

Consultation over A96 Corridor (17/08/06)

The A96 Corridor between Inverness and Nairn is recognised as the preferred location for major long term development in both national and local planning policy. Studies undertaken in 2005 produced an overall strategy to guide such growth. This includes the 'polar' option of town expansion areas at East Inverness and South Nairn which would incorporate 'bypass' arrangements for corresponding sections of the A96 trunk road.

Consultants are currently working on these two 'Framework' plans. Various options for the long term expansion of East Inverness and South Nairn together with an overall 'green' framework for the wider Corridor have been prepared by 'stakeholder' groups. Their report will shortly be publicised and communities invited to give their views as to the preferred scale, composition and configuration of long term development in each locality.

The consultation follows a progress update given yesterday (Wednesday 16), during a meeting of The Highland Council's Planning, Development, Europe and Tourism Committee.

Chairman Sandy Park said: "We will be now opening out the consultation to the wider public to find out peoples opinions so that we can go forward to select the preferred option in each case."

The details of the consultation, which starts next week will be publicised in local newspapers shortly. Copies of the Options report can be downloaded from the Council's website and will shortly be available at Service points and other public offices. Local exhibitions will be held to display large scale maps and background information about the proposals. Planning staff will be in attendance to provide assistance where needed. Forms will be available at the Exhibitions with which to record observations and preferences for return to the Director of Planning & Development, John Rennilson, before 25 September 2006

A further report concerning selection of the preferred Framework plans will be brought to the next Area and Headquarter's Committee meetings at the end of September/October.

Other work to progress long term transport and infrastructure requirements for the wider Corridor and consider the scope for phasing and developer contributions will follow. The final report will be presented to the Council in February 2007.

ENDS

- The A96 Corridor covers all of the land between Inverness and the border with Moray and south to the B9006. The Inverness City-Region continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland. During the last 30 years the population has grown by almost 32,000. Over the same period, just over 20,000 houses have been built.

Recent official Government figures show that in the year 2004-05, the Highland population increased by 2,250 persons.