

ISSUE DATE: TUESDAY 31 MAY 2005

## **A96 CORRIDOR MASTERPLAN**





A new community, serving a population of 10,000-plus, should be created on the A 96 Inverness – Nairn road at Dalcross South - between Tornagrain and Drumine Farm, near Gollanfield - to meet the long term needs of the growing Inverness city region.

This is the main recommendation of the first phase of the A 96 Corridor Masterplan, which will be considered on Monday 6 June by members of The Highland Council's City of Inverness and Area Committee and the Nairnshire Area Committee at a joint briefing in the Town House, Inverness, by consultants FG Burnett and Council planning officials.

The Masterplan, which sets out a long-term sustainable vision for the A 96 Corridor between Inverness and Nairn, earmarks 250 hectares of land in the ownership of Moray Estates on the south side of the main road as a new settlement which could be created to meet housing needs after 2011.

Access into the site would be opened up by the construction of the £4.1 million Airport Access road, which got underway last week. An 800-metre countryside separation buffer will be maintained with the nearest major community at Croy. However, it would integrate with the existing cluster of houses at Tornagrain. All ground is held by Moray Estates and availability for development has been confirmed.




The report also recommends:-

-  A new community/resort at the site of the former Ardersier Fabrication Yard for approximately 3000 people, subject to the outcome of feasibility studies into transport links, public safety (contamination/flood risk), impact on heritage designations and an agreed masterplan/contributions package.
-  Expansion of existing settlements within the Corridor in accordance with housing allocations contained in the current Inverness and Nairn Local Plans at Ardersier, Croy, Culloden Moor/Sunnyside, Culloden and Nairn, together with various smaller settlements. These will accommodate a further 1200 houses (2500-3000 people).
-  Review of the scope for additional long term development around the southern edge of Nairn and the eastern margins of Inverness, linked explicitly to improvements to the transport network, particularly further dualling of the A96: provision of a Nairn bypass; and an interchange upgrade/bypass for Raigmore/Inshes, Inverness.
-  Corresponding commitment to reinforce the existing Local Plan policy presumption against further development within the Corridor including sporadic housing in the countryside, allied with a strategy to enhance the landscape/heritage features and supplement recreational facilities including the network of cycle/walkways.

Major improvements to services, such as water and drainage, gas and electricity are also essential if development is to take place.

The plan takes forward the Council's policy development, building on the approved Structure Plan, which identifies the need to identify a supply of land for more than 10,000 new dwellings in the Inverness and Nairn areas by the year 2017, as well as the Inverness City Vision, which envisages the A 96 Corridor accommodating up to 30,000 more people over the next 30-40 years.

The report notes that there are already significant developments planned in the A 96 Corridor, such as:-

-  the Airport Business Park, being promoted by a new Joint Venture Company, which is capable of accommodating in excess of 250,000 square metres of new workspace and facilities and generating more than 5,000 jobs;
-  the redevelopment of the former Ardersier oil fabrication yard at Whiteness Head by a private consortium which is preparing the creation of a mixed residential/resort-type development;
-  proposals for a new championship golf course, resort hotel and holiday lodges on ground west of the Airport at Castle Stuart.

As well as existing major development land allocations at Sandown, Nairn, and Stratton/Ashton/Seafield, Inverness, the Council is also aware of developer interest in schemes on the outskirts of both Inverness and Nairn.

Councillors will be asked on Monday to support the A96 Corridor strategy proposals; and to agree a cash limited contribution of £25,000 per year for the next two financial years to progress a second phase of consultancy examining detailed infrastructure needs and funding arrangements.

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