

Issue Date: Wednesday 17 August 2005

## **MASTERPLAN FOR A96 CORRIDOR ONE STEP CLOSER**

At today's Planning and Development Committee (Wednesday 17 August) Members gave their approval for The Highland Council to press ahead with plans to draw up a strategy for the A96 Corridor. The strategy will eventually create a Masterplan for the area from 2011 onwards which will be incorporated into the Development Plan.

Following the decision made today the next stage is for Consultants to carry out an assessment to see if the necessary infrastructure can be put in place and if so, what the financial costs implications would be. The Council will contribute £25,000 per annum over the next two years towards the costs of these investigations.

Director of Planning and Development, John Rennilson said: We are only at the start of a long process where no doors are closed and nothing is written in stone. There will be public consultations and close liaising with Area Committees throughout the process.

"By approving the recommendations today the Council is not making a commitment but it will help members to make an informed decision when the final recommendations are put to them. We must wait to find out the results of this second stage as suitable infrastructure must be in place before details of any developments can be drawn up.

Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Sandy Park said: "I was delighted with the high level of debate we had this morning and lots of very good points were raised. There is a lot more work to be done but I am pleased we now have some sort of plan which we can use to lobby the Scottish Executive for infrastructure improvements such as rail and road."