a Recycling Innovation Zone.

£500,000 has been set aside for each of the four projects with spending to be phased over three years.

On top of this, the eight partners in the Partnership have set aside £100,000 each as contributions to eight key projects, while £300,000 is to be deployed for vital feasibility studies to promote dialogue and implementation of the City-Vision.

The key projects will involve assistance towards the creation of a:-

- ✚ UHI Executive Office on the riverside, in a conversion of the original Royal Northern Infirmary buildings;
- ✚ city Project Office as a focus for establishing and marketing Inverness and the sub-region as "the natural place to be";
- ✚ combined Voluntary Sector Resource Centre/offices;
- ✚ pilot city centre Business Improvement District scheme;
- ✚ demonstration city centre vacant block Housing conversion, including affordable units;
- ✚ Community Trust to assemble, enhance and manage the city's green buffers, wedges and rural setting.

It will also provide support for: -

- ✚ further development of commuter rail services, linking Inverness with the wider

sub-region;  
the Merkinch Social Inclusion Partnership Project.

The Partnership also intends to build on the expansion of Eden Court Theatre with the creation of:-

- a regional genealogy/archive centre, new city museum/gallery and community arts centre as part of a wider cultural experience;
- strategic transport and traffic studies for the city and the A 96 corridor; and
- a design masterplan for key city regeneration and expansion "hotspots".

The City Partnership has produced a draft Vision Statement, which will be sent to the Scottish Executive at the end of this month for its approval. The Highland Council will consider the document when it meets on Thursday 29 May.

The Vision highlights the potential for Inverness to develop over the next 30 years as a place of critical mass; a competitive place; a connected place; a clean place; a cultural place; a comely place; a creative place; a cosmopolitan place; a caring place and a confident place.

The draft statement states: "Inverness and the Highlands have together undergone a much-needed transformation over the last 30 years. In making the shift from a marginal provincial location to a burgeoning mainstream one, Inverness now commands attention both as a city and capital of the Gaidhealtachd. It is widely acknowledged as a dynamic and vibrant place making a growing contribution to Scottish business, civic and cultural life. The collective objective of the City Partnership is to maintain that progress and momentum.

"The next 30 years provide equally invigorating changes as the city looks to consolidate its performance and reputation as "the natural place to be"..... While the future is uncertain, the City Partnership aspires to provide the strong inclusive partnership necessary to harness change by driving through essential infrastructure and environmental projects.

"Implementation of the vision will require boldness, imagination and perseverance to avoid the trip of incrementalism and mediocre schemes."

The City Partnership comprises representatives from The Highland Council, the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network; the Highlands and Islands of Scotland Tourist Board, Inverness and District Chamber of Commerce, Inverness City Management Initiative and the University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute.

The City Vision document will be displayed at Inverness Service Point, 23 Church Street, Inverness, from tomorrow (Friday 23 May) or click [here](#) to read it online.

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