

APPENDIX 1:

Outline of the A96 SPG's Community Engagement Process

The Tornagrain pre-application community engagement process should be understood and evaluated within the context of The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework Interim Planning Guidance.

As highlighted earlier the principle of a new town at Tornagrain is explicitly in the Guidance. It is therefore necessary to outline the processes of public engagement that preceded The Highland Councils adoption of the Framework as Interim Planning Guidance.

This will serve to illustrate that the principle of development at Tornagrain has arisen through an extensive processes of public engagement undertaken by The Highland Council. Furthermore this discussion will set the context for the evaluation of the complimentary Tornagrain pre-application public engagement process.

The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework - Interim Planning Guidance

The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework was adopted by the Highland Council as Interim Planning Guidance in September 2007 following the extensive public engagement process set out below.

In 2004, The Highland Council appointed F G Burnett to identify how best to deliver future growth of Inverness and Nairn area by preparing a masterplan for the A96 Corridor. Preparation of the masterplan comprised three components:

1. Stakeholder engagement - "Collaboration for Success" with:
 - a. CfS1 - Government and Regulatory stakeholders (22nd June 2004)
 - b. CfS1 - Business/developer/landowner stakeholders (23rd June 2004)
 - c. CfS2 – All Stakeholders (20 September 2004)
2. Technical capacity assessment relating to infrastructure, landscape, transport, land use and urban design.
3. Community consultation – with community councils and an appropriate sample of local people through focus groups:

- a. General Public Focus Groups (Inverness Airport conference facility)
 - i. Afternoon 24th November
 - ii. Evening 24th November
 - iii. Afternoon 25th November
 - iv. Evening 25th November
- b. Community Councils Consultative Conference (THC HQ)
 - i. Afternoon 27th November

Reports presenting the outcomes of each of stage were prepared for each stage. The process concluded with the production of a 'stage 1 masterplan' which identified two 'preferred development option':

- Dalcross North: a new settlement in the middle of the corridor straddling the A96, adjacent to the airport.
- Dalcross South: a new settlement south of the A96, adjacent to the airport

In June 2005 the Nairn and Inverness Area Committees considered the conclusions and agreed to proceed to Stage 2 of the Masterplan.

In August 2005 The Highland Council considered the conclusions and preferred development option of the stage 1 masterplan. The council undertook to investigate A96 corridor strategic development options further, most notably "polar growth", and appointed Halcrow to undertake the additional work including the production of development frameworks for east Inverness and Nairn and preparation of a 'green framework' for the corridor as a whole .

The interim findings of this work were presented to the Council in August 2006. The interim findings, particularly with regard to the green framework and protocol for delivery of infrastructure in the A96, continued to identify a new settlement at Tornagrain as a sustainable and necessary development option within the A96 corridor.

The Council accepted the interim findings and agreed to consult the public on that basis. The interim reports were advertised and placed on deposit. In addition to this several public exhibitions were held, leaflets were distributed and there was further publicity and press. The deadline for consultation responses was 25 September.

The findings of public consultation process were presented to The Highland Council in November 2006. The Council accepted the findings and agreed to undertake the final feasibility work and program of investigations necessary to finalise the A96 corridor masterplan.

Accordingly the outstanding reports were prepared and presented to the Council in January 2007. A new settlement at Tornagrain continued to be an integral part of the A96 masterplan. The final stage investigations and feasibility work that informed the finalisation of the masterplan were prepared on that basis.

The Council accepted the finding and agreed to consult the public on the final A96 Masterplan. The Masterplan was advertised and placed on deposit. In addition to this several public exhibitions were held, leaflets were distributed and there was further publicity and press. The deadline for consultation responses was 5th March.

The findings of public consultation process were presented to The Highland Council in March 2007. The Officers report and verbal presentation highlighted that approximately 150 public consultation responses had been received. A number of these responses expressed concerns about Tornagrain particularly whether there was a need for a new settlement accommodating 10,000 people; the suitability of the site in view of the probable noise from the airport; the effect on Norbord; and the effect on badgers. The Officer highlighted that the proposal for a settlement at the centre of the corridor had been central to the A96 Strategy from the outset and that significant infrastructure was required at the centre of the corridor to support the proposed business park and airport expansion which Tornagrain would help deliver. The A96 Corridor Masterplan and Developer Contribution Protocol was approved as interim guidance awaiting completion of outstanding matters in the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The A96 Growth Development Framework together with its finalised Strategic Environmental Assessment was approved by The Highland Council in September 2007. The guidance specifically identifies a new settlement at Tornagrain which will deliver 4500 units in the period 2011 to 2041:

“Tornagrain is a new settlement proposal designed on new urbanism principles that are entirely consistent with the Smart Growth approach adopted for the A96 Corridor. This proposal will provide 4,500 homes accommodating around 9,500 people. The

Tornagrain proposal will be fully integrated in the preparation of Statutory Development Plan which will cover this area, and which will formally be in place by 2011”

The Framework has therefore undergone a comprehensive process of public engagement which identified the principle of a new settlement at Tornagrain throughout. As such the principle of Tornagrain complies with the outcomes and conclusions of this extensive process of public engagement.

A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework Production & Public Consultation Process

