

# Tornagrain

A Planned Town for the Highlands

## Planning Statement



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# Introduction

## Purpose

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Moray Estates Development Company Limited (MEDCO), in support of their application to The Highland Council (THC) for Outline Planning Permission for a mixed use development to provide a settlement of up to 4,960 dwellings, together with the associated facilities, amenities, services and infrastructure, on a 259 hectare site at Tornagrain, and adjacent to the A96 broadly midway between Inverness and Nairn.

This Statement should not be read in isolation, but together with the other planning application productions which include the application form, drawings, Indicative Layout, Landscape Framework, Design Statement, Design Code, Environmental Statement, Construction Environmental Management Plan, Access Management Plan, Sustainability Statement (within the Environmental Statement), Energy Strategy and Pre Application Community Engagement Statement.

## Planning Context and Background

The site lies within the A96 Corridor, which is identified in The Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 2 (Proposed Framework) December 2008, as an Area of Co-Ordinated Action. It identifies the corridor, between Nairn and Inverness, as the main focus for growth in the Inner Moray Firth, including the creation of a new settlement at Tornagrain.

The Development Plan comprises The Highland Structure Plan 2001 and the Inverness Local Plan 2006. The application site is identified for a new settlement in The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework, which was approved by THC in September 2007. Production and approval of the A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework involved extensive community and stakeholder engagement.

As the site is allocated for a new settlement in the approved A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework, this Planning Statement will primarily concentrate on the details of the outline proposal within this context and taking account of the salient national and local planning policies.

This Statement will also pay due regard to the Developer Contributions Protocol, contained within the Framework, for the delivery of the requisite infrastructure to serve development in the A96 Corridor in general and for the site in particular.

The application site lies to the immediate south of land which is the subject of an Outline Planning Application (08/00215/OUTIN submitted March 2008), for the Inverness Airport Business Park (IABP). A co-ordinated approach has been taken to demonstrate how the new settlement at Tornagrain could be fully integrated with the business park. This statement also has regard to the approved masterplan for Inverness Airport produced by Highland and Islands Airports Ltd in August 2007 as required under Department of Transport guidelines.

Construction is underway of the Castle Stuart Golf Links development, which includes an hotel, spa, hotel apartments, fractional ownership units, and two golf courses.

Finally, outline Planning Permission 05/01294/OUTIN was granted on 2nd November, 2007, for a residential development of 1,950 units, including a hotel, marina and associated facilities, and sewage treatment plant, at the former Fabrication Yard, Whiteness Head, by Ardersier.

## Process

The form and content of the Planning Statement is twofold. First, it provides context to the proposal by identifying the need for the proposed scheme, and describing the site and the development. The second part of the Statement identifies the proposed planning policy issues and assesses the scheme against the aims and objectives of the requisite national, strategic and local planning policies, guidelines and standards.

## Pre-Application Community Engagement

A new settlement at Tornagrain was first proposed by THC in December 2004. During the various iterations of the strategy, Tornagrain was retained as a proposal. In September 2006, MEDCO held its first major consultative event – a Charrette led by Andres Duany of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ) – in Inverness to develop a Masterplan for the site. This is described in more detail below.

An important element of the Charrette process is public and community engagement. To encourage discussion about the planning and development issues in the area, Duany was invited to present a lecture at the University of the Highlands and Islands, Inverness in June 2006. The lecture explained the shortcomings of the nature of urban design and planning in the post war era. At that lecture, he also provided an outline of DPZ's design principles and the Charrette process.

The Pre-Charrette brochure in August 2006 informed the local community of the background, context, purpose and programme the proposed Charrette. The paper invited their attendance to contribute to, or air concerns about the proposal to create a new town at Tornagrain. The paper explained the workshop based process and the underlying principles of new or traditional urbanism. Copies of the paper were delivered to the vast majority of homes in the A96 Corridor.

The Charrette took place between 5th and 14th September 2006. It brought together the local community and a multi-disciplinary professional project team, to work in partnership in creating a masterplan for the site. The design team also included Scottish and UK designers and expert consultants in the fields of landscape design, traffic, transport, environment, ecology, engineering and socio-economics.

The post-Charrette paper issued in February 2007, published the output of the Charrette, a summary of the main issues arising from the Charrette an explanation of the evolution of design of the illustrative masterplan and an update on THC's progress with its A96 Corridor Strategy.

A website ([www.tornagrain-newtown.co.uk](http://www.tornagrain-newtown.co.uk)) was also established to inform and update the local (and wider) community on the context and progress of the design of a masterplan. Initially, it provided a summary of the progress of THC's Development Framework for the A96 Corridor, the background, principles and vision of the new settlement, the operation of the Charrette and the output from that process. The website also provided contacts for enquiries and further information.

During the process of the Charrette, THC continued to pursue its Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for the economic growth of the A96 Corridor as noted earlier, the A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework was ultimately approved on 26th September 2007.

In accordance with the emerging SPG, in the summer of 2007 MEDCO announced their intention to submit a planning application for the creation of a new town at Tornagrain. Prior to this submission, MEDCO determined to hold three exhibitions to explain their proposal.

A first exhibition was held on the 7th and 8th November 2007 and invited further contributions from the community in respect of the development of the masterplan. It provided information on progress since the conclusion of the Charrette, the context of The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007, and the conclusions of the baseline studies of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The

exhibition also detailed the baseline conclusions on land, landscape and visual amenity, ecology, cultural heritage, geology, hydrology, noise, air quality, transport and socio-economics. It also provided a strategy for sustainable design, energy and utilities, and an outline of the programme for further pre-application community consultation.

A second exhibition took place on 10th and 11th March 2008, providing further information on the progression of the indicative layout and revisions, arising from the findings of the environmental assessment and baseline studies.

A final third pre-application exhibition took place on the 15th and 16th September 2008, providing details of the conclusions to the environmental assessment and the final proposal, including the masterplan which would be submitted for outline planning permission.

The content of all exhibitions was produced in a brochure format. This included a pre-paid comment form to encourage community comment.

Alongside the general public consultation, MEDCO also held a series of meetings for local representatives, known as the Community Consultative Forum (CCF), as well as a separate forum for Tornagrain residents. These bodies were constituted to encourage engagement with the local community.

## Pre-Application Consultations

The planning application has followed more than 15 months of pre-application consultation with THC and statutory consultees. Pre-application consultations have been undertaken with members of THC's Directorates of Planning, Transport, Environmental Health, Education, Housing and Social Services. Meetings have also been held with Transport Scotland and Scottish Water.

The application has also been the subject of a pre-application Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) exercise, which resulted in The Highland Council's release of its Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion in January 2008. This formed the basis for the assessments contained in the accompanying Environmental Statement.

The Opinion resulted from the Council's consultation with its Roads, Environmental Health, Landscape and Archaeology Officers; together with The Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, the Health and Safety Executive, Scottish Water, National Air Traffic Control Services, Network Rail, Historic Scotland and The Forestry Commission.

# The Site

## Location

The application site (Figure 1) lies primarily to the south of the A96 Trunk road, mid-way between Inverness and Nairn, and 1.5km south of the Inverness Airport Passenger Terminal at Dalcross. The site also extends marginally to the north of the A96, into the IABP site, to facilitate any interface with the IABP as may be appropriate.

The village of Ardersier lies 3.2km to the north east, and the former Whiteness Fabrication Yard (which has outline planning permission for a residential/marina scheme) lies a further 3.2km beyond. Castle Stuart Golf Links and the Norbord factory lie approximately 3.2km and 1.6km away (respectively) to the north west.

The application site extends along the A96 in a north-easterly direction, from the 20 or so dwellings which comprise the existing settlement of Tornagrain (and Petty Church) to the western edge of Drumine steading buildings, a distance of some 3km. The site varies in width between 500-1,000m for most of this length, reaching 1,400m at its widest point, approximately 1.5 km to the north of the village of Croy.

## Description

The application site (Figure 2) extends to some 259 hectares of gently undulating agricultural land with fringes of commercial forestry (Figure 3). Much of the western part of the site is concealed from the A96 by the southern part of Tornagrain Wood, a commercial plantation scheduled for felling, in phases, over the next ten years or so.

The site rises from 12m above sea level (by the A96) up to 60m asl; and views from the A96 of the new settlement will be set against a woodland background which rises another 40m, at High Wood and the woodland on the east side of the Mid Coul/Croy Road.

The south west boundary of the site follows the Tornagrain/Dalcross minor road. The Croy road, which connects the Airport junction with Croy, cuts through the centre of the site. The site contains dwellings at Mid Coul, Hillhead and Culaird.

Hillhead Quarry, which lies in the southern part of the site, has been the subject of sand and gravel extraction. However, there has been little extraction, other than for estate maintenance purposes, in recent years; the last commercial extraction having contributed to the construction of the new airport access road in 2005.

## Access

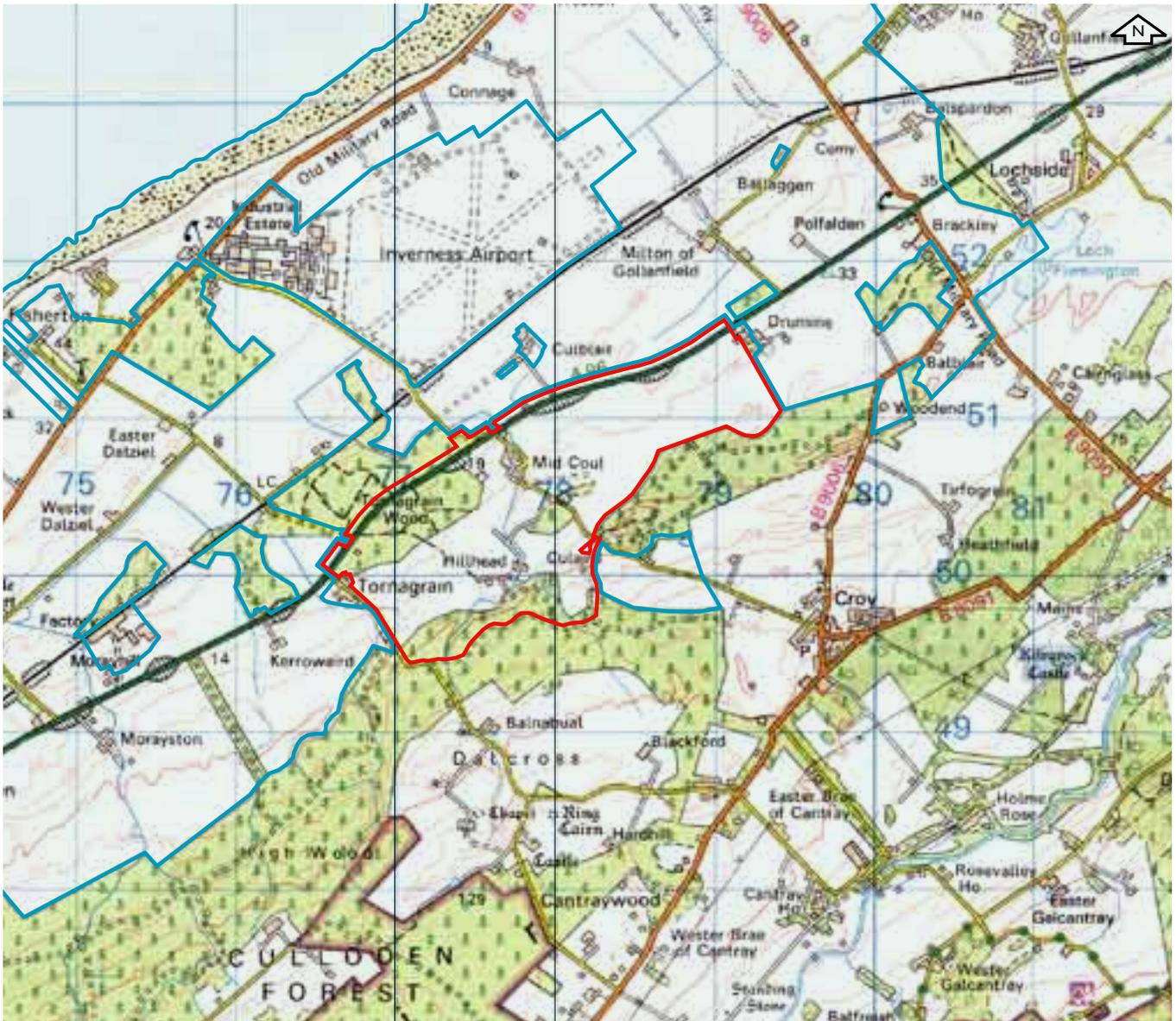
Accessibility to the site by air and road is good due to its close proximity to Inverness Airport, the A96(T) and the site of the proposed rail halt / park-and-ride, to the north on the main Inverness/Aberdeen railway. Planning permission was granted for the rail halt in February 2008. There are also existing bus services which pass along the A96.

The site has two public road access points to the public highway; from the A96 to the existing Tornagrain settlement, and through the centre of the site to Croy.

## Ownership

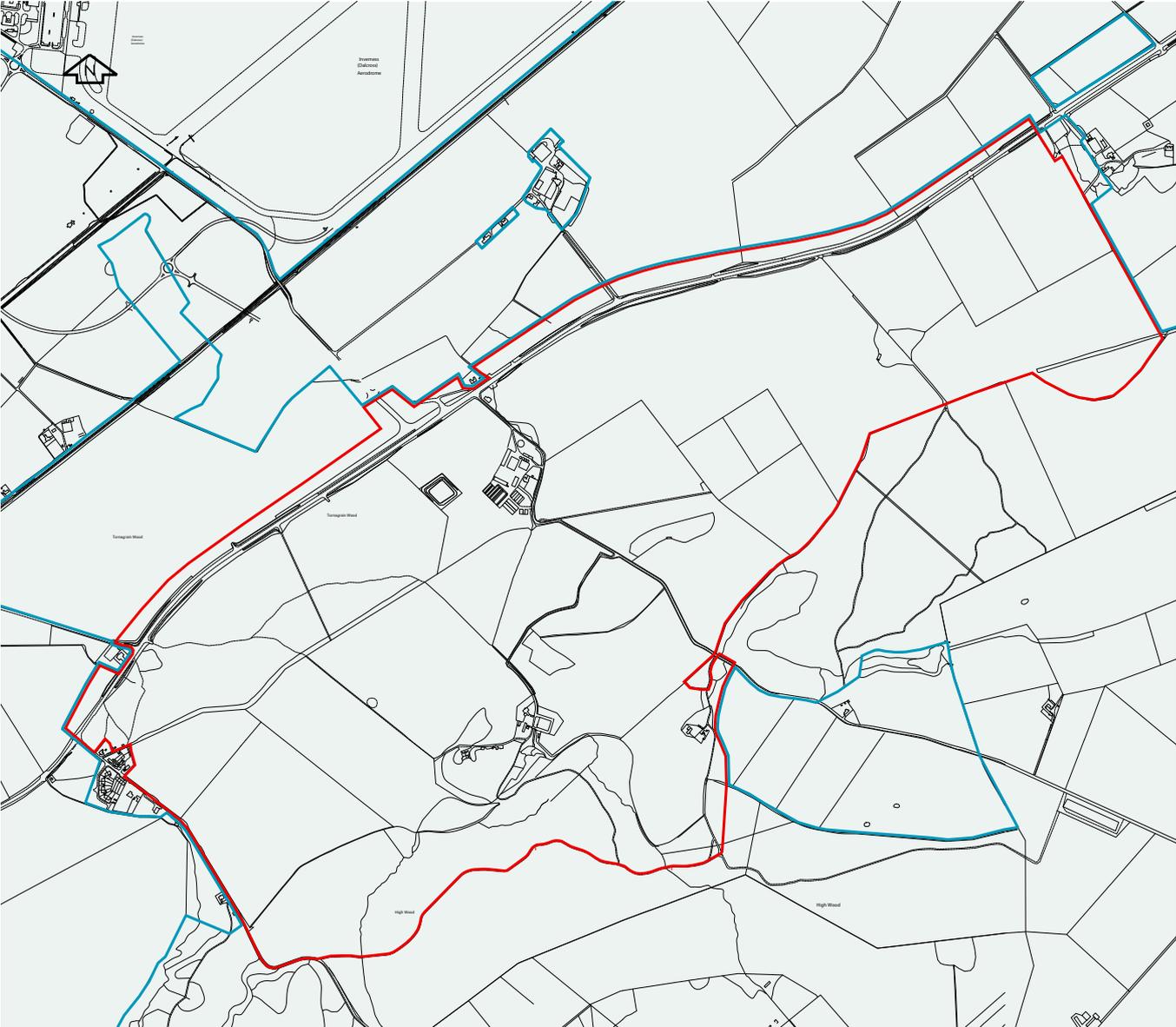
The application site is owned by the applicant, Moray Estates Development Company Limited, Lord Doune and Lord Doune's Accumulation and Maintenance Trust 2005. The site also contains trunk and unclassified public roads, an MOD Oil Pipeline (kerosene /aviation fuel), a high pressure gas main and power cables.

Figure 1: Location Plan



-  Application Site
-  Other Land in Applicants Ownership

Figure 2: Site Plan



- Application Site
- Other Land in Applicants Ownership

Figure 3: Aerial Site Plan



 Application Site

# The Proposal

## Summary

Outline Planning Permission is sought for the following development:-

**New Town comprising up to 4,960 Housing Units and supporting Community Facilities (18,222m<sup>2</sup>), Retail (20,000m<sup>2</sup>), Business (7,000m<sup>2</sup>), General Industry (1,000m<sup>2</sup>), Storage and Distribution (1,000m<sup>2</sup>), Hotels (4,000m<sup>2</sup>), Residential Institutions (5,000m<sup>2</sup>), Leisure (3,000m<sup>2</sup>), Petrol Stations (1,500m<sup>2</sup>) and associated Landscaping, Open Space, Infrastructure and associated Services.**

## The Masterplan

In accordance with guidance set out in PAN 83 the Tornagrain masterplan clearly sets out how the site will be developed by specifying the following development parameters:

- built form
- land uses
- phasing
- landscaping
- open space
- urban design principles

Further details for each of the development parameters are set out below (and in the productions accompanying this planning application). The Environmental Statement that accompanies this Outline Planning Application has assessed the masterplan development parameters.

Notwithstanding the elements that are proposed as fixed, in light of the complexities and timescales of this scheme, a degree of flexibility should not be precluded. Flexibility and variations to the masterplan will necessarily be considered through subsequent detailed planning applications. However any future detailed planning applications will necessarily have regard to the masterplan which is the subject of this planning application. It is therefore envisaged that there will be a presumption in favour of the masterplan, particularly where any subsequent planning applications would materially alter or negatively impact on the integrity of this vision. It is envisaged that this will be enacted through condition and/or accompanying Section 75 agreement.

## Site Selection and Design Background

Tornagrain was identified by THC as suitable for accommodating some of the growth of the Inverness area in the form of a new town, within The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework, approved in September 2007.

The site is ideally positioned for a new settlement as it:

- Has very good transport links, being close to the A96 and the Aberdeen-Inverness railway line, for which planning permission has recently been granted for a new station and park and ride facility.
- Is adjacent to the significant employment opportunity at Inverness Airport Business Park, allocated in the Inverness Area Local Plan 2006. In addition, it is also well placed to serve growing employment opportunities at Inverness Airport.
- It is within a controlled collective ownership which will assist implementation and the scope for the implementation of exemplar design and sustainable technologies.
- It is also centrally located in the growth area identified by THC and accepted by the Scottish Government.

The current proposal is the culmination of four years of research by the applicant and members of the project team, including international case studies from the USA, Holland, Denmark, Germany and Italy, as well as within a UK, Scottish and Highland context. These studies examined old and new communities to identify their relative merits.

The case studies informed the subsequent appointment of DPZ, and the emergence of an indicative layout and urban design guidance, developed by community engagement through the Charrette process.

## The Vision

The vision for Tornagrain set by the Estate is to provide a new sustainable community which will provide the highest quality of life for residents, and will:

- be compact and built for pedestrians rather than cars;
- be big enough to provide a sustainable community by accommodating a range of community and leisure facilities and local shops;
- contain a wide, but integrated, range of homes for different household sizes and incomes;
- have good public transport, walking and cycling connections to Inverness, Nairn, and the IABP;
- provide good employment opportunities and have good links to major local employment centres;
- complement the nearby countryside including existing buildings, features and views;
- incorporate features that will minimise impact on the environment and services such as roads, water and sewerage;
- provide an example of urban design and architectural excellence and innovation in the Highlands;
- encourage community involvement in civic life and promote a sense of pride and civic responsibility; and
- grow in a planned way so that all these objectives are met at each stage as it develops.

## Use Mix and Distribution

Tornagrain is a mixed use development and Table 1 sets out the proposed extent of the development (gross external floor areas) by Use Class, including details of more specific sub-classes, where relevant. Figure 4 provides a masterplan drawing, for outline approval which shows how it is proposed to distribute these uses within the site.

The Masterplan illustrates how the uses are distributed between the key character areas; the town centre, the commercial interface with the A96 (and IABP site), neighbourhood centres and the wider residential areas.

There are nine dwellings existing on the site, of which it is proposed to retain eight. Mid Coul Farm House, Mid Coul Farm Steading, Hillhead Farm House, Hillhead Farm Steading, 1-3 Hillhead Farm Cottages and Culaird will be retained. 1 Mid Coul Cottages, and the modern farm buildings at Mid Coul will be demolished. These buildings are identified in Figure 5.

The scheme provides the opportunity for the A96 Trunk Road, where it passes the site, to be diverted northwards. The anticipated route of this, together with its intersections, has been illustrated on some of the application drawings. However, the nature of any diversion is a matter for Transport Scotland. Planning permission is not sought for this scheme as part of this proposal.

In recognition of the 2008 planning permission for a new rail halt and park and ride at Dalcross, the Local Plan's allocation of the land to the north for Inverness Airport Business Park, and the 2008 planning application for the same, the Tornagrain proposal includes a strip of land along its northern boundary which has been provided, in the interests of a co-ordinated and strategic planning approach, to provide optimum integration and linkages between the new town and the rail halt and IABP. However, there are no proposals within the Tornagrain planning application for the land included in IABP. The former is independent of the latter, and should be determined on its own merits.

Table 1: Proposed Extent of Development by Use Class

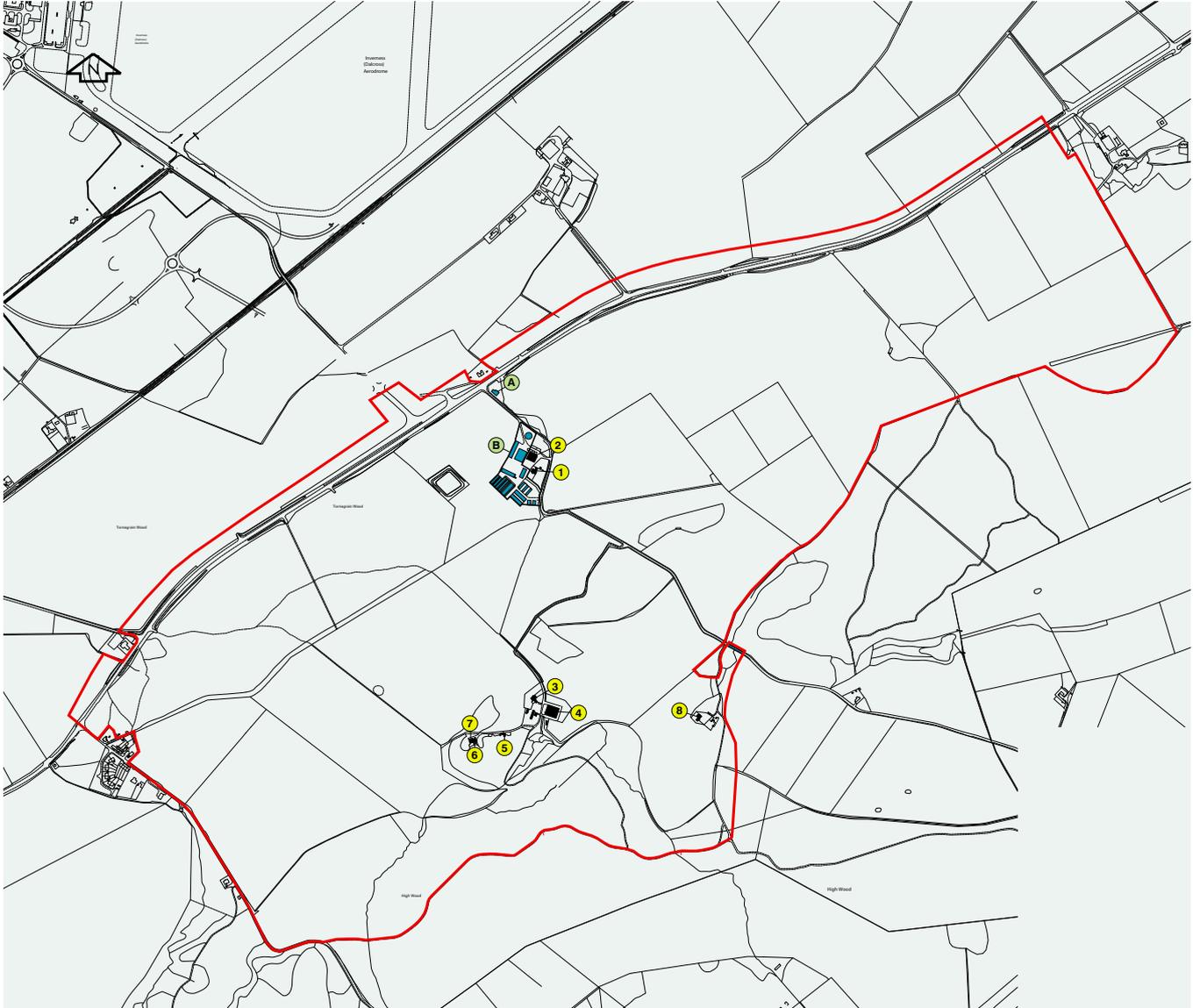
Class	Use	Sub-Group %	Mean GFA m <sup>2</sup>	GFA m <sup>2</sup> (units)
1-3	Retail			20,000
		Shops		12,800
		Finance/Professional		1,200
		Food & Drink		6,000
4	Business			7,000
5	General Industrial			1,000
6	Storage & Distribution			1,000
7	Hotels			4,000
8	Residential Institutions			5,000
9	Residential			578,088 (4,960)
		Detached (25)	155	192,200 (1,240)
		Semi (17)	140	118,048 (843)
		Terrace (30)	110	163,680 (1,488)
		Flat (28)	75	104,160 (1,389)
10	Non-Residential Institutions			18,222
		Primary Schools		6750
		Secondary School		8522
		Community Hall		700
		Place of Worship		250
		Libraries		400
		Adult Education		600
		Healthcare		400
		Emergency Services		600
11	Assembly & Leisure			3,000
	Sui Gen			1,500
		Petrol Filling Station (2)	750	
			Total	638,810

Figure 4: Distribution of Uses Drawing



<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Residential</b>	4960 Units	<span style="color: #FFDAB9;">■</span> <b>Neighbourhood Centre 1</b>	2,000 sq m	<span style="color: #800080;">■</span> <b>Commercial Centre</b>	10,350 sq m
<span style="color: #90EE90;">■</span> <b>Open Space</b>	79.4 ha	Class 1-3 1,500 sq m		Class 1-3 3,250 sq m	
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Class 1-3</b>	20,000 sq m	Class 4 500 sq m		Class 4 3,600 sq m	
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Class 4</b>	7,000 sq m	<span style="color: #FFA07A;">■</span> <b>Neighbourhood Centre 2</b>	4,000 sq m	Class 5 1,000 sq m	
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Class 5</b>	1,000 sq m	Class 1-3 3,000 sq m		Class 6 1,000 sq m	
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Class 6</b>	1,000 sq m	Class 4 1,000 sq m		Sui 1,500 sq m	
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Class 7</b>	4,000 sq m	<span style="color: #FF0000;">■</span> <b>Neighbourhood Centre 3</b>	3,000 sq m	<span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> <b>Town Centre</b>	21,100 sq m
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Class 8</b>	5,000 sq m	Class 1-3 2,250 sq m		Class 1-3 10,000 sq m	
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Class 10</b>	18,222 sq m	Class 4 750 sq m		Class 4 1,150 sq m	
<span style="color: #483D8B;">■</span> <i>Including schools</i>	15,272 sq m			Class 7 4,000 sq m	
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Class 11</b>	3,000 sq m			Class 10 2,950 sq m	
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> <b>Sui Generis</b>	1,500 sq m			Class 11 3,000 sq m	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60,722 sq m</b>				

Figure 5: Plan of Buildings Retained/Demolished



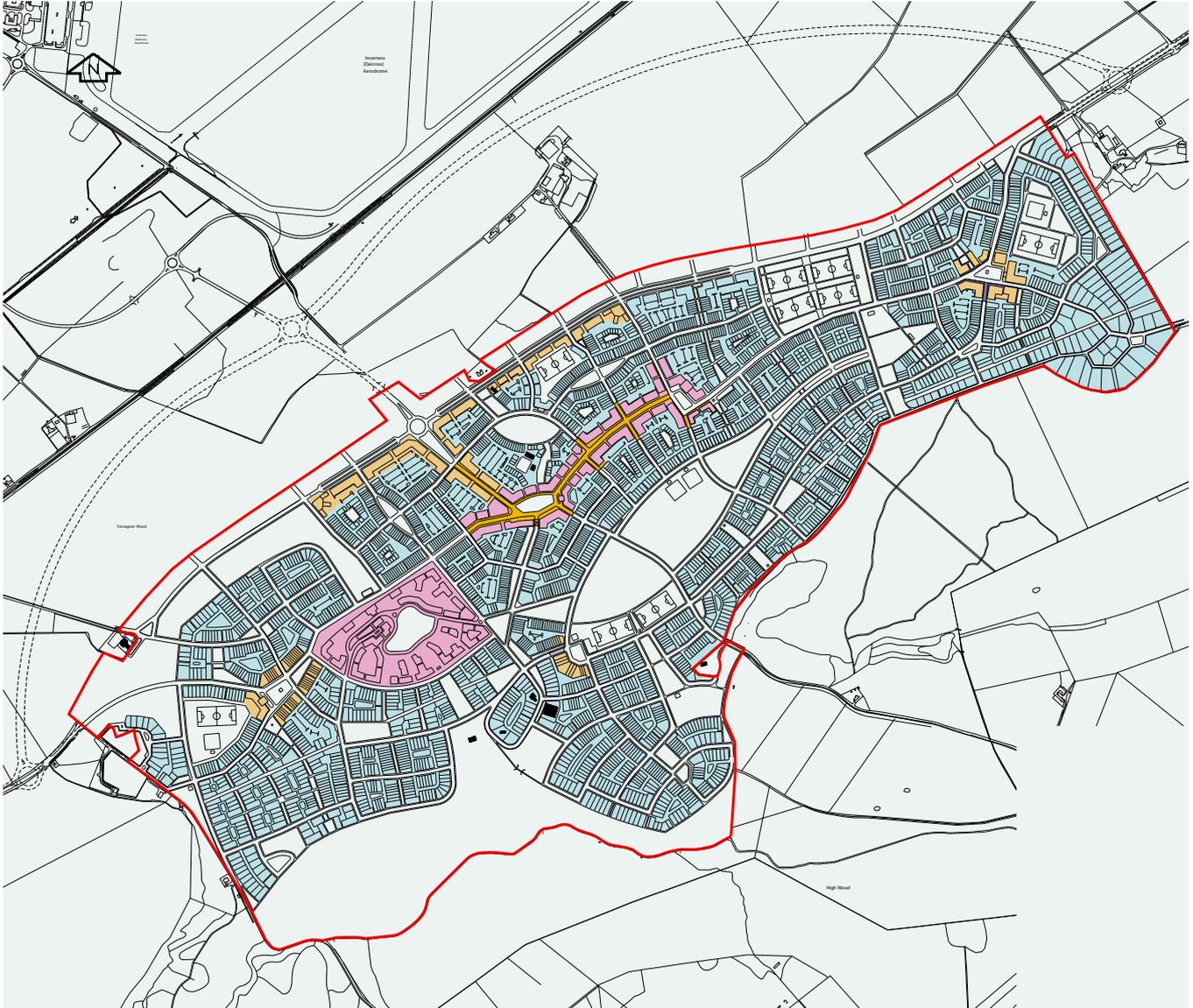
**Demolished**

- Ⓐ 1 Mid Coul Cottages
- Ⓑ Mid Coul Farm (Buildings)

**Retained**

- ① Mid Coul Farm House
- ② Mid Coul Steading
- ③ Hillhead Farm House
- ④ Hillhead Steading
- ⑤ 1 Hillhead Cottages
- ⑥ 2 Hillhead Cottages
- ⑦ 3 Hillhead Cottages
- ⑧ Culaird

Figure 6: Bulk and Massing Drawing



- Five Storey Maximum
- Four Storey Maximum
- Three Storey Maximum

## Bulk and Massing

The Landscape Framework has also shaped the distribution of building mass across the site. This is illustrated in Figure 6. The majority of the site consists of residential neighbourhoods where heights other than in certain circumstances should be of no more than three storeys.

The commercial zone which follows the A96 could be up to four storeys to reflect the uses, character and scale of the anticipated buildings on the opposite side of the trunk road. This will ensure a consistent and complementary street scene for views from the A96, avoid a conflict of uses, and deliver a co-ordinated approach to the interface with the future development of IABP.

The town centre / main thoroughfare will contain mixed uses and, in-keeping with the vernacular characteristics of neighbouring town High Streets, see building heights extend higher than the neighbouring residential areas. While it is not anticipated that these will, in the main, extend above four storeys, there will be occasions (e.g. civic or ecclesiastical buildings) when these may extend to five storeys. This random and occasional interruption of the high street's skyline, by such punctuation, will add interest, make a significant design contribution to the roofscape and evening silhouette (particularly as viewed from the A96), promote a sense of character/identity of the settlement and community identity and civic recognition.

## Phasing

Given the scale and long timeline for completion of a settlement at Tornagrain, a phasing drawing is provided in Figure 7.

For ease of comparison with the phasing envisaged in The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework, a table is provided below (Table 2) which details the proposed phasing of completion of the dwelling units. Tables 3 and 4 provide tables of the requisite phasing of the supporting and associated facilities, services, and other non-residential development, and their spatial distribution, within the core zones. More specific details of the phasing of civic buildings is provided in Table 5. Table 6 provides the phasing of open space provision.

Table 2: Housing Phasing (and TAGCDF\* Comparisons)

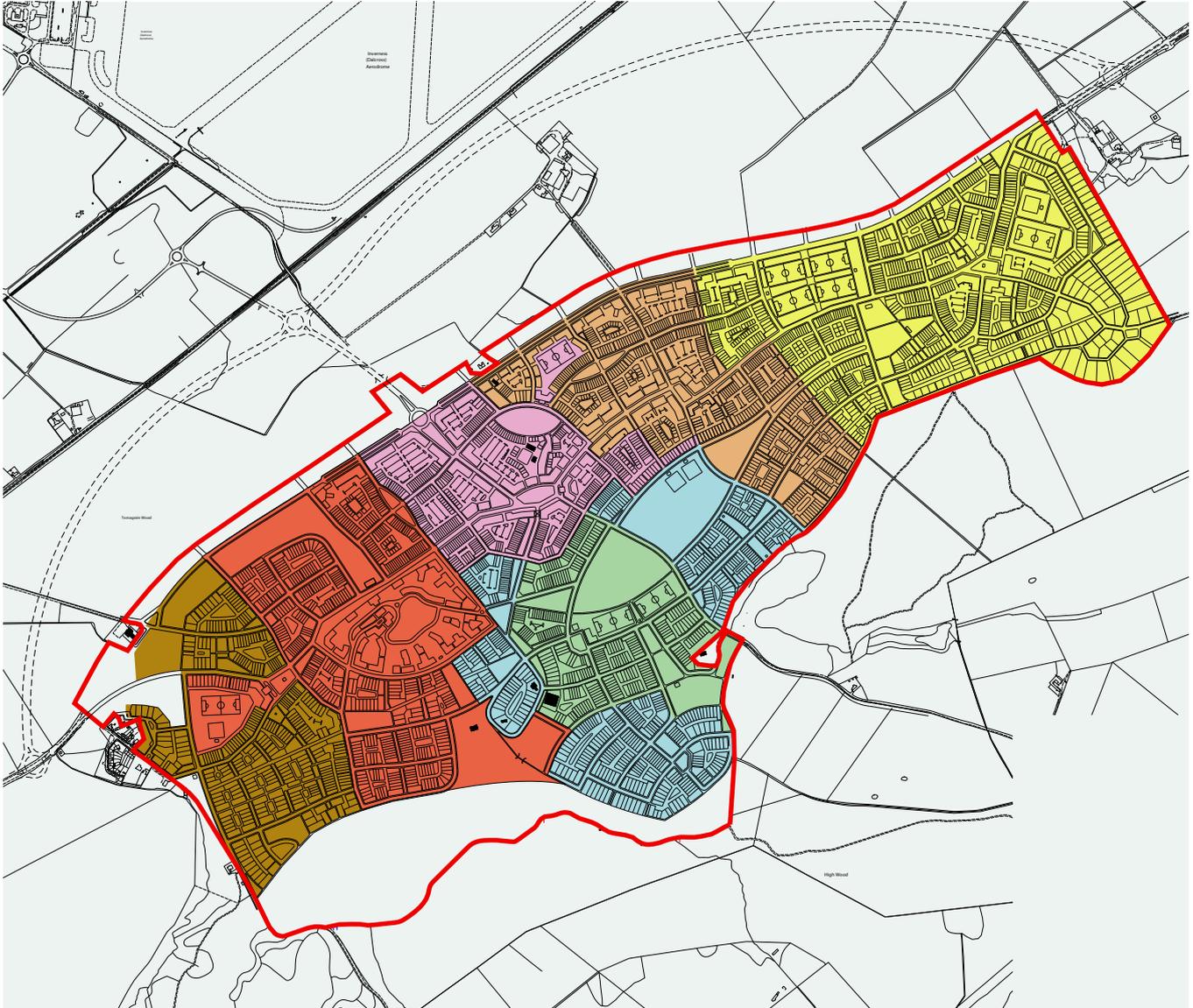
Phase (Years)	Proposal (TAGCDF*)	Total (TAGCDF*)
1 (2011–16)	344 (350)	344 (350)
2 (2016–21)	507 (500)	851 (850)
3 (2021–26)	780 (750)	1631 (1600)
4 (2026–31)	885 (900)	2516 (2500)
5 (2031–36)	960 (950)	3476 (3450)
6 (2036–41)	1100 (1000)	4576 (4450)
7 (2042–46)	384	4960

\*The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework

The housing table demonstrates how the phased completion of the housing is consistent with the Development Framework's phasing programme with a 2.8% deviation from the Framework's allocations to 2041. However, in the interests of a co-ordinated planning approach to the settlement over a longer time horizon, the masterplanning exercise has delivered a planning application proposal to ensure appropriate integration of an additional 8.4% of units for development beyond 2041. It should be noted that any phasing of a scheme of this scale can only be indicative.

It is only proposed to develop 69% of the application site, so as to optimise the contribution from both formal and informal open space. The proposed phasing of the non-residential elements of the development has been designed to allow the requisite mixed uses and open space to develop in parallel with the provision of housing, to ensure the effective delivery of a sustainable community. This will see supporting services and open space being completed (as the critical mass permits) in the interests of providing the future community, with the best environment, services and quality of life, whilst promoting a cohesive civic identity from the start of the settlement.

Figure 7: Phasing Plan



	Proposed		THC Requirement	
		cumulative		cumulative
Phase 1 2011–16	344		350	
Phase 2 2016–21	507	851	500	850
Phase 3 2021–26	780	1631	750	1600
Phase 4 2026–31	885	2516	900	2500
Phase 5 2031–36	960	3476	950	3450
Phase 6 2036–41	1100	4576	1000	4450
Phase 7	384	4960		

Table 3: Non Residential Floor Space Phasing

	Class 1-3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6	Class 7	Class 8	Class 10	Class 11	Sui Gen	Total
Phase 1	1500	500					1418			3418
Phase 2						1000				1000
Phase 3	9000	2500	500	500	2500	1000	2131			18131
Phase 4	4500	1750	300	300	1500	1000	10759		750	20859
Phase 5	500	750	200	200		1000			750	3400
Phase 6	2750	1000				1000	2496	3000		10246
Phase 7	1750	500					1418			3668
<b>Total</b>	<b>20000</b>	<b>7000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>4000</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>18222</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>60722</b>

Table 4: Non Residential Floorspace Spatial Distribution

	Class 1-3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6	Class 7	Class 8	Class 10	Class 11	Sui Gen	Total
	Retail	Business	General Industry	Storage & Distribution	Hotels	Residential Institutions	Non-residential Institutions	Assembly & Leisure		
Town	11000	1500			4000		12290			28790
Commercial	3000	3500	1000	1000			600		1500	10600
NBH1	1500	500					1418			3418
NBH2	2750	1000					2496			6246
NBH3	1750	500					1418			3668
Residential area						5000		3000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>20000</b>	<b>7000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>4000</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>18222</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>60722</b>

Table 5: Community Facilities Phasing

Facility	Total Floor Space	Phase						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Primary School	4254	1418			1418		2496	1418
Secondary School	8522				8522			
Emergency Services	600			600				
Health Centre	400				400			
Community Hall/ Place of Worship	650			650				
Additional Facility (Indicative)	Facility Floorspace (Indicative)							
Library	600							
Adult Education	700							
Additional Proposed Floorspace	1300			881	419			
<b>Total</b>	<b>18222</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2131</b>	<b>10759</b>		<b>2496</b>	<b>1418</b>

Table 6: Open Space Phasing

	Units	(Cumulative)	Play Area					Playing Field	Allotment	Residual Open Space	Total Open Space
			NEAP		LEAP		Total	Total			
			no.	area	no.	area	area	area			
Phase 1	345	345	2	1.7	1	0.36	2.06	2.44	0.7	5.7	10.90
Phase 2	506	851	0	0	2	0.72	0.72	0	0	6.76	7.48
Phase 3	780	1631	2	1.7	0	0	1.7	0.83	0	0.61	3.14
Phase 4	885	2516	2	1.7	1	0.36	2.06	0	0	1.17	3.23
Phase 5	960	3476	3	2.55	2	0.72	3.27	0	0	8.26	11.53
Phase 6	1100	4576	2	1.7	3	1.08	2.78	7.01	0.8	0.14	10.73
Phase 7	384	4960	2	1.7	1	0.36	2.06	2.59	0	27.74	32.39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4960</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>11.05</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>14.65</b>	<b>12.87</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>50.38</b>	<b>79.40</b>

## Housing

A variety of housing size, type and tenure, will provide choice for all household requirements and expectations, including 25% affordable housing. The Class 8 residential institutions (e.g. nursing homes), identified in Table 1, will be distributed within the residential areas.

The aim is for all housing to be of high quality, incorporating best practice in sustainable design and construction.

The thoroughfare network is designed to ensure good pedestrian accessibility to the principal facilities in the town centre, the local neighbourhood centres, sports and recreational facilities and open space. A network of pathways and green corridors will promote pedestrian permeability throughout the new town and enhance the environment for pedestrian and cycle movement.

## Landscape Framework

The design for Tornagrain has been guided by SNH's Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Assessment, the details of which have been explained and illustrated in the Landscape Framework document which accompanies the planning application. This has also been assessed in detail in the Environmental Statement Technical Annexe No. 6 (Landscape and Visual Amenity).

The proposed landscape strategy for the site has been informed by the existing commercial woodland plantations which surround the site and the Estate's approved woodland felling programme. These commercial woodlands are primarily located within the north western part of the site and then beyond the site, to the south. New planting will be provided, together with open space to enhance the landscape setting of the settlement and the urban landscape's internal open spaces and green corridors.

The restructuring will improve the species mix, by creating woodlands of mixed hardwoods and conifers.

## Town Centre, Commerce and Neighbourhoods

The Masterplan defines the locations of the main commercial centre, high street and neighbourhood centres, within the wider scheme.

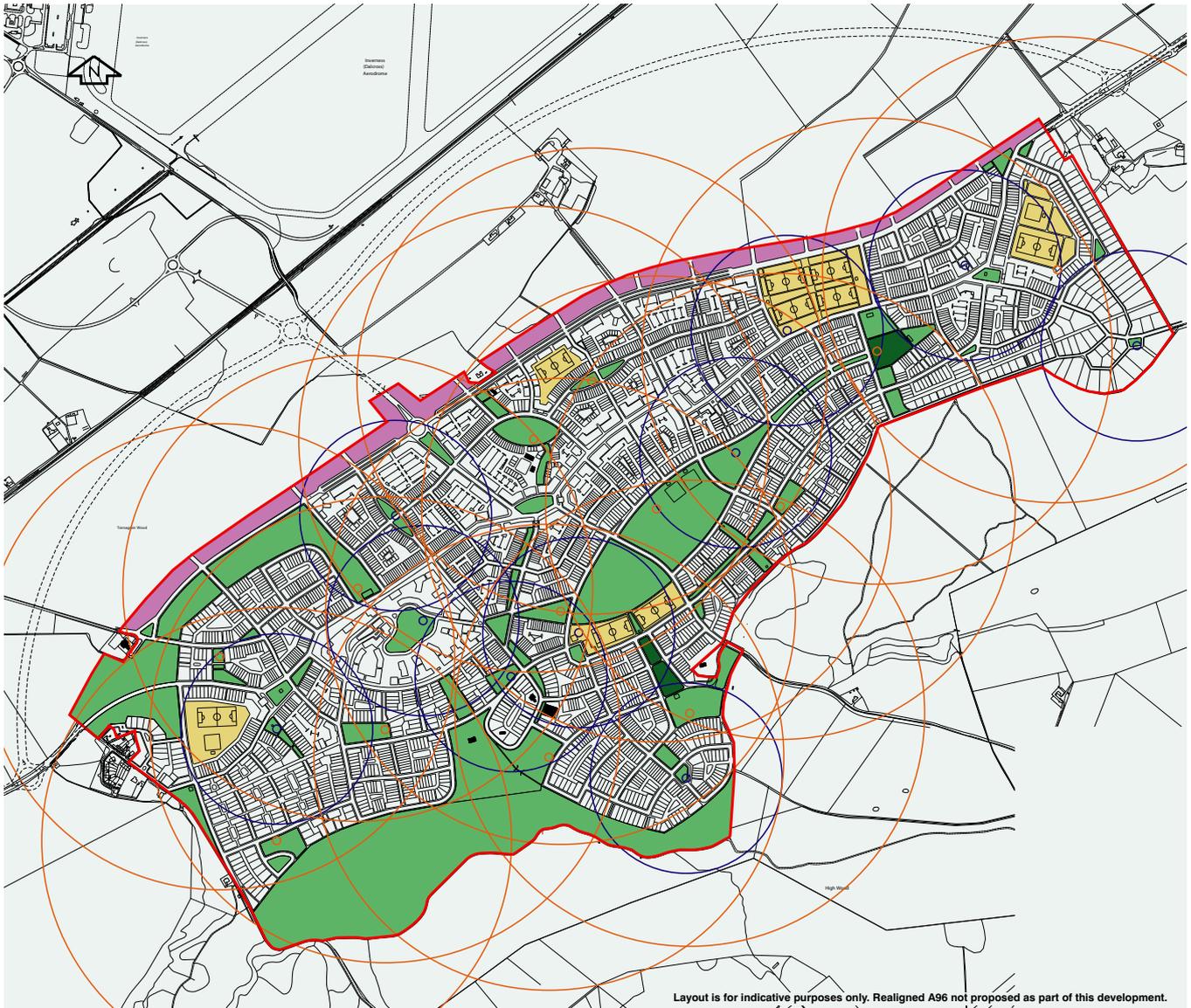
The main commercial, business and employment centre follows the northern boundary of the application site. This will promote a cohesive interface with the business uses proposed in the Local Plan on the opposite side of the A96, and avoid unnecessary conflict with the residential areas. There are limited other large scale commercial facilities in Tornagrain to reflect the role of IABP but smaller scale employment opportunities and space will be provided in Tornagrain at various locations across the town.

The town centre has a more central position in the community, in which the main civic facilities, shopping and services will be contained. The town centre is designed to ensure that it provides an environment that is attractive to the community, forming a central focal point, rather than simply a shopping and service facility. The retail and service provision is intended to eventually meet all the daily needs of Tornagrain's residents to reduce traffic to other locations and to help foster a sense of community and self sufficiency.

The High Street is framed to the east by a square which is fronted by the secondary school which reinforces the civic importance of the town centre. To the west, the High Street enters the main square in which will be found retail (including a supermarket), a hotel, civic space (gardens) and the town hall or other such key civic building. While the town centre's 'frontage' buildings will be flexible in design, to accommodate future changes of town centre uses, 'active' ground floor frontages will be promoted; with less active frontage commercial uses and residential development above. To the rear of the main liner buildings is parking provision within very easy reach of the town centre services. Importantly, the High Street is within 10 minutes walk of most of the community which will encourage use of its facilities without the need for a car.

To ensure appropriate provision of facilities for the first phase of the development, local neighbourhood centres will be the focus for primary schools, neighbourhood scale retail, employment space, recreational areas and open space. This should promote neighbourhood identity, cohesion and a degree of self-sufficiency within the wider settlement.

Figure 8: Open Space Allocations and Phasing

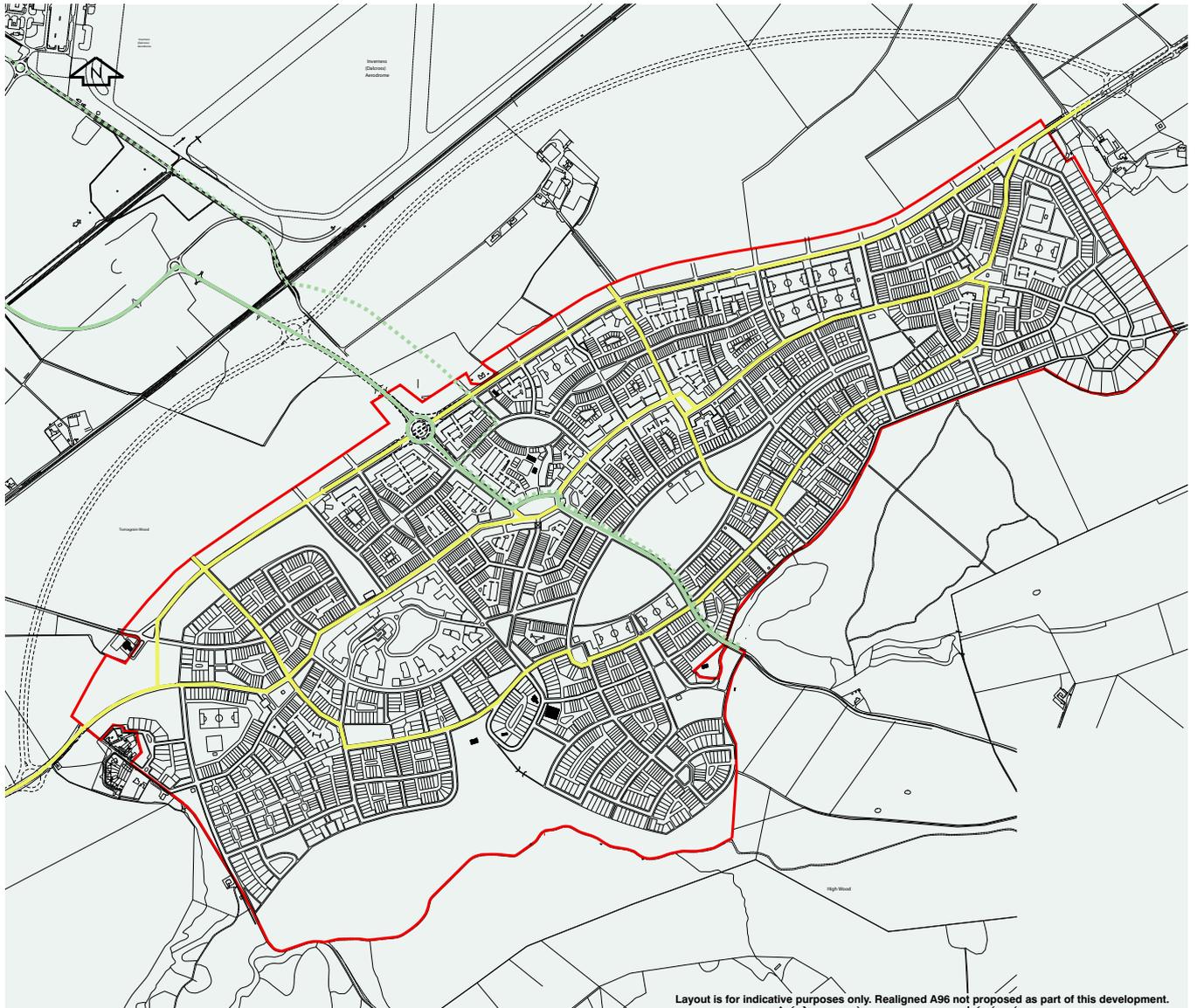


Layout is for indicative purposes only. Realigned A96 not proposed as part of this development.

	Application Site	
<b>Total Area</b>		<b>259.1 ha</b>
<b>Total Developable Area</b>		<b>168.4 ha</b>
<b>Total Non-Developable Area</b>		<b>90.7 ha</b>
Including		
	Inverness Airport Business Park	11.3 ha
	Total Public Open Space	79.4 ha
Including:		
	Allotment	1.5 ha
	School Playing Field	7.26 ha

-  LEAP - Local Equipped Area for Play (10no) 240m walking distance, 400m<sup>2</sup> minimum
-  NEAP - Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (13no) 600m walking distance, 1000m<sup>2</sup> minimum

Figure 9: Infrastructure Phasing Plan (Roads)



- Primary Road Network
- ..... Proposed Foot/Cycleway
- Phase 1 (2011–2016)
- Phase 6 (2036–2041)

## Open Space and Outdoor Recreation

79.4 hectares of green open space and woodland will be provided within the site. This will provide for a high quality landscape and environment, both formal and informal together with recreation, bowling greens and allotments. Included within this is 14.7 hectares of parkland and 12.9 hectares of playing pitches. These facilities will provide both an attractive environment but also promote exercise, sport and health and wellbeing as an integral part of the town.

## Community Facilities

In addition to outdoor space, employment opportunities in the commercial centre and the retail and service provisions in the town centre and neighbourhood centres, the proposal will also provide a secondary school and four primary schools, a swimming pool, community hall, place of worship, library, and centres for adult education, health care and emergency services.

## Infrastructure

Highways provision will be phased to support the incremental development as it proceeds. Figure 9 illustrates the phased introduction of the principal roads infrastructure. Incremental improvements to the existing A96/Croy road junction will be implemented, as the development progresses, to ensure traffic flow and highway safety.

The proximity of the site to the integrated transport hub at the Airport will provide the community with access to the existing public transport facilities adjacent to air and by road (existing bus and taxi services along the A96 and to/from the airport). Given the proximity of the site to existing bus services, little deviation is required by bus operators to include Tornagrain stops, as the critical mass is achieved in the town. The proposal includes the requisite provision of parking, turning and manoeuvring areas for such vehicles.

Tornagrain is only seven miles from the principal railway station in the Highlands at Inverness. This provides regular mainline services to Aberdeen, the central belt and mainline services to the south. The recently approved Dalcross Hi-Trans rail halt / park and ride development would provide Tornagrain residents with access to the rail network within a 10 – 15 minute walk.

Full details of the roads and transport proposals are provided in the Environmental Statement's Technical Annexe on Transport.

The proposed phasing of drainage infrastructure will principally be the responsibility of Scottish Water as the proposal lies within a 'qualifying site' within the A96 Corridor. Contributions towards such installations will be resolved through the S.75 Agreements

It is, however, possible that some interim drainage measures may be required to enable the first phase of development in the short term.

The existing High Pressure Gas Main which traverses the site will be re-routed so that its revised development exclusion zone (90m either side) will avoid the developed area. (Figure 10) The 33kV electricity line which serves the existing settlement of Tornagrain will be re-routed below ground.

## Principles of Design

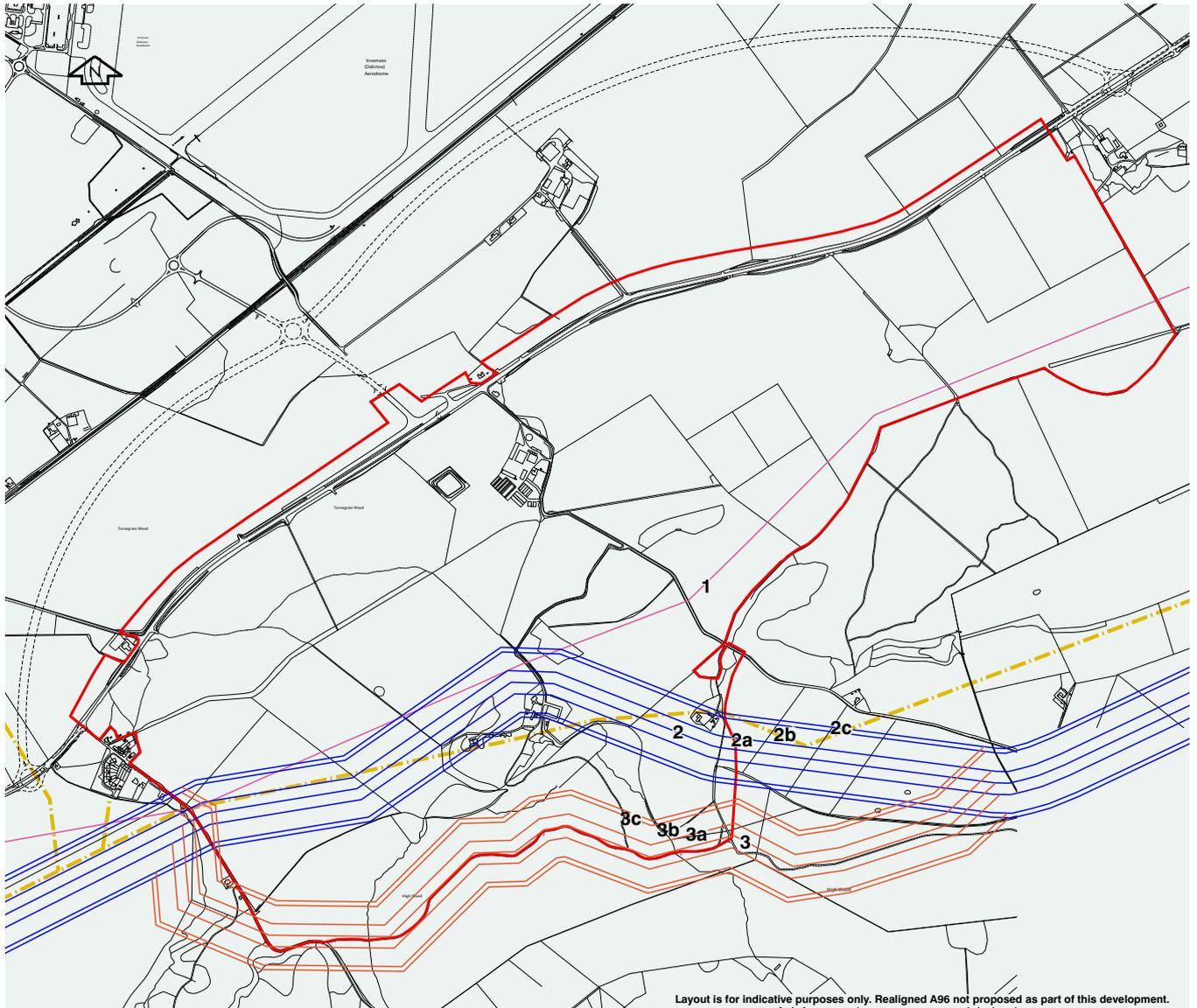
The proposed design creates a compact, diverse, mixed use walkable community of high quality set within a locally sensitive landscape framework. The masterplan reflects the importance of the thoroughfare network in influencing residents mode of transport and encourages walking by the creation of streets designed for character, rather than traffic capacity, and where pedestrians are not discouraged by traffic. The plan also reflects the critical importance of the public realm which is addressed through the landscape framework, urban design and streetscape design, providing a variety of spaces, formal and informal, throughout the town. Character will change throughout the town to reflect location – for instance more formal in the centre, less so towards the edge.

The proposal has been designed to adopt the most appropriate and efficient modern construction methods to deliver energy efficient buildings whilst minimising energy consumption, carbon emissions and waste, meet the principles of sustainable development, provide the highest quality of life for residents, and promote social cohesion and civic identity.

Full details of the principles of design are contained within the accompanying planning documents, particularly the Landscape Framework, Design Statement, Access Management Plan and Sustainability Statement, and illustrated in the various plans and Indicative Layout drawing.

A Design Code has also been produced and submitted as part of this application. The Code sets out a form of regulation to ensure that development is implemented in accordance with the principles of the masterplan.

Figure 10: Service Routes



1 Existing Kerosene/Oil Pipeline (Retained)

2 Existing Gas Pipeline (Removed)

Existing Pipeline Restrictions on Development

- 2a from existing Pipeline up to 32m (IZ=Inner Zone) allow individual single houses to be positioned here on a stand alone basis.
- 2b from 32-80m from the existing Pipeline (MZ=Middle Zone). Allow up to 30 dwellings at density less than 40 per hectare
- 2c from 80-90m from the existing Pipeline(OZ=Outer Zone). Allow vast majority of residential based developments

3 Anticipated Alternative Route

Existing Pipeline Restrictions on Development

- 3a from Proposed Pipeline Deviation up to 32m (IZ=Inner Zone) allow individual single houses to be positioned here on a stand alone basis.
- 3b from 32-80m from the Proposed Pipeline Deviation (MZ=Middle Zone). Allow up to 30 dwellings at density less than 40 per hectare
- 3c from 80-90m from the Proposed Pipeline Deviation (OZ=Outer Zone). Allow vast majority of residential based developments

Overhead HV Power Cables

## The Long Term

Given the time horizon of the proposal (and its indicative layout) to 2046, it has been guided by the most recent national and strategic planning guidance and planning permissions, at the time of submission. The context for this is provided by the draft National Planning Framework No. 2 (2008), The Highland Council's approved A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework (2007) and the Local Plan allocation for IABP.

In an attempt to have regard to the long term nature of the proposal, the layout has also provided an indicative route for the dualling of the A96 to the north, as illustrated in the approved A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007. The indicative route has been identified by the applicant's Transport Consultants, Savell Bird and Axon, as the most realistic / appropriate alignment. This is detailed in the Environmental Statement's Transport Assessment. Neither the indicative realignment, dualling nor enlarged junctions of a new A96 form part of this proposal, and the dotted outline of its estimated realignment (outwith the site) are for indicative purposes only. Land along the route of the proposed realignment is controlled by the MEDCO or IABP Ltd.

Although no planning permission exists for the land to the immediate north of the site, the adopted Local Plan has allocated this land for commercial development. A planning application for the development was submitted in March 2008. It is anticipated that outline planning permission will be forthcoming for this development. Consequently, the indicative layout which accompanies this application has been prepared in anticipation of such a scheme coming forward, to demonstrate how the new town could dovetail successfully with the IABP.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Tornagrain planning application is a stand-alone application which should be considered on its own merits. The current proposal is submitted for determination in isolation of what may, or may not, progress in respect of either improvements to the A96 or IABP.

The layout which accompanies this application is for indicative purposes only and, as such, has not been submitted for outline approval, but as the most likely manner by which Tornagrain could provide a new community, whilst integrating successfully with any future development of the IABP site and changes to the A96 trunk road.

Outline planning permission is sought for the development shown in Table 1 on page 11.

This section has explained fully the development proposal itself. The document now turns to look at the policy context.

# National Planning Framework

## Introduction

The proposal will be primarily be assessed within the context of the National Planning Framework 2 (Proposed Framework) December 2008, rather than the first National Planning Framework for Scotland (2004), as the former:

- Is likely to be adopted prior to determination of this application. A Discussion Draft was the subject of a consultation exercise in 2008. The Scottish Government has now considered the comments made and the proposed NPF2 has been laid before Parliament on 12th December 2008 for a period of 60 days consideration as required by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act.
- It therefore represents the Government's most recent policy in addition to the planning framework for Scotland.
- It has designated the A96 Corridor, between Inverness and Nairn, as one of four national designated Areas of Co-Ordinated Actio.
- It refers specifically to the emergence, in 2007, of The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework.
- It refers specifically to *"the creation of a new settlement at Tornagrain"*.
- Finally, it provides a guide for spatial development within a timeframe more consistent with the development proposed (i.e. to 2030).

## National Planning Framework 1 (2004)

Notwithstanding the points made above, the site already lies within an area identified by the National Planning Framework for Scotland (2004) as important for economic development:

*"Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth is an economic development zone with considerable potential. To the east of the City, the A96 Corridor and the Airport offer opportunities for future expansion" (Paragraph 163).*

The proposal is, therefore, consistent with the aims and objectives of the adopted NPF by delivering a major element which will contribute to, and be a co-ordinated element of, the economic expansion opportunities of the A96 Corridor and the Airport.

## NPF 2 – Key Challenges

### Introduction

NPF2 identifies the primary drivers of change within the context of: an Economic Strategy; Sustainable Development; People and Households; Scotland in the World.

### Economic Strategy

NPF2 emphasises that *"the central purpose of the Scottish Government is to increase sustainable economic growth"*, to be *"focused on the achieving that purpose and the challenging targets the Government is setting"* (Paragraph 11).

To this end, the NPF2 has set the strategic targets of providing a Wealthier and Fairer society; a Greener place; Safer and Stronger communities; a Smarter community to ensure higher and wider achievements; and a Healthier community for sustained health and improved health care.

The Tornagrain proposal will deliver a major contribution to increased sustainable economic growth by creating a greener and safer place for living, working and recreation, building on proximity to significant employment opportunities and its excellent transport links to create a community attractive to employers, employees and investors alike. In addition by creating a diverse, mixed use community with a wide range of housing and employment opportunities with a walkable environment Tornagrain should also promote a wealthier, fairer, stronger, smarter and healthier community.

NPF2 also highlights the importance to the economy of places with *"strong, positive identities"*, which offer *"a variety of economic opportunities, a stimulating environment, amenities for a wide range of lifestyles and good connections to other high quality places"* (Paragraph 12) to attract businesses to areas with a physical and social infrastructure which supports innovation and attracts well-educated and talented people. Tornagrain has been planned to meet these objectives by creating a community which integrates employment and living opportunities within an urban design framework which seeks to maintain its Highland identity whilst building on the best traditions of Highland and Scottish town planning.

## Sustainable Development

NPF2 emphasises the importance of sustainable development which reduces greenhouse gasses, reduced dependency on fossil fuels, improved efficiency of water consumption, and wildlife conservation.

Tornagrain will seek to achieve buildings of the highest environmental efficiency but it will also seek to exploit its proximity to a major employment centre (IABP) and its good potential public transport, together with an urban structure designed to encourage walking to significantly reduce transport emissions and improve health and lifestyle.

## People and Households

NPF2 highlights the significant increase in fertility rates in Scotland since the 1960s, projecting a population increase to 5.37 million by 2031, with associated implications, not only for housing supply, but for education, health, and the delivery of locally accessible community facilities. NPF2 specifically highlights the growth of the Highlands and Islands and notes that *“substantial growth is taking place in Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth” (Paragraph 32).*

NPF2 highlights that *“not all of the additional homes needed to accommodate these households can be built on previously developed land” (Paragraph 33).* In addition NPF states:

*“It is important to recognise that population and household projections are based on extrapolations of past trends and are therefore indicative rather than predictive. Indeed, the Government’s aspiration for Scotland – reflected in targets for greater economic and population growth – imply higher overall household growth than current projections indicate. Planning should reflect this, to ensure a generous supply of land for housing” (Paragraph 34).*

The planning system has ensured that the supply of land for new housing meets the substantial growth in Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth to 2030, and beyond, through the planning authority’s approval of The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007. The planning application for Tornagrain will make a major contribution to these objectives.

## Scotland in The World

NPF2 emphasises the importance, in the realisation of the Government’s five strategic objectives and the Government’s Economic Strategy, of raising Scotland’s international profile to attract high quality inward investment. The Government is committed to an enhanced relationship with the European Union, particularly the Celtic, Nordic and Baltic countries. It is especially concerned with addressing the extremely peripheral areas, within the context of an ever-more eastwardly gravitation of Europe’s economic centre and the substantial resultant reductions in structure funds for Caithness, Sutherland, Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides .

The Tornagrain proposal will raise the international profile of Scotland and the Highlands in creating a deliverable, well-located, sustainable development in an area of identified need.

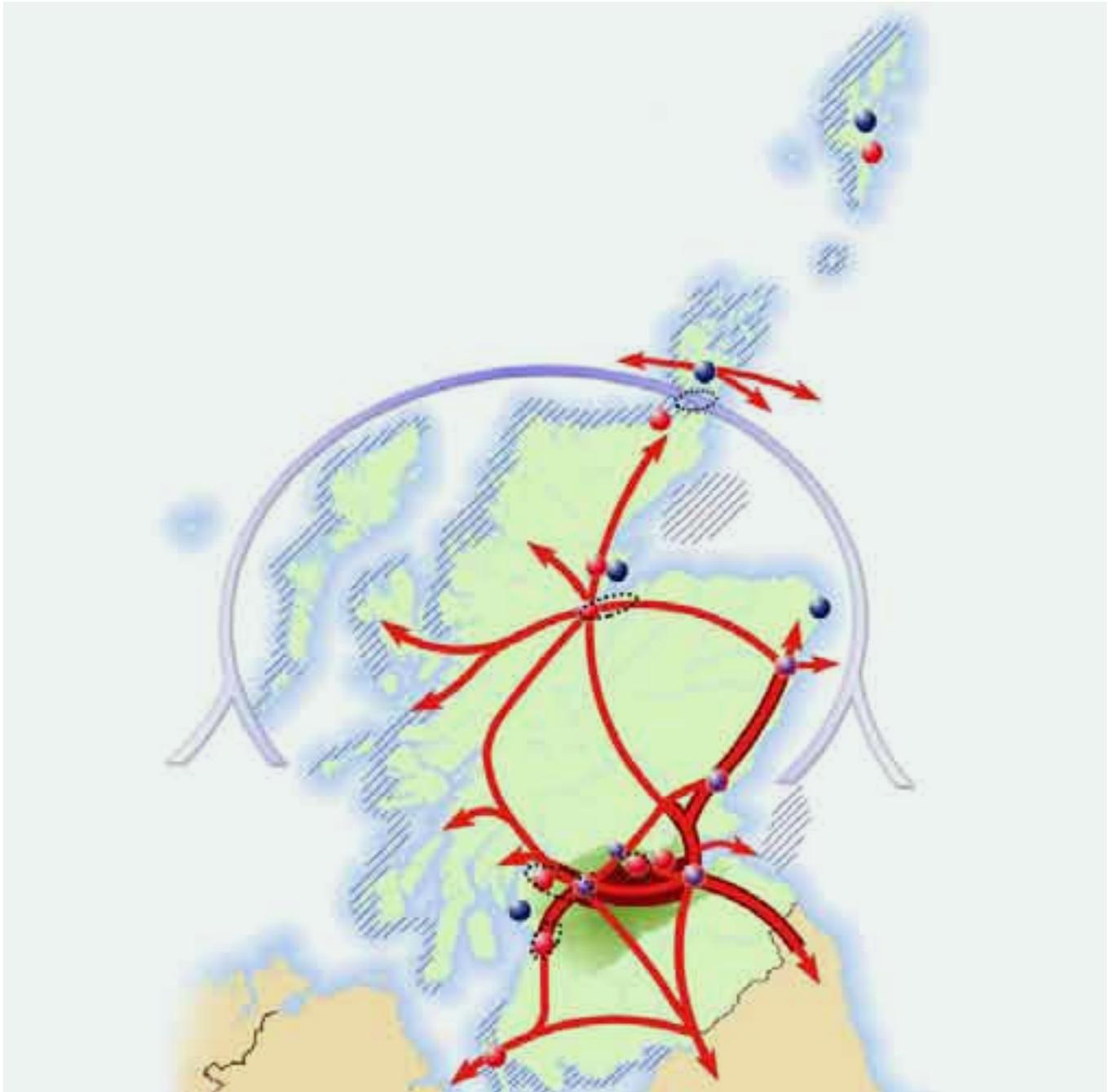
## NPF 2 – Spatial Perspective Highlands and Islands

The NPF2 provides perspectives to address spatial issues of national importance for the Highlands to provide a context for development planning. The Highlands is considered to offer substantial opportunities for sustainable growth such as the Inverness-Nairn Corridor is identified as one of five national areas:

*“Where major change is taking place and the scale and complexity of the issues to be addressed means that co-ordinated action is needed in the national interest.” (Paragraph 184)*

The NPF2’s Strategy Map (Figure 11) identifies the Inverness-Nairn Corridor as one of four Areas of Co-ordinated Action, and a *“key economic development corridor and strategic transport route which will be important in supporting Scotland’s development to 2030” (Paragraph 236).* It promotes the need for rural economic diversification and environmental stewardship; and encourages co-ordinated action to support economic development along the Inverness-Nairn Corridor.

Figure 11: NPF Strategy Map No. 9



- City
- International gateway
- Deep water opportunity
- Marine energy potential
- Central Scotland green network
- Key economic corridor
- Strategic transport route
- Potential subsea energy network
- Areas of co-ordinated action
- Economic diversification and environmental stewardship

The NPF2 advises that where substantial increases in population and households are projected in the Highlands, it will be important to make the requisite infrastructure provision. It encourages Inverness to:

*“develop its role as the Highland capital, broaden its economic base, improve its connections to Scotland’s other cities and the rest of the world, and attract higher quality jobs.” (Paragraph 210)*

The A96 Corridor, between Inverness and Nairn, is identified by the NPF2 as *“the main focus of growth in the Inner Moray Firth” (Paragraph 212)*. The NPF2 also refers to Highland Council’s A96 Corridor Development Framework (The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007) and the need to accommodate 30,000 people in the area over the next 35 years, including *“the creation of a new settlement at Tornagrain” (Paragraph 212)*.

The NPF2 explains that development of this scale will require upgrading of infrastructure, including transport services, water and drainage and supporting ‘green infrastructure’.

In light of the above NPF 2 advises that:

*“The STPR [Strategic Transport Projects Review] has identified the need to dual the A96 between Inverness and Nairn and provide a new rail station, airport interchange and park and ride facilities at Dalcross. It has also identified a package of improvements to the Aberdeen – Inverness rail line which would reduce journey times between the two by 20 minutes and improve the connectivity of communities along the route.” (Paragraph 212)*

## **NPF 2 – Making it Happen**

The NPF2 states the intention to produce an action programme to set out how, when and by whom the national strategy will be delivered, including stakeholders’ commitments. This will include engagement with planning authorities to ensure the Framework is reflected in the relevant development plans.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

NPF 1 contemplated growth in the Inverness, Moray Firth and A96 corridor. This has been developed within NPF2 to identify an Area of Co-ordinated Action in the Highlands to meet the growth and expressly identifying a new settlement at Tornagrain.

Not only does this express policy identifying Tornagrain for development, but the scheme as a whole complies with the more detailed aspirations of the NPF. In short, the proposals for Tornagrain are in compliance with and will seek to deliver relevant key aims of the Scottish Government Strategy as set out in NPF 2.

# National Planning Policy

## Introduction

It is important to note that national planning policy context is currently undergoing a period of reform following the enactment of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006. Within the context of the revised legislative framework the Scottish Government in preparing to introduce a range of reforms through new secondary legislation and policy.

In the October 2009 the Government published 'Delivering Planning Reform' a statement of objectives and actions. The statement set out the Government's intention to rationalise the Scottish Planning Policy series into three parts. Scottish Planning Policy (parts 1 and 2) was published in October 2008 and are summarised below.

This Chapter will primarily assess the proposal within the context of the broader existing national policies, as relevant to the proposal. It will therefore concentrate on the principal Scottish Planning Policies (SPPs) and supporting Planning Advice Notes (PANs).

Rather than an exhaustive appraisal of all national policies, this statement will concentrate on the principal national planning policies which apply to the proposal, namely Scottish Planning Policy, The Planning System (SPP1), Economic Development (SPP2), Homes (SPP3), and Transport (SPP17). It will also make reference, as appropriate, to other national policy areas, particularly in respect of Firm Foundations (The Future of Housing in Scotland), the Scottish Sustainable Community Initiative and design.

## The Planning System

Scottish Planning Policy (October 2008) is the Scottish Government's statement on the purpose of planning and the core principles of the planning system. SPP therefore replaces SPP1 The Planning System (November 2002). The statement clarifies the role of planning with the Government's wider aims and policies, stating at paragraph 5:

*"The Scottish Government believes that a properly functioning planning system is essential to achieving its central purposes of increasing sustainable economic growth"*

The statement identifies the core principles which the Government believes should underpin the planning system:

- *There should be a genuinely plan-led system, in which succinct development plans set out ambitious, long term vision for their area. They will be kept up to date, and provide a practical framework within which the outcome of planning applications can be decided with a degree of certainty and efficiency.*
- *The primary responsibility for the operation of the planning system and services is with the local and national park authorities.*
- *Confidence in the planning system needs to be reinforced through: the efficient and predictable preparation of plans and handling of applications; transparency in decision making and reliable enforcement of the law and planning decisions.*
- *The constraints and requirements that planning imposes should be necessary and proportionate.*
- *The system should operate to engage all interests as early and as fully as possible to inform decisions and allow issues of contention and controversy to be identified and tackled quickly and smoothly.*
- *There should be a clear focus on the quality of outcomes, with due attention given to consideration of the sustainable use of land, good design and the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment.*

Within this context the Statement sets out the role of development plans:

*"Development Plans should guide the future use of land and the appearance of cities, towns and rural areas. They should indicate where development, including regeneration, should happen and should not happen" (Paragraph 11)*

Importantly paragraph 10 states that *"the development plan comprises a local development plan supported by supplementary planning guidance"*. Paragraph 20 goes on to state:

*"Where [supplementary planning guidance] is to form part of the development plan, authorities should ensure guidance:*

- *Is derived from the plan*
- *Has been the subject of discussion and engagement.*

*Supplementary planning guidance should not be applied to development proposals until it has been formally agreed by the authority following consideration of comments and representations on the draft"*

The statement also sets out the role of development management stating:

*“Development management is a key part of the planning system and must operate in support of the Government’s central purpose. This means providing greater certainty and speed of decision making as a means of creating good quality sustainable places” (Paragraph 23)*

## Economic Development

Scottish Planning Policy No. 2: Economic Development (November 2002) provides planning policy for economic development within the wider context set by the Framework for Economic Development in Scotland (FEDS). The Framework highlights the importance of ‘international competitiveness’, to enable all regions in Scotland to contribute and benefit in a sustainable manner.

SPP2 focuses upon enhancing Scotland’s economic prosperity in a highly competitive global environment. To compete successfully, it is important that development opportunities are provided *“in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the diverse range of industrial, business and commercial requirements.”* Economic competitiveness is supported by ensuring development occurs in locations that meet business requirements whilst also ensuring flexibility to meet changing demands.

SPP2 identifies suitable locations as those that have good access to public transport and are well served by infrastructure. The importance of public transport accessibility is particularly emphasised when economic development is planned as part of major expansions to urban areas. SPP2 requires the delivery of infrastructure to reflect the phasing of development.

## Housing

### Introduction

Scottish Planning Policy No. 3: Planning for Homes (Revised July 2008) provides the Government’s latest national planning policy for housing. Other associated national housing policies, advice notes and guidance include: PAN 44 Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape (March 1994); the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (June 2008); Firm Foundations, The Future of Housing in Scotland (October 2007); PAN 83 Master Planning (September 2008); Designing Places A Policy Statement for Scotland (2001); PAN 76

New Residential Streets (November 2005); PAN 67 Housing Quality (February 2003); and PAN 74 Affordable Housing (March 2005).

### SPP3 (Overview and Key Objectives)

SPP3 (Revised July 2008) sets out the Scottish Government’s policy on the identification of housing requirements, provision of land and delivery of homes. Although Scotland is entering a period of transition as progress continues towards the full commencement of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, SPP3 confirms that it will remain relevant throughout this process.

SPP3 states that the overarching aim for homes is to focus the role of planning in the delivery of housing to building a better, more diverse range of housing to serve Scotland’s economic, social and environmental aspirations. It reflects NPF2’s commitment to raising the rate of completing 35,000 new homes a year, as set out in Firm Foundations, by identifying sufficient land to support an increased supply of *“the right homes in the right places”*.

SPP3 acknowledges that new housing development requires significant amounts of land, and the role of housing as the key element to shaping our cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods. It recognises that this is an important factor in sustainable economic growth and will have a long-term impact on the rural landscape and the health and well-being of communities.

At paragraph 16, SPP3 outlines its key objectives as guiding:

- *identification of housing need and demand on a more consistent and robust basis through joint working between local authorities and a range of partners;*
- *the use of the planning system to facilitate the construction of well-designed, good-quality housing in sustainable locations;*
- *allocation of a generous supply of land to meet identified housing requirements across all tenures, including affordable housing, and related policy objectives;*
- *mechanisms to help ensure that planned housing is built, including quick and efficient review of development plans to enable maintenance of a 5-year effective land supply; all of which supports*
- *the creation of high-quality places, which support the development of sustainable communities.*

Again, Tornagrain complies with these policy aspirations.

### SPP3 (Delivery of Housing)

SPP3 advises that the “*delivery of housing does not rely solely on the allocation of appropriate land in the development plan*” as many other issues affect the time taken to reach the stage where housing can be built.

Paragraph 56 encourages planning authorities to develop a long-term sustainable settlement strategy, where the policy framework and site allocations will be tested through a Strategic Environmental Assessment, which should be based upon the following key considerations:

- *the efficient use of land and existing buildings, resources and infrastructure;*
- *accessibility by a range of transport options to jobs and services for all sections of the community;*
- *co-ordination of housing land provision with improvements in infrastructure, including transport and educational investment, and with other major proposals such as business or other economic development; and*
- *the protection and enhancement of landscapes; natural, built and cultural heritage; biodiversity; and the wider environment, including consideration of flood risk.*

Paragraph 58 also requires planning authorities’ site selection to balance:

- *the potential of the site to meet the strategy and policies of the plan and other national and local policy objectives;*
- *the relative accessibility of sites by a choice of transport options;*
- *the availability of infrastructure, education and community facilities;*
- *whether development can be achieved on a particular site within the required timeframe;*
- *the provision of a variety of sites to provide choice across the housing market area;*
- *the design, quality and density of development that can be achieved on a site, taking account of its location, landscape setting and characteristics;*
- *the individual and cumulative effects of all proposed development; and*
- *any other relevant matters, including the views of all relevant parties (including the local community).*

Paragraph 59 also advises that:

*Strategic consideration of the scale and location of the housing land requirement in development plans well ahead of land being required for development should assist in aligning the investment decisions*

*of developers, infrastructure providers and others ...Where large areas of land are identified as appropriate for development in line with the settlement strategy, but are capable of contributing to the housing requirement in years beyond the current plan, the long-term reservation of that land for development in later years should be indicated in the plan.*

Paragraph 70 acknowledges that, in seeking to locate new housing where it will be accessible by a range of forms of transport, planning authorities may conclude on balance that the release of certain areas of greenfield land will result in a more sustainable pattern of development than relying on brownfield sites, and that it may be necessary to release greenfield land where:

*new stand-alone settlements may contribute towards meeting housing requirements as part of a long-term strategy where*

- *there are physical, environmental or infrastructural constraints to the further growth of existing settlements, or it forms part of a strategy for promoting rural development and renewal;*
- *it could assist in reducing development pressure on greenbelt land or areas of attractive countryside;*
- *it can be serviced readily by public transport;*
- *it will not have a significant adverse effect on any natural or built heritage interest safeguarded by a national or international designation; and*
- *it will not result in other significant environmental disbenefits.*

SPP3 requires planning authorities to specify its scale and location, and set out the framework to guide development where it considers a new settlement a necessary part of their development strategy. It also encourages such settlements to be located to “*make optimum use of public transport and provide opportunities for walking and cycling*”, in accordance with SPP 17. SPP3 highlights the Scottish Government’s commitment to the effective integration of land use and transport to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, where patterns of development should seek to reduce the demand for travel and reliance on the private car, and energy consumption generally. It encourages preference to be given to locations which can be well-integrated with existing and proposed public transport, walking and cycling networks, which should be developed at higher densities. While SPP3 acknowledges that “*people living in rural areas may continue to rely*

*heavily on private forms of transport where there are few alternatives*” it encourages mixed developments where integration of housing with commercial, community and leisure uses, can create improved access to jobs and a wide range of services.

SPP3 also encourages new settlements to take advantage of the opportunity to effect a step change in the quality and environmental standards of communities, and where design and build quality should *“reflect the best architectural and design traditions of Scottish towns and villages”* (Paragraph 72). It also encourages a range of housing tenures, decentralised heat and power and high energy efficiency standards, and follow the principles set out in PAN 44.

SPP3 also identifies additional housing related policy objectives in terms of other relevant issues such as landscaping and open space, mixed communities, affordable housing, rural housing and developer contributions.

SPP3 clearly envisages new settlements as identified in the NPF. In terms of the criteria appropriate to such settlements, Tornagrain is generally compliant.

## Design and Sustainability

### Introduction

SPP3 makes reference to the 2008 PAN 44 (Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape) for guiding the design of new development. However, as this had not emerged by the submission of the Tornagrain application, this Planning Statement will assess the proposal within the context of the 1994 PAN 44, with due consideration to the emerging national policies and principles of sustainable communities as set out in the Scottish Government’s publications: Firm Foundations: A Discussion Document on The Future of Housing in Scotland (2007); the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (2008); Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland (2001); PAN 83 (Master Planning) (2008) and the provisions of PAN 68 (Design Statements).

### Firm Foundations

Firm Foundations recognises the role which good affordable housing plays in the wellbeing of individuals, families and society, and the need to provide neighbourhoods which optimise access to work, education and leisure opportunities. It promotes creating a housing system which meets communities’ needs for good quality, energy

efficient and affordable housing. The discussion document outlines a vision for a housing system which delivers more housing (35,000 a year), meets higher environmental standards, offers more choice, contributes to sustainable mixed communities and achieves better value for public investment.

Firm Foundations’ vision for future housing (at page 4) is for:

- *An increased supply of housing across all tenures, all of which is delivered on the basis of higher environmental and design standards.*
- *More choice of housing that those on lower incomes can afford.*
- *Housing developments that contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.*
- *Social housing that provides better value for public expenditure.*

One of Firm Foundations’ priorities for action on delivering supply is through New Settlements where this provides *“an opportunity to effect a step change in the quality and environmental standards of new communities”*. In such communities, Firm Foundations encourages locations which make optimum use of public transport and provide opportunities for walking and cycling, where housing reflects the best architectural and design traditions of Scottish towns and villages, a range of tenures, decentralised heat and power and high energy efficiency standards. It seeks, through the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative, to encourage proposals for such communities in response to the draft NPF 2, where new settlements reflect the principles of Designing Places and represent exemplars of 21st-century low-impact development. Firm Foundations sets out at page 18 the following criteria to be applied in selecting such proposals:

- *their contribution to meeting regional housing and economic needs;*
- *high environmental and design standards;*
- *commitment to building a sense of community and environmental wellbeing;*
- *provision for walking and cycling and effective use of public transport and information technology infrastructure;*

- *innovative use of renewable and clean energy technologies; and*
- *effective reuse of brownfield land.*

The Tornagrain proposal will contribute to Firm Foundation's Vision for housing. Specifically it will:

- Enable the local authority, developers and builders to increase the rate of annual new housing supply by the middle of the next decade.
- Provide a new sustainable stand-alone settlement which is sympathetic to the Inner Moray Firth landscape and environment, consistent with the principles encouraged by the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative.
- Make a 25% contribution to affordable housing to enable The Highland Council to build new houses and provide, together with housing associations and RSLs, for a variety of social housing need, including the development of LIFTs and other forms of assistance available to help people achieve and sustain home ownership, safeguard the future of that provision, meet Scottish Housing Quality Standards, and provide improved choice and supply within mixed communities.
- Enable the private rented sector to flourish and play a full role in meeting housing need in urban and rural areas through the provision of good quality accommodation for private rent.

The proposal will support the creation of an open, just and inclusive Scotland, and the mainstreaming of the culture of equality, through the planning and delivery of housing through a new stand-alone settlement which will be consistent with the Scottish Government's criteria for providing *"a step change in the quality and environmental standards of new communities"* on a site, and through a design, which makes optimum use of public transport and provide opportunities for walking and cycling. The Landscape Framework, Design Guide and Design Code (and Indicative Layout), will ensure that housing reflects the best architectural and design traditions of Scottish highland towns. Tornagrain will provide a range of housing tenures where heat and power are sustainable and energy efficient.

The proposal will also comply with the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative, reflect the

principles of Designing Places and provide a new stand-alone settlement which will seek to be an exemplar of 21st-century.

### **Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (SSCI)**

One of the outcomes of the Firm Foundations housing consultation was the launch, in June 2008, of the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (SSCI). This initiative seeks to encourage local authorities, and their partners, to propose more sustainable communities as part of the solution to meeting housing requirements in their areas. The Initiative encourages sustainable, adaptable designs, with low energy demands through *"inspirational developments which will serve as exemplars of the highest quality development that can be achieved at the beginning of the 21st Century"* (pg 4).

The Initiative recognises that *"sustainable communities are vitally important for our long term economic and social success"* (pg 2) and aims to *"bring strong and innovative design and building principles into our settlements, and promote exemplars of how communities could live in the future"* (pg 3). The SSCI is a reflection of the Scottish Government's commitment to creating *"an enduring legacy of high quality, distinctive new developments"* (pg 3) where sustainable communities should meet people's needs and aspirations, whilst protecting and enhancing Scotland's natural and built heritage. This should include ambitious and innovative approaches to addressing the needs of those on lower incomes and helping to create sustainable, mixed communities across Scotland; as part of the Government's vision of more homes of all tenures, built to higher environmental and design standards.

It would be inappropriate for this Planning Statement to reiterate in detail the September 2008 SSCI application for Tornagrain as this is not a matter for determination by The Highland Council through the outline planning application, but through the Scottish Government's separate process for such submissions.

However, in advance of the release of the revised PAN 44 the SSCI provides the best national policy guidance on the Scottish Government's emerging thinking on sustainable communities, and as such, its general principles should be addressed in this Planning Statement.

The Tornagrain proposal is consistent with the SSCI's general principles and guidance for a sustainable

settlement as it will make a significant contribution to the NPF2 and Firm Foundations' objective of increasing housing completions to 35,000 a year, in a manner which is *"not only environmentally, but also economically and socially sustainable"*, and provide an *"exemplar of the highest quality development that can be achieved at the beginning of the 21st Century"* (pg 4).

In summary, the Tornagrain settlement will also meet the seven objectives for a sustainable a community as it will:

- Contribute to meeting identified housing requirements in the area.
- Demonstrate a level of innovation and quality of design which will lead to the creation of a successful place and serve as an inspiration to future development in the Highlands and Scotland.
- Make a significant contribution to reducing emissions of carbon dioxide in construction and throughout the community's life.
- Minimise pollution.
- Create opportunities to live healthier, more active and environmentally responsible lives and so influence behaviour and attitudes.
- Deliver demonstrable, high quality sustainable forms of new development within reasonable timescales.
- Incorporate provision for evaluation of the success and benefits of the approach and outcomes, so that future developments can benefit by learning from innovation.

Tornagrain will also provide a positive outcome in terms of the SSCI's main criteria for assessment of the quality of sustainable communities as:

1. It will contribute to meeting the identified regional and local housing requirements in compliance with Firm Foundations' objective of increasing housing completions, The Highland Council's Structure Plan Policy H2 and its allocation of the site for a new settlement of some 9,500-10,000 population in the approved SPG for the A96 Corridor.
2. It will take account of the economic opportunities of the area, particularly the Inverness area and Inner Moray Firth area, and specifically along NPF2's strategically designated

A96 Corridor as an 'Area for Co-ordinated Action' and the site's close proximity to the major employment opportunities.

3. The development of the site as a sustainable location by virtue of The Highland Council's identification of the site for a new settlement through its SPG's Smart Growth Approach, Strategy Framework, Green Framework (within the context of the Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Assessment), Collaboration for Success process, community consultation, and Strategic Environmental Assessment.
4. The form and layout of the development and building design will contribute to the highest standards of quality and sustainability, address long-term sustainability and be delivered, through:
  - a. The Environmental Impact Assessment and resultant mitigation proposals, accompanying Landscape Framework, Design Statement, Design Code, Energy Strategy, Sustainability Statement, Construction Environmental Management Plan, Green Transport Plan, Access Management Plan, mixed use phased Masterplans.
  - b. An Indicative Layout which promotes walking and cycling above car use, generous open space provision and easy pedestrian access to all shops, services and community facilities.
  - c. A coherent and high quality design of a self-sufficient new town within a co-ordinated planning approach to directly support the economic development potential of the A96 Corridor.
  - d. The Highland Council's Developer Protocols and a Section 75 Agreement to deliver phased funding of associated infrastructure improvements, services, community facilities and affordable housing.

#### **PAN 44: Fitting Housing into the Landscape**

PAN 44 was published in 1994 to provide national planning advice on fitting new housing development into the landscape. It is not a blueprint for housing design but sets out approaches to relate housing layout more sensitively to the existing landscape, and includes a consultants' manual to assist the process. As revised version of PAN 44 is anticipated after registration of the Tornagrain planning application, which will incorporate many of the issues addressed earlier in this chapter in respect of SPP1, the Scottish Government's Firm Foundations discussion paper

and the SSCI, the provisions of this review of the current PAN 44 should be considered within the context discussed above.

The Policy Framework for PAN 44 was prepared within the context of the UK Government's White Paper on sustainability, This Common Inheritance, the UK Sustainable Development Strategy and NPPG1: The Planning System (superseded, in 2008, by SPP1 – discussed above). The White Paper concluded that it was vital that towns should be pleasant places in which to live and work and recognised the role new buildings and development could play in contributing to a good environment and improving 'quality of life'. In achieving this, it identified such development attributes as the quality of good planning and layout, building design (and maintenance) and adequate green space within and around a town. The White Paper also advised that new housing on greenfield sites could contribute to this:

*"It is important that new housing on 'green field' sites is carefully placed to preserve the open countryside and respects the quality of the landscape." (Paragraph 4, PAN 44)*

Paragraph 7 of PAN 44 encourages residential developments which sit well within the landscape and make a positive contribution to the character of the settlement. It refers to the provisions of NPPG3 (superseded by SPP3, discussed above) in encouraging new housing to achieve a high standard of design and landscaping in, particular with regard to:

- *the shape, layout and form of the development and its impact on the surrounding area;*
- *the choice of materials, with colours and textures that complement development in the locality;*
- *well designed schemes that respect both the local environment and the landscape setting; and*
- *the visual impact of new developments as seen from major roads and rail routes.*

PAN 44 emphasises the importance of 'landscape fit' in guiding new development to make a positive and specific contribution to fulfilling sustainable development. It seeks to ensure that proposals are sufficiently responsive to the 'sense of place', and the general and particular character of the area. Attention is drawn to the capacity of the landscape to absorb development, together

with considerations such as availability of land, housing need and demand, energy efficiency and infrastructure. Paragraph 11 states that *"The guiding principle of new housing development is that it should help to maintain and enhance the environment."* PAN 44 encourages planning policies and proposals for housing development to be guided by a better understanding of the characteristics of the landscape, its suitability for development, landscape fit and the principles of good design.

The Design Manual was prepared to advise how new housing developments can improve environmental quality through their relationship to the landscape, highlighting the need to address the departure from the principles of Ebenezer Howard's 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow' and the mediocrity of later 20th century development:

*"Many recent developments in Scotland have been mediocre and indifferent in quality. The problem is particularly prevalent on the edges of Scotland's small and medium sized towns where significant visual impact has resulted from incremental growth." (Paragraph 2)*

It highlights the need to reflect *"Scotland's long and distinctive tradition of urban form"*, which has been shaped by a variety of physical, historical, social, economic and cultural influences, such as wind and rain in shaping development within the landform and positioning of buildings to maximise shelter. It refers to the achievements of historical approaches where close attention was paid to landscape setting and its influence upon the size of settlements and early town planning examples, such as Inveraray, where regular grid patterns and a main street with squares and punctuated by prominent civic buildings assist in reinforcing the settlement's structure and buildings' hierarchy.

The Design Manual emphasises the importance of the 'town mark' as one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Scottish townscape, and the 'signature' by which a town is recognised from a distance often identified, (and highlights Linlithgow), by the silhouettes of tall buildings, towers and spires, sometimes assisted by a natural landmark. It identifies the demands of transportation and access as major determinants of urban form and the movement away from the compact form and narrow streets of earlier development. Paragraph 12 criticises the departure from the traditional approach of adapting new ideas to suit local circumstance and reinterpretation of vernacular stylistic or practical details to modernist internationalism which encouraged:

- *simple and utilitarian buildings constructed from modern materials;*
- *the rejection of old styles of classical orders and formal layout; and*
- *the rejection of local tradition as an obstacle to creativity and progress.*

From a review of the influences and characteristics of late 20th century development, the Design Manual highlights the value of traditional street patterns, settlement hierarchy and the contributions that human scale and buildings arrangement and detail can contribute to a sense of place. It concludes that layouts have been too frequently driven by functional criteria which has resulted in uniform developments where design has been deferred to the later stages in the process, resulting in large scale residential estates which result in a scale, density, layout and design and creation of spaces which:

- *Involve extensive land-take, with limited landscaping or 'green framework'.*
- *Adversely affect the visual setting of existing towns and countryside.*
- *Evolve as a sequence of phased developments related solely to market considerations often in the absence of any overall design for the wider environment.*
- *Often result in a mono-type and mono density layout lacking in variety of land-use and building form.*
- *Present stark contrast to the urbanity which traditionally characterises Scottish towns.*
- *Contrast markedly with the form, style, materials and general character of the established townscape creating significant visual intrusion at the edge of towns.*
- *Are often characterised by standardised suburban designs and layouts with little diversity and lacking other uses to create focal points and landmarks. As a result they lack of individuality and identity.*
- *Have standard house types insensitive to individual locations.*
- *Use standard palette of materials often transported over long distances and alien to the locality.*

- *Lack evidence of success in the creation of place. There is often a lack of distinction between public and private space and an absence of landmarks and distinguishing features. (Paragraph 22, PAN44 Design Manual)*

The identification of the application site and design of the Tornagrain proposal has been led by the principles of PAN 44, its Design Manual and the checklists for analysis and plan. These details are explained in more detail in The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007's 'Green Framework', and the planning application's Environmental Statement, the Landscape Framework, Design Statement and Design Code. The proposal seeks to deliver new housing on a greenfield site which is carefully placed to preserve the open countryside and respect the quality of the landscape. The aim is to provide, through good quality town planning, building design (and maintenance) and adequate green space provision, a pleasant place in which to live and work.

Tornagrain has been designed to sit well and integrate with the surrounding landscape. The existing landscape of the site, is well placed to accommodate the development. Views from major roads and rail routes have been considered. The high quality of design and landscape framework means Tornagrain will be able to make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

The design of Tornagrain has derived from an extensive review of the best examples of traditional Scottish urban design, including landscape context, form, pattern, influences and buildings characteristics. Precedents extend from the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh to settlements across Scotland. The layout has been driven by the principles of traditional urban design from its first inception, in term of scale, density, layout and design and creation of spaces, whilst dovetailing with the functional objectives of an 'accessible' and sustainable place.

Tornagrain will seek to address the mediocrity of later 20th century development, and avoid ad hoc incremental growth, by planning in a comprehensive and coherent way at the settlement level. It will emulate Scotland and the Highland's long and distinctive tradition of urban form. Close attention has been paid to the landscape setting and its influence upon the size of the settlement. It will reflect the cultural traditions of street patterns and provide a main street with important public spaces punctuated by prominent civic buildings and provide a clear settlement structure and buildings' hierarchy. Tornagrain will provide a distinctive sense of identity, and a town mark and signature by which it will be recognised from a distance, primarily from

the silhouette of its principal buildings along the elevated main street. It will apply new ideas and construction opportunities to traditional approaches to suit local circumstance and emulation of the vernacular; and contain compact forms and streets where human scale, interest, amenity and access by walking and cycling will take precedence in design over the demands of car travel. It will also encourage public transport use. Tornagrain will discourage simple and utilitarian buildings and embrace, through emulation but not replication, the buildings and construction methods, from the best examples of vernacular layout, street patterns and building orientation and styles, whilst adapting them to meet the needs of a sustainable community for the 21st century.

In summary, Tornagrain will address the mistakes of recent development as it will:

- Be compact so minimising land-take through higher densities and careful integration of uses.
- Create an urban fabric which promotes increased travel on foot and cycle and seeks to exploit opportunities to access public transport and employment opportunities.
- Be diverse and mixed use avoiding the 'zoning' which has characterised develop in recent decades. This avoids travel and encourages self sufficiency in a community.
- Create a diversity of housing types carefully integrated to avoid segregation of socio-economic groups and tenures. This will include dispersed provision of affordable housing on a 'tenure blind' basis.
- Having a co-ordinated planning approach to housing and nearby employment uses again seeking to reduce transport and encourage local working.
- By encouraging high quality design and an emulation of the vernacular rather than 'reinterpretation'.
- Recognising the importance of the public realm over the private realm.

### Designing Places

Designing Places (2001) sets out the national policy context for design aspirations and the role of the planning system in delivering these. It highlights the pitfalls of poor design, the opportunities for design to make 'successful places', and its rich historical urban design tradition as evident in places such as Edinburgh's New Town, and the creation by landowners of many smaller planned towns and villages in a drive for improvement. It encourages historical reference to successes patterns and characteristics of past development as models of

successful design for the future. It acknowledges the role that landowners have played in delivering attractive places through their stake in the long term future, and refers to the development of a policy on architecture in Scotland's encouragement to learn from the past:

*The challenge for our architecture today is to fuse what is still vital in local tradition with the best in our increasingly global civilisation, to marry them in new ways that meet our modern needs and aspirations. (Pg 11, Designing Places)*

Designing Places emphasises the importance of sustainability in design, in terms of its impact on future communities' social, economic and environmental wellbeing, recognising the value of such attributes as a distinct identity, safe and pleasant spaces, ease of movement (particularly by foot), where "visitors feel a sense of welcome", adaptability to changing circumstances, good use of scarce resources, which all contribute to the wider quality of life. Designing Places also promotes greener lifestyles, energy efficiency, mixed uses, biodiversity, transport and water quality. It identifies the role landscape and the contribution its appearance, character, materials and ecologies can make to assist in making places regionally and scenically distinctive.

Designing Places sets out at page 18 seven values to which good design should pursue:

- *A well thought out design process, for example, with urban design frameworks and development briefs, can provide a clear basis for communication and negotiation. Developers benefit from a good degree of certainty about what is expected, avoiding delay and saving abortive work and unnecessary expense. The design process can resolve conflicts that might otherwise emerge, messily and expensively, at a later stage.*
- *Good design adds value to the investment that any development scheme represents.*
- *Good design creates places that work. People will use and value such places, supporting regeneration and bringing long term economic benefits. Well designed places attract customers and their workplaces keep their staff.*
- *Good design can reduce the long term costs of energy, maintenance, management and security.*

- *Well designed places establish and maintain a distinct identity, to the benefit of users and investors.*
- *Well designed places are easy to get to and move around. The thought put into connecting them into their surroundings pays off.*
- *Good design is a key to achieving social, economic and environmental goals of public policy, as laid down by central and local government. It can bridge the gap between aspirations and reality.*

All these attributes are evident in the design of Tornagrain.

### Master Planning

PAN 83 was produced in September 2008, as part of the Scottish Government's commitment to the design quality agenda, and encourages the development of sustainable communities with high quality environments, good transport connections and well-designed, energy efficient homes, to deliver a greater focus on the quality of places through effective masterplanning. It provides clear, concise, advice on what can often be considered a complex subject and requires effective well-structured masterplans to be undertaken for Scotland's new sustainable places. It promotes an integrated approach to engage the community, and others, to manage physical, social and economic change. Its aims are set out at page 3:

- *promote the use of masterplanning to create better places;*
- *explain how to achieve more effective masterplanning;*
- *achieve more consistency in the presentation of masterplans; and*
- *encourage good practice through a range of exemplar case studies.*

PAN 83 identifies the importance of a clear vision; writing a good brief; getting the right, committed, team, strong leadership and working together in partnership, as the key factors to successful masterplanning. It identifies the requirement of a multi-disciplinary team which can: interpret policy; assess the local economy and property market; appraise a site, and its wider area; manage and facilitate a participative process; draft and illustrate design principles; programme the development process; and project manage the masterplanning process.

PAN 83 divides the process of masterplanning into a structure of: site appraisal; analysis; developing the design; testing the concepts and finalising the masterplan; resulting in presentation, in a consistent format, of the proposal. It provides checklists to assist an understanding of the process. Also provides summaries and reviews of masterplanning examples in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Gigha, Stirling and the Highland Housing Fair.

PAN 83 seeks to ensure more consistency in the approach and content of master planning and provides a format to guide an understanding of what is required.

The Tornagrain approach to master planning has been consistent with the approach outlined in PAN 83 in terms of preparing, creating, processing and implementing a masterplan. The masterplanning approach and the format of the application submitted (and associated documentation) has also been the subject of prior discussion and agreement with the planning authority. More illustrative user-friendly summaries of the conclusions of the masterplanning process were distributed to the community in the form of a brochure at a final pre-application community exhibition at Petty Church, Tornagrain, on the 15th and 16th September 2008.

### Design Statement

One of the series of advice notes which address design in more detail is PAN 68, which encourages the use of Design Statements. It describes the design process and explains what a design statement is, why it is a useful tool, when it is required and how it should be prepared and presented. It encourages a more consistent approach to design statements, improved structure and inclusion of the relevant information sought. PAN 68 is addressed fully in the Design Statement which accompanies the planning application, and provides the context for the accompanying Design Code.

## Street, Housing and Open Space Design

PANs 76, 67, 65, (and SPP11) and PAN 74 provide national advice on more specific design issues in respect of Residential Streets, Housing Quality, Open Space and Affordable Housing, respectively.

Tornagrain's residential streets will conform with PAN 76 as they will promote development of a

successful place, which is: distinctive; safe and pleasant; easy to get to, and around; welcoming; adaptable and resource efficient. Tornagrain will support PAN 76 aspirations for higher quality design in new development by delivering a more flexible and innovative approach to its design of the residential streets to provide a more integrated environment between transport patterns, streetscape and buildings; an environment where people can safely interact with each other and take pleasure in the streetscape; create local identity; and make a positive contribution to its character.

Tornagrain's housing quality will conform with PAN 67 as it will deliver a sustainable new settlement through a co-ordinated approach to economic competitiveness, social justice and environmental quality. The design of the proposed new town has sought to provide the housing quality set out through Designing Places' six qualities of successful places, and through PAN 67's housing quality context, identity and connection considerations, and implementation in terms of layout, landscape, scale and mix, details and materials and maintenance. It will seek to ensure that the housing design quality reflects the context of its physical location and market conditions, reinforcing Scottish and highland identity and be fully integrated with the movement and settlement patterns of the wider area.

For reasons addressed in this Planning Statement and the SPG for the A96 Corridor, the open space proposals for Tornagrain will comply with the principles of PAN 65 through the provision of a well-distributed, well-connected and accessible supply of quality open space. It will contribute to social, environmental and economic values and meet the two key functions of protecting valuable areas of open space and ensuring provision of appropriate quality in, or within easy reach of, new development. Tornagrain will also provide open spaces which are integrated within green networks, promoted as identifiable 'places' and contribute to Designing Places' objectives for successful places in terms of location, design, management and adaptability.

The Tornagrain proposal is also consistent with PAN 74 as it proposes to include on-site provision for 25% affordable housing in an integrated tenure blind basis, as encouraged by The Highland Council's affordable housing target for new developments, and through a Section 75 Agreement.

## Sustainable Transport

### Introduction

Scottish Planning Policy 17: Planning for Transport highlights the role land use planning has in supporting the achievement of the Scottish Government's economic, environmental and social objectives, where *"the national focus on transport is now on delivery of projects"*, through the positive role which can be played by integration of land use and transport planning.

Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport PAN 75 emphasises that the design of development is important to the success of integration. Urban design principles should be used to encourage a modal switch.

It explains that the purpose of transport integration is to *"reduce the need to travel and offer more sustainable travel choices"* (Paragraph 6). Paragraph 7 of SPP 17 states that transport policies seek to achieve better integration by:

- Encouraging patterns of development that facilitates movement by public transport including provision of interchange facilities between modes;
- Encouraging freight servicing by rail or water;
- Provision of high quality public transport; and
- Effective management of motorised travel.

### Overview

SPP17 and PAN 74 encourage effective use of transport networks to support the economy, where early consideration of the interaction of accessibility, transport and development strategy, can assist in reducing the need to travel by creating the right conditions for greater use of sustainable transport modes. SPP 17 promotes land allocations which take account of transport opportunities and impacts, together with consideration of economic competitiveness, social justice, environmental quality and design objectives, as set out in the National Planning Framework. It encourages planning authorities to relate the settlement strategy to the capacity of the strategic transport network and identify where economic growth requires additional transport infrastructure. The aim is to ensure that planning policies and decisions are made in a way that recognises how the location and design of new development can support the better integration of land use and transport, while helping to reduce the overall need to travel.

SPP 17 highlights that one of the aims of policy is to “support and accommodate new investment and development” (Paragraph 16). Development locations should be supported where effective integration of networks for walking, cycling and public transport can be delivered. Where major new transport infrastructure is required this may be funded from both public and private sources including developer contributions. A masterplanning approach may be required to identify a contribution strategy for different developers and different phases of development.

SPP 17 encourages prioritising action on walking, cycling, public transport and motorised modes, planning for those whose mobility is impaired, and make land allocations related to transport opportunities. New development should maximise sustainable transport modes while constraining car parking to help to reduce dependence on car travel. It requires assessment of development proposals to ensure that location is right and Transport Assessment methodology applied. Travel plans should promote sustainable transport, and effects on trunk roads should be managed to avoid adverse impact on safe and efficient flow of traffic. Significant developer funding is encouraged where new trunk road junctions are proposed.

### Summary and Conclusion

The application is consistent with the principles of SPP 17 and PAN 74 as it has been led by early consideration of the interaction of accessibility, transport and development strategy to reduce the need to travel by creating the right conditions for greater use of sustainable transport modes.

The site was identified for a new settlement by The Highland Council’s allocation in its A96 SPG which took account of transport opportunities and impacts, together with consideration of economic competitiveness, social justice, environmental quality and design objectives. The SPG reflects how the location of new development can most effectively support integration of land use and transport, while helping to reduce the overall need to travel.

Although the proposal for Tornagrain is in outline only, the planning application is accompanied by a number of additional productions which provide a full analysis of the transport issues (through the Environmental Statement’s transport assessment) and explain and detail the sustainable transport benefits of the proposal. These additional productions include the principles for a Green Transport Plan (included within Technical Annex

11), Access Management Plan, indicative layout, Design Statement and Design Code.

The proposal will provide higher density development on a site ideally placed for the efficient use of existing transport infrastructure and sustainable transport opportunities. The site’s identification is also consistent with SPP 17’s encouragement for higher density development as it benefits from high levels of public transport accessibility, along high frequency corridors or at nodes in the network. The proposal provides for effective integration of networks for walking, cycling and the delivery of public transport. Appropriate provision will also be made through the A96 SPG’s developer protocols for financial contributions to the requisite transport infrastructure improvements.

## Other Significant Relevant Policy Issues

### Introduction

There are additional policies and guidance which are relevant to specific elements to the proposal in respect of town centres and retail, minerals, flood risk, carbon emissions, renewable energy, waste, community engagement and environmental impact assessment. These policy issues have been addressed briefly below.

### Town Centres and Retailing

Scottish Planning Policy 8 (SPP8) was released in 2005 and sets out the national policy for town centres, acknowledging their role as locations for a broad range of land uses, and the key uses which contribute to their economic growth and enhancement. Its annex provides advice on the consistent determination of related planning applications, how to plan for their development, and respond to proposals for town centre uses. The policy applies broadly to the range of uses appropriate to a town centre’s vitality and viability, including leisure, entertainment, recreation, food and drink, community facilities, civic space, culture and tourism, residential and business uses, as well as retail and commerce. SPP 8 encourages the establishment of a mix of uses in town centres, whilst recognising that they may not always be the best place to locate certain forms of retail and related development.

SPP 8 defines a town centre as extending to:

*“city, town and district centres, irrespective of size, that provide a diverse and sustainable mix of activities and land uses which create an identity that signals their function and wider role.” (Box 1 Paragraph 6)*

SPP 8 advises that a proposal for a town centre should be rigorously assessed against the provisions of the SPP and the development plan to ensure that the location is conveniently and safely accessible to all sectors of the community, and also the proposal is of high design quality and at an appropriate scale for its location.

A more detailed outline of the proposed town centre uses at Tornagrain is provided elsewhere in the Planning Statement (Chapter 3 on the Proposal) Its proposed location, design and philosophy, are explained in more detail in the accompanying Design Statement, Design Code and indicative layout, supplemented by the provisions of the Access Management Plan. The Environmental Statement's Socio-Economic Technical Annex also provides additional analysis and explanation of the retail element of the proposed town centre.

The Tornagrain proposal is consistent with SPP 8 as it will provide a town centre with *"a diverse and sustainable mix of activities and land uses and create an identity that signals their function and wider role"* (Paragraph 11). Its town centre location is conveniently and safely accessible to all sectors of the community and sufficient provision has been made in the accompanying design documents to ensure that an outline planning permission will promote an appropriate scale for its location and a high quality of design.

Tornagrain will provide the level of facilities for a District Centre, as prescribed in the Local Plan's criteria for the scale of residential population allocated for the site in the A96 SPG. The Annex to SPP8 provides a definition of a District Centre as one which will *"usually contain at least one food supermarket or superstore, a range of other shops and services such as banks, building societies and restaurants"* (pg 13, SPP 8). The Annex states that District Centre proposals should not exceed 30,000m<sup>2</sup>, though outside cities, a smaller size is likely to be more appropriate. The Local Plan proposes that a District Centre should include a supermarket or superstore. The SPP 8 Annex defines a food superstore as *"self-service stores selling mainly food goods, usually with more than 2,500 sq metres trading floorspace, with associated car parking"* which *"should be of an appropriate scale relative to their catchment area"* and where *"the range and level of goods and services should not have a significant detrimental impact on town centres identified within the network of centres in the development plan"* (pg 13, SPP 8).

The location and design for the Tornagrain town centre will promote its vitality and viability. It

is centrally located making it accessible to all residents of Tornagrain and IABP on foot, cycle or by public transport. Parking is dealt with sensitively both on street and to the rear of liner buildings to provide parking which is convenient for users but does not damage the streetscape. Retail, including a supermarket, leisure and civic uses will be concentrated in the town centre to encourage its use both during the day and at night. Its urban form, emulating other high streets and squares in traditional Scottish towns will create vibrant civic spaces which will encourage their use for gathering and boost retail and commercial activity. Finally the high street is one of the main thoroughfares of the town bringing with it the movement of people and vitality necessary for its commercial success.

The vitality of the town centre will be further enhanced by concentrating the town centre uses within the main street, whilst making alternative provision for other commercial employment opportunities of more 'business-oriented' activities (which intrinsically have less active frontages) to an envisaged business 'boulevard', to the north.

The proposal will also include local neighbourhood centres which will contain retail and community services for the day-to-day requirements of local neighbourhoods.

The proposed scale of retail development at Tornagrain, which also includes retail provision within the neighbourhood centres, of 12,800m<sup>2</sup>, together with 1,200m<sup>2</sup> of Financial and Professional Services and 6,000m<sup>2</sup> of Food and Drink, is consistent with the provisions of the Local Plan's allocation of a District Centre for the scale of development proposed, and SPP 8's Annex.

The Tornagrain town centre will also address SPP 8's key policy objectives to provide economic, social, health and environmental benefits for the wider community by:

1. Identifying the most appropriate location for retailing and other related activities to promote a distinct, competitive place to create a town centre which is attractive to investors and suited to the generation of employment opportunities.
2. Supporting an efficient, competitive and innovative retail and leisure sector which meets the needs of the entire community to create a climate that enables all sectors of the community to have access to a wide choice of shopping, leisure and other community services.

3. Promoting good quality design, including the promotion of sustainable management of water and energy, to enhance its quality and provide a safe, inclusive and attractive town centre for everyone, to improve the physical quality and sustainability of the town centre environment.
4. Providing a town centre and neighbourhood centres which are accessible to all residents by foot or cycle and a choice of modes of transport which reduce the need to travel by car.

For the reasons outlined above, the proposal is concluded to be consistent with the provisions of SPP 8 within the context of the network and hierarchy of town centres; the desire to focus the right development in a town centre; promote a high quality of environment, design and safety, and optimise sustainable accessibility.

### Minerals

SPP 4 was published in 2006 to provide national planning policy on minerals. Although there is no proposal for minerals extraction within the Tornagrain application, the site contains a former sand and gravel working. It is allocated (together with part of the application site which lies to the west of the Croy Road) as a safeguarded resource in the 2006 Local Plan, prior to the site's subsequent inclusion within the 2007 A96 SPG's allocation for a new town (discussed in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7 of this Planning Statement).

In recognition that mineral working can have a detrimental impact on local communities and the environment, SPP 4 states that the planning system "must ensure" that "extraction only takes place where those impacts can be made acceptable". SPP 4 also highlights the need for planning decisions in respect of minerals to accord with the principles of sustainable development and environmental justice, where:

*Communities should be afforded protection from the adverse effects of (minerals) developments within close proximity, that may have a significant impact on them or their environment. (Paragraph 7)*

These significant impacts extend to such considerations as traffic, blasting vibration, overpressure and flyrock, noise, dust, visual intrusion, groundwater, surface water, wastes and severance and footpaths.

This issue of working with communities is pursued further in the SPP, which states that:

*Where mineral extraction takes place close to communities or they are affected by the transporting of minerals, extraction can be regarded as an unwelcome environmental intrusion and nuisance; (Paragraph 15)*

*Where mineral working is to take place close to communities, proposals must address fully the implications for such communities in order to minimise local difficulties; (Paragraph 18)*

and

*Planning authorities and operators, in consultation with local communities, should seek to agree a buffer distance that is reasonable, taking into account the specific circumstances of each individual (minerals) proposal. This will include its size, duration, location, method of working, local topography and the characteristics of the various environmental effects likely to arise and the mitigation that can be achieved (Paragraph 18)*

Although PAN 50 is primarily concerned with Controlling the Environmental Effects of surface Mineral Workings it also provides general advice in respect of general concerns in respect of the potential conflicts and incompatibilities between minerals workings and the environment and the amenities of nearby residential property, clarifying that any buffer zones should be measured from the site boundary rather than the closest working face, and provides advice on the proximity of minerals workings to communities. PAN 50 advises planning authorities to take particular care in considering working in close proximity to settlements, confirming that mineral operations should not proceed "where they judge that mitigation measures are not sufficient to safeguard the quality of the local environment". PAN 50 draws from past experience in respect of mineral extraction in close proximity to residential property, concluding that "it may be difficult to provide adequate protection for nearby residents despite requirements for landscaping works such as bunds, screening and planting, especially where the workings will have an extended life" (Paragraph 13). PAN 50 advises that:

*Working in close proximity to residential property should only be contemplated in exceptional circumstances e.g. where there are clear, specific and achievable objectives e.g. for the removal of instability. (Paragraph 14)*

and where:

*such working should be for a limited and specified period without scope for extension. (Paragraph 14)*

Although the application site contains an area of sand and gravel (Hillhead Quarry) which the Local Plan seeks to safeguard commercially viable deposits, the planning authority's SPG for the A96 Corridor has revised its emerging policy for the site by its subsequent allocation for a new town, for which dwelling completions are sought from 2011.

Notwithstanding this, the proposed extraction of sand and gravel from the residual commercially economic deposits within the safeguarded zone would be negated by the incompatibility, and conflict in their extraction, with the environmental quality and amenity of the SPG's proposed dwelling completions within the site which will be due for occupation in two year's time.

Only approximately one quarter of the area which is safeguarded by the Local Plan contains deposits where extraction might be commercially viable. Within this area of commercially viable deposits:

- (a) an area has already been worked;
- (b) part lies below a woodland in the centre of the site (identified in the Local Plan as a woodland which should be maintained/enhanced for retention) and which the development seeks to retain through incorporation within the main parkland;
- (c) part straddles the Mid Coul Burn and will have negligible recoverable deposits without extensive re-grading and risk of affecting levels of drainage into, and pollution of waterways (and knock-on effects on its established wildlife habitat value).

In light of the various points made above it is concluded that there are clearly circumstances, in this instance, to prevent the extraction of sand and gravel from the site.

### **Flooding**

A minor part of the application site on the northern banks of the Mid Coul Burn are identified within SEPA's 1:200 year potential flood risk area. SPP 7 and PAN 69 provide national policy and advice on planning and flooding. These documents confirm that flood risk will be a material consideration and encourage developers to err on the side of caution in decision making where flooding is an issue. They encourage sustainable drainage whenever practicable and discourage unnecessary culverting of watercourses.

The small part of the site which has been identified as within SEPA's potential 1:200 year flood risk has been the subject of a Flood Risk Assessment, together with the requisite alleviation measures and sustainable drainage systems analysis. This information can be found in detail in the Environmental Statement.

### **Renewable Energy and Carbon Emissions**

National Policy on renewable energy is provided in SPP 6, which sets out how the planning system should manage the process of encouraging, approving and implementing renewable energy proposals in determining planning applications. National advice on appropriate renewable technologies and the reduction of carbon emissions are provided in PAN's 45 and 84, respectively.

In the interests of tackling climate change, and the need to ensure secure and diverse energy supplies, SPP 6 emphasises the importance of a continued increase in the use of clean and sustainable energy from renewable sources, including microrenewables, and identifies a target for generating 40% of Scotland's electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

Although the outline planning application for Tornagrain does not include detailed proposals for energy, the accompanying Energy Strategy recognises the role renewable and low to zero carbon energy technologies, combined with improved energy efficiency measures can play in reducing annual carbon emissions and the need for energy consumption such as space heating, cooling, and lighting, and reducing annual operational costs.

It is anticipated that the construction of Tornagrain will be the subject of a phased energy strategy to provide a sustainable low-carbon community, eventually progressing to 'Net Zero-Carbon' and 'Total Zero Carbon' standards.

The key considerations which have been identified for delivering a provisional energy strategy for Tornagrain are:

1. Optimisation of low energy design to reduced operational energy demand, in accordance with building regulation standards.
2. Investigation into the economies of scale, and flexibility to adapt networks to changing fuel supplies, of the potential for a site-wide distributed heat and/or power network, subject to realistic economic considerations.

3. Development of a methodology for the coordination of the complex implications of a site-wide strategy for distributed energy networks, such as long term ownership and operational issues, particularly in the event of Tornagrain being developed in land parcels by separate developers.
4. The scope for Tornagrain to benefit from local availability of biomass for the delivery of reduced carbon emissions through biomass CHP or biomass heating plant connected to a distribution network for the delivery of zero-carbon standards beyond 2016.
5. The scope to address Tornagrain's anticipated energy consumption profile for electricity as improvements in design and energy efficiency are anticipated to reduce the need for space heating.
6. The scope for a variety of options of building integrated renewables at Tornagrain and a combination of different technologies, either supplementing a site wide strategy or acting as part of a wholly building integrated solution will also be considered.

### **Waste Management**

SPP 10 provides the national policy on Waste Management, for which further advice is provided in PAN 63. The SPP has been prepared to reflect the national commitment to improving Scotland's waste management record and encourages planning authorities to provide for new waste management installations and help to further the National Waste Plan's objectives in relation to sustainable waste management, underpinned by Strategic Environmental Assessment.

SPP 10 identifies preferred options in the waste hierarchy to prevent, reuse and recycle, or otherwise recover, value from waste before disposal. To these ends it encourages local authorities' efforts to reduce municipal waste, recycle and compost waste, and divert it away from landfill. It encourages effective development planning to contribute to the objective of sustainable development, taking account of the relationship between economic, social and environmental priorities, and contains a table for effective waste management planning for new infrastructure within the European and Scottish policy context.

Although the Tornagrain application is in principle only, the outline application has addressed the issues of sustainable waste management as set out in SPP 10 and PAN 63 through provision of an accompanying Construction Environmental Management Plan and Waste Management Plan.

### **Community Engagement and Environmental Impact Assessment**

PAN 81 (Community Engagement: Planning with People) was released in 2007 to reflect the requirements of the new planning system, as it will be changed by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, in respect of the details for community involvement in modernising the development management process.

Although the secondary legislation (Regulations and Orders) intended to follow the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, in respect of the provisions of PAN 81, did not apply at the date of submission of the outline planning application for Tornagrain, the applicant undertook an extensive series of pre-application consultations with the local communities and others and this process has been summarised in Chapter 1 of this Planning Statement and detailed in the accompanying Pre-Application Community Consultation Report.

It is concluded that the applicant's community engagement process has been consistent with the advice of the PAN in terms of the applicant's role and the process undertaken in terms of involvement, support, planning, methodology, working together, sharing information, working with others, improvement, feedback, monitoring and evaluation.

As the proposal is also an EIA application, the applicants have also complied with their statutory obligations under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999, and the provisions of PAN 58 (Environmental Impact Assessment), to provide an Environmental Statement, including Main Report, Technical Annexes and a Non Technical Summary (NTS), to express an accurate and balanced conclusion of the Environmental Statement's key points in a clear, succinct and more readily understood summary.

## Summary and Conclusion

This Chapter of the Planning Statement has assessed the outline planning application for Tornagrain within the context of the principal relevant national planning policy statements and advice notes in respect of economic development, housing, design, sustainability and transport. It has also reviewed the proposal within the context of other relevant national policy areas such as town centres, retailing, minerals, flooding, renewable energy, carbon emissions, waste management, community engagement and EIA.

This analysis has concluded that the Tornagrain proposal will make a significant contribution to the principles and key objectives of the Scottish Government's policies on the economy, the sustainable provision of well-designed housing and sustainable transport; whilst contributing to, and complying with, other policies on town centres, retailing, flood risk and drainage, renewable energy, carbon emissions, waste management, community engagement and EIA.

# The Development Plan

## Introduction

The Development Plan for the site comprises the Highland Structure Plan, approved in 2001, and the Inverness local Plan, adopted in 2006. These should be considered alongside the Inverness City-Vision (2003), which was subsequently approved by the Scottish Executive, and The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007. This chapter is focused on the Structure Plan and Local Plan, and the 2007 Framework is then addressed separately in the subsequent chapter of this Statement.

## Highland Structure Plan 2001

The Structure Plan confirms, in Policy H2, that: *“The Council will support proposals for the establishment of comprehensively planned new settlements in meeting future housing demand in the Inner Moray Firth area”*, particularly where this will enable *“linking new housing development to business opportunities associated with the Airport and rail link to Inverness and Nairn”*. This policy commitment has been highlighted in the SPG’s Strategic Policy.

These Structure Plan aspirations were subsequently reflected in the Inverness City-Vision (2003)’s development theme of ‘the Expanding City’, which proposes that:

*Farsighted planning and collaboration with major landowners will create six new communities strategically located along the trunk road and rail route through to Nairn.*

The Structure Plan provides the planning authority’s long-term strategic land use planning framework within the context of its strategic Goals and Values.

This Planning Statement comments only briefly on the strategic policies of the Structure Plan which are relevant to all planning issues of the site. However, it highlights the key strategic planning policies which are relevant to the main issues with which the SPG’s allocation, and the Tornagrain proposal, are concerned.

## The Vision

The Structure Plan’s Vision was developed from an analysis of Highland’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and is founded upon the three interdependent principles of:

- *supporting the viability of communities;*
- *developing a prosperous and vibrant local economy; and*
- *safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environment.*

The Vision contains a number of inter-related Community, Economy and Environment elements:-

The Vision for the Community is for: an emphasis on health promotion and illness prevention; a wide choice of access to services and public transport; celebration of tradition and culture; a full choice of education opportunities; community involvement and empowerment; a strong sense of community and identity; interdependence and diversity; security of the Gaelic language; integrated and balanced development; good, safe living conditions; a shared sense of purpose; equality of opportunity; high quality housing; energy conservation and youth motivation.

The Vision for the Economy is for: high levels of efficiency; nationally aligned wage rates; best value service provision; a strong and prosperous region; a skilled and motivated workforce; growing business; developing skills; reduced social and economic disparity; business innovation, research and development; good internal and external communication links; increased provision of IT facilities; robust and diverse SMEs; quality and choice in all sectors; job and career choice; maximised capabilities and a high regional profile.

The Vision for the Environment is for: recognition within the European and global context; monitored use of natural resources; maintained and enhanced biodiversity; minimised land and water pollution; increased awareness of natural processes; sustainable management of maritime areas; increased environmental education; sustainable use of natural resources; a desirable place to live, learn work and relax; integrated environmental protection and enhancement; a choice of opportunities for recreation and public access; and community involvement in the management and stewardship of land.

The proposed new settlement at Tornagrain will deliver the Vision’s three principles of supporting the viability of communities, developing a prosperous and vibrant local economy, and safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environment. It will also, comprehensively, progress all elements of the Vision for the community, economy and environment.

## The Strategy

### Strategic Objectives

The Structure Plan sets out 15 Strategic Objectives for the delivery of its Vision:

- (a) *Community empowerment and decision-making;*
- (b) *The diversification of the regional and local economies;*
- (c) *The quality and number of employment opportunities;*
- (d) *Accessibility to and quality of housing;*
- (e) *The safety, enjoyment and diversity of towns and villages;*
- (f) *Standards of health for all;*
- (g) *The effectiveness and efficiency of infrastructure provision;*
- (h) *Accessibility to community facilities and services;*
- (i) *Accessibility to education and training;*
- (j) *The maintenance and enhancement of the cultural heritage, including landscape and Gaelic language;*
- (k) *The quality of the built environment;*
- (l) *Biodiversity;*
- (m) *The optimal use of renewable and non-renewable resources;*
- (n) *The efficiency of energy use;*
- (o) *The quality of air, water and land.*

The indicative design of the proposal has arisen from community empowerment and decision-making, influenced through the Charrette process, and Tornagrain will make a significant contribution to the Structure Plan's Objectives.

The proposal will deliver a town which has been designed to optimise safety and promote diversity and enjoyment; open space, sport recreation, and health facilities; effective, efficient infrastructure provision, through a street pattern which provides accessibility to education, training community facilities and services, by a walking/cycling network and discourages car travel, and has excellent public transport links; a street pattern, Design Brief and Design Code which

will provide the highest quality of built environment and reflect the best of the Highland's cultural heritage; a variety and number of quality employment opportunities; accessibility to, and wide variety of, quality housing (including affordable housing and residential institutions); and a Landscape Framework to increase biodiversity and maintain and enhance the landscape for the community.

Tornagrain will also seek to deliver the optimal use of renewable and non-renewable resources, the efficiency of energy use, and a high quality of air, water and land.

The proposal will, therefore, seek to deliver on all 15 of the Strategic Objectives that support the Structure Plan's Vision.

## General Policies

### Introduction

The Structure Plan provides the General Strategic Policies, which have emerged from its strategy, sustainability objectives and strategic themes. The General Strategic Policies provide THC's expectations for sustainable development which are vital to the implementation of the Plan's strategic themes, and these involve partnership working to integrate community, economic and environmental interests, and benefit local communities. The issues which are of particular relevance to the Tornagrain proposal set out in General Strategic Policies G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6 and G7.

### Policy G1 (Conformity with Strategy)

Strategic Planning Policy G1 states that:

*The Council will support developments, having regard to the plan's sustainable objectives, which promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the people of Highland.*

### Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability)

Structure Plan General Strategic Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability) provides the sustainability criteria against which development proposals will be assessed. This includes areas such as compatibility with services, accessibility, energy efficiency, avoidance of natural hazards and safeguard zones, recycling, residential amenity, non-renewable resources and transport routes, impact on designated protection areas. Policy GP2 requires sensitive high quality design, lively well-used and safe environments, and which contribute to the community's economic and social development, whilst accommodating the needs of all sectors of the community.

Tornagrain will make a contribution to Policy G2's objectives for design for sustainability because it will be compatible with services and transport routes, be highly accessible and energy efficient, whilst avoiding (or make appropriate mitigation) for natural hazards, designated protection areas and safeguard zones and non-renewable resources. It will promote recycling, a high quality residential amenity, sensitive high quality design, lively well-used and safe environments, and contribute to the community's economic and social development, whilst accommodating the needs of all sectors of the community.

### **Policy G3 (Impact Assessment)**

General Policy G3 requires applicants for developments which are likely to have significant environmental and/or socio-economic impacts to undertake impact assessments and, where these have significant adverse impacts they will only be approved where

- (a) no reasonable alternative exists; or
- (b) if there is demonstrable over-riding strategic benefit; or
- (c) if satisfactory overall mitigation measures are incorporated.

As previously noted, the application has been the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment and the findings of this are summarised at chapter 8 of this Statement. With specific reference to General Policy G3, it can be argued that:

- (a) no reasonable alternative exists - THC's A96 SPG identifies the application site as the most appropriate for a proposed new settlement, by virtue of its proximity to the transport interchange and employment opportunities at IABP, and through an assessment of the wider A96 Corridor and its Landscape Framework;
- (b) there is an over-riding strategic benefit for the proposal, in terms of THC's aspirations for the A96 Corridor and the Dalcross zone (and Structure Plan's confirmation that *"The Council will support proposals for the establishment of comprehensively planned new settlements in meeting future housing demand in the Inner Moray Firth area"* (Policy H2), particularly where this will enable *"linking new housing development to business opportunities associated with the Airport and rail link to Inverness and Nairn"* (Policy H2); and
- (c) overall mitigation measures are incorporated within the proposal and these have been detailed in the accompanying Landscape Framework and Environmental Statement.

### **Policy G4 (Community Benefit and Commitment)**

General Strategic Policy G4 promotes community benefit and commitment, and outlines the Council's expectation to *"benefit the local community"* and *"wellbeing of the Highlands"* through development agreements to assist the funding of infrastructure, socio-economic stability and local community initiatives.

The applicants are committed to their obligation for the infrastructure funding contributions required by the A96 SPG's developers protocol, the provision of 25% affordable housing and all of the other community facilities including: nursing home accommodation, public transport facilities, a secondary school, four primary schools, community hall, place of worship, library, adult education, healthcare, emergency services, swimming pool and sports facilities and sports fields, play areas, shops, professional services, cafes, restaurants and bars, hotels, petrol stations and employment opportunities.

For these reasons the proposal will comply with General Strategic Policy G4.

### **Policy G5 (Integration of Environmental and Community Interests)**

General Strategic Policy G5 states that The Council will:

*support measures that link the protection, enhancement, understanding and enjoyment of the natural and cultural heritage with the sustainability and vitality of local communities.*

The proposal will deliver a sustainable, vibrant community, incorporating such *"measures that link the protection, enhancement, understanding and enjoyment of the natural and cultural heritage"* as its Landscape Framework, Design Statements and Design Code, abundant green areas and corridors of open space, woodland management practices, increased biodiversity, and Access Management Plan. Consequently, and within the terms of Policy G5, the proposal should have the support of the planning authority.

### **Policy G6 (Conservation and Promotion of the Highland Heritage)**

General Strategic Policy G6 encourages conservation and promotion of the Highland heritage, stating that:

*The Council will seek to conserve and promote all sites and areas of Highland identified as being of a high quality in terms of nature conservation, landscape, archaeological or built environment.*

The proposal will promote conservation and Highland heritage, consistent with Policy G6, as the SPG's selection of the site for a new settlement was the result of a strategic environmental assessment and through its growth strategy and Green Framework. The site lies outwith all designated sites and areas of significant landscape, scenic, archaeological, built heritage, ecological, scientific, marine and wildlife significance and will conserve such (outlying) areas, as required by Policy G6.

In addition, Tornagrain will provide a Landscape Framework, significant tree planting of traditional species, land management practices, habitat provision and green corridors, increased biodiversity; and a Design Guide and Design Code to deliver the highest quality of streetscapes and building layout, form and detail, to reflect the best elements of vernacular Highland settlements and buildings.

### **Policy G7 (Partnerships and Community Planning)**

General Strategic Policy G7 promotes community planning and a partnership approach in developing and implementing community planning initiatives at both the strategic and local level.

The proposal is the product of extensive community planning at the strategic level through the community public consultation processes which resulted in the Structure Plan's confirmation that *"The Council will support proposals for the establishment of comprehensively planned new settlements in meeting future housing demand in the Inner Moray Firth area"*, particularly where this will enable *"linking new housing development to business opportunities associated with the Airport and rail link to Inverness and Nairn"* (Policy H2); and the Inverness City-Vision (2003)'s aspiration to develop the A96 Corridor through the creation of *"new communities strategically located along the trunk road and rail route to Nairn"*.

The proposal is also the product of extensive local community planning, where a partnership approach was also taken in developing, through the 'Collaboration for Success' process, which led to the approval of the A96 SPG and through the Tornagrain Charrette process which led the design for, and implementation of, the proposal process.

For these reasons, the proposal is the product of both a strategic and local level community planning and partnership approach to developing and implementing community planning initiatives, and is consistent with Policy G7.

## **Community**

### **Introduction**

Within the context of the General Strategic Policies, the Structure Plan also provides subject-specific policies under the headings of Community, Economy, Environment and Infrastructure. This Section will deal with the Community Policies, under the Structure Plan's sub-headings of Housing, Retailing, Services and Facilities and Sport and Recreation.

### **Housing**

The Structure Plan's housing projections, as outlined in Policy H1 for the period 1998-2017 are not directly applicable to the proposals completions period of 2011-2047. However, Policy H2 is directly relevant to the proposal as it provides the Structure Plan's Policy for New Settlements.

Policy H2 states that :

*The Council will support proposals for the establishment of comprehensively planned new settlements in meeting future housing demand in the Inner Moray Firth area which accord with the General Strategic Policies. Further locational information will be provided by The Council as part of a strategy map and commentary for the future distribution of housing land. Such proposals will also be assessed against the following additional criteria:*

- *Location relative to housing need and demand;*
- *Mix of housing tenures;*
- *Proximity to existing and potential employment opportunities;*
- *Opportunities for generation and support of local employment;*
- *Location relative to public transport infrastructure; and*
- *Range of services and facilities.*

The Tornagrain proposal is consistent with Policy H2 as it will deliver a *"comprehensively planned new settlement"* to meet *"future housing demand in the Inner Moray Firth area"* and, for the reasons already provided in this Chapter, accord with the General Strategic Policies.

The proposal is consistent with Policy H2 as it will accord with the *"further locational information"* provided by the planning authority's strategy map and commentary for the future distribution of housing land, as provided in the A96 Corridor's 2007 SPG.

The proposal is consistent with Policy H2 as it will: be located to meet the planning authority's identified housing need and demand, in close proximity to

existing employment opportunities at Inverness Airport and Dalcross Industrial Estate, potential employment opportunities at IABP, and public transport infrastructure. It will provide opportunities for generation and support of local employment and a wide range of services, facilities and mix of housing tenures.

The proposal will also accord with Policies H4, H5 and H6 (Affordable Housing) as the landowner will provide 25% of affordable high quality housing through a S.75 Agreement.

The proposal will accord with Policy H7 (Housing for Varying Needs) as it will provide a range of house types of the appropriate scale and type for its location, residential institutions, and through a proportion affordable high quality housing through a S.75 Agreement.

Appropriate street provision will provide access, in accordance with the principles outlined in Policy H8 (Access Arrangements for New Development) as led by the Department of Transport/ DCLG's Manual for Streets 2007 and its emerging Scottish counterpart, Designing Streets.

### Retailing

Structure Plan Retail Policy R1 (Shopping Hierarchy) supports *"development proposals which consolidate the shopping hierarchy and enhance the role of individual settlements as shopping centres"* and Policy R2 (Everyday Shopping Needs) encourages local provision of facilities to meet everyday needs.

The proposal will provide a 'District Centre', as defined in the Local Plan, which will sustain all but the higher order retail needs of the proposed new community, enhance the role of the settlement as shopping centres, and deliver a consolidated shopping hierarchy, in accordance with Policy R1. The residents' everyday shopping needs will be provided, in accordance Policy R2, at the town centre and more locally, in neighbourhood centres.

### Services and Facilities

The Structure Plan's policies for services and facilities, education, health and social work and community safety, are set out in Service Policies S1, S2, S3 and S4, respectively. Policy S1 encourages appropriate provision of community facilities in local centres. Policy S2 expresses the planning authority's support for the development of educational and associated facilities, particularly where they contribute to the social and economic development of the community. Policy S3 encourages the provision of domiciliary

services for community care in all sectors and Policy S4 promotes community safety.

The proposal complies with the Structure Plan's Services and Facilities Policies S1, S2, and S3, because it will contribute to the social and economic development of the community, provide education facilities for a secondary school, four primary schools and life-long learning, domiciliary services for community care such as nursing homes, and other community facilities such as: public transport facilities; community hall; place of worship; library; healthcare; emergency services; wooded areas, parkland and other green recreational open spaces; a swimming pool and sports facilities; sports fields, play areas, allotments, and bowling greens. The indicative layout, Design Statement and Design Code have been prepared to address the issue of crime in accordance with the principles of Policy S4, and so to promote and develop community safety.

### Sport and Recreation

The relevant Structure Plan policies for Sport and Recreation are provided in SR1, SR2, SR5, SR6 and SR7. Policies SR1 and SR2 oblige Local Plans to identify existing sport and recreation deficiencies and new opportunities, and standards for the provision of new open space. Policies SR5, SR6 and SR7 encourage improved access for informal recreation, an integrated system of paths and improved use of countryside around towns.

The proposal is consistent with Policies SR1 and SR2 as it will provide a total of 79.4ha of green open space which is well in excess of the 33.9 ha required by the Local Plan. The proposed open space includes 14.65 ha of formal recreational play areas comprising 13 NEAPs and 10 LEAPs, a further 12.87 ha of sports pitches and 1.5 ha of allotments.

The proposal will also comply with Policies SR5, SR6 and SR7 by encouraging improved access for informal recreation, an integrated system of paths (detailed in the accompanying Access Management Plan) and improved use of countryside around towns by providing access to the managed woodland framework in which the site lies.

While not directly relevant to the proposal, the Structure Plan contains additional sport and recreation policies in respect of golf (SR3), launching and mooring (SR4) and skiing (SR8 and SR9). Tornagrain is well located for access to all these facilities. There are a number of quality golf courses in the Inverness and Nairn area, including the emerging Castle Stuart Golf Links; a new marina has been approved at Whiteness, and the Highland's main ski centre at Aviemore is within an hour's drive.

## Economy

### Introduction

This section will deal with the strategic Economy Policies, under the Structure Plan's sub-headings of Business and Industry, Tourism, Agriculture, Forestry and Minerals.

### Business and Industry

Business and Industry Policy B7 confirms that small-scale business development will be appropriate with new housing development, and encouraged in rural areas. The proposal is consistent with Policy B7 as it includes 7,000m<sup>2</sup> floor area of new high quality business; and the site lies to the immediate south of the Local Plan's allocated Economic Development Initiative for the Inverness Airport Business Park, which is the subject of a separate 2008 outline planning application.

### Agriculture

Agriculture Policy A1 (Safeguarding of Agricultural Land) presumes against development of prime quality or locally important agricultural land except where essential to the interests of the local community and no reasonable alternative location is feasible. Prime Agricultural Land is classified as within Macauley Institute Classes 1, 2 and 3.1.

There is no Class 1 agricultural land within the site. Approximately 26ha. of the site contains Classes 2 and 3.1 agricultural land which will be lost to urban development. While the loss of prime agricultural land is unfortunate, it only extends to 11% of the site area.

The presence of prime agricultural land extends across the fertile plain which follows the A96 from Inverness to Nairn. As such, it would be likely to be affected by an alternative site of this scale along the A96 Corridor.

The site has also been identified as an appropriate site for a new settlement through THC's strategic environmental assessment and subsequent allocation within The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007 SPG.

The proposal is, therefore, consistent with Policy A1 as *"the development is essential to the interests of the local community and no reasonable alternative location is feasible"*.

### Forestry

Structure Plan Policy F3 states that *"The Council will encourage the conservation and expansion of native woodland"*. The proposal is consistent with Structure Plan Policy F3 as the proposal has been designed within

a Landscape Framework in which the settlement is contained through the retention and enhancement of existing woodland. The only woodland being removed is part of a commercial plantation already programmed for felling. The proposal will retain and enhance the existing woodland in the centre of the site through additional planting and its inclusion in the community's main parkland. It will also comply with Policy F3 by providing a landscape plan which will enhance visual amenity, increase biodiversity and include significant levels of new, native species, tree planting.

Policies F4 and F5 encourage more community involvement and understanding of their woodlands and amenity woodlands. The proposal will contribute to these policies through its Landscape and Access Management Plans which will introduce substantial tree planting, enhance visual amenity, increase biodiversity; and provide the community with woodland access, amenity woodland, and informative signs and woodland information.

### Minerals

Structure Plan Policies M3 and M4 seek to protect mineral deposits of known value from other development and encourages local plans to provide a cordon sanitaire around such minerals workings. In recognition of specific circumstances to these very generalised policies, Structure Plan Paragraph 2.11.12 states that *"New developments sensitive to noise, dust and if relevant blasting (especially housing and other residential establishments) would not be appropriate in close proximity to mineral workings"*. Hillhead Quarry is not one of the strategic sand and gravel sites identified for protection in the Local Plan's General Policy GP8, and the issue of the site's inclusion of the Local Plan's safeguard zone for sand and gravel deposits has been addressed in more detail elsewhere in this Planning Statement. It is concluded that there are specific circumstances, in this instance, to prevent the extraction of sand and gravel from the site.

## Environment

### Introduction

This section will deal with the Environment Policies under the Structure Plan's sub-headings of Nature Conservation, Landscape and Built and Cultural Heritage.

### Nature Conservation

Nature Conservation Policy N1 (Nature Conservation) states that:

New developments should seek to minimise their impact on the nature conservation resource and enhance it wherever possible. The Council will seek to conserve and promote all sites according to the following hierarchy:

- *sites and species of international importance - Developments which would have an adverse effect on the conservation interests for which a site has been designated will only be permitted where there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive) would be affected, prior consultation with the European Commission is required unless the development is necessary for public health or safety reasons.*
- *sites of national importance - Developments will only be permitted where the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised or any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social and economic benefits of national importance.*
- *sites of local importance - Developments will be assessed for their effects on the interests of sites of local conservation importance and will be resisted where these are judged to be unreasonably detrimental.*

The application site lies outwith all designated nature conservation sites of international importance, national importance and local importance.

Evidence has been found within the site of the following species of national and international importance: Slavonian Grebe, Otter, Badger, Common Goldeneye, Red Kite, Northern Goshawk, Peregrine, Barn Owl, Redwing, Common Crossbill; Red Squirrel, Palmate Newt, and Bats.

The Environmental Statement's Technical Annex on Ecology has taken due cognizance of the provisions contained within the Inverness and Nairn Biodiversity Action Plan 2004, to identify habitats and species for which the area is important and actions to enhance bio-diversity.

The proposal includes provisions for improved woodland management, open space and corridors and improved biodiversity proposals, and these are contained in the landscape proposals and detailed and assessed within the Environmental Statement's

Technical Annexes on Ecology and Landscape. These documents also provide details of the mitigation of development impact on the designated species and habitat provision and enhancement. Although the proposal will promote biodiversity through landscape treatment of water bodies, these are not considered to represent a significant risk of bird strike to the aviation interests of the airport due to their small scale, urban setting and distance from the airstrip and landing routes. A confidential Badger Protection Plan has been submitted to SNH in support of a formal application for a Badger Licence, which will be determined by SNH.

For the reasons detailed in this Planning Statement, and the Environmental Statement, it has been concluded that the proposals will be consistent with Policy N1 as it will avoid designated nature conservation sites of international, national or local significance and there will be improved management of areas to provide improved and diversified habitats for species of major importance.

Policy N2 (Interpretation and Enjoyment) states that "*Proposals for the interpretation, enjoyment and otherwise positive management of the nature conservation resource will generally be supported*". For the reasons outlined above, and through the proposed Access Management Plan, the proposal will be consistent with Policy N2 as it will provide for the interpretation, enjoyment and positive management of the nature conservation resources within the site.

Structure Plan Policies N4 and N5 (Local Biodiversity Action Plans) require THC to promote local biodiversity action plans and consider development proposals within their context. The proposal is consistent with these policies as its ecological assessment and mitigation proposals, as detailed in the Environmental Statement, have been progressed and prepared within the context of the Highland Biodiversity Action Plan.

The proposal will be consistent with the Structure Plan's Nature Conservation Policies N1 and N2 as the application site has been identified to avoid all designated nature conservation sites of international, national or local significance; there will be improved management of areas to provide improved and diversified habitats for species of major importance; a confidential Badger Protection Plan has been prepared in support of a Badger Licence application to SNH; and an Access Management Plan will provide for the interpretation, enjoyment and positive management of the nature conservation resources.

### **Landscape**

As the application site lies outwith the designated landscapes of international importance, National Scenic Areas and Areas of Great Landscape Value, Landscape Policy L4 (Landscape Character) applies:

*The Council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining and enhancing present landscape character in the consideration of development proposals.*

The Tornagrain masterplan process has been led by the accompanying Landscape Framework which was prepared within the context of the Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Assessment and the Green Framework contained within The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007. Further details and explanation of this is provided in the Landscape Framework and assessed within the Environmental Statement's Technical Annex on Landscape and Visual Amenity.

### **Built and Cultural Heritage**

Policy BC1 (Preservation of Archaeological Sites) states that:

*Archaeological sites affected by development proposals should be preserved, or, in exceptional circumstances where preservation is impossible, the sites will be recoded at developers' expense to professional standards. Provision will be made in Local Plans for the appropriate protection, preservation and enhancement of archaeological sites.*

Archaeological investigation, detailed in the Archaeology Annex of the Environmental Statement, has concluded that there are no significant archaeological sites within the application site. In the interests of compliance with Policy BC1, it is proposed that an appropriate archaeological method statement will be submitted to THC, upon approval of the outline permission.

## **Infrastructure**

### **Introduction**

This section will deal with the Infrastructure Policies under the Structure Plan's sub headings of Transport and Communications, Waste, Utilities and Natural Hazards.

### **Transport and Communications**

Policies TC1, TC2 and TC3, support measures to achieve a shift from private car to alternative forms of transport, multi-modal interchanges and an integrated Local Transport Strategy. The proposal is consistent with these policies as it will introduce a new town adjacent to a major multi-modal road and air interchange (where planning permission has been granted for a rail halt / park-and-ride) and incorporates measures to achieve a shift from private car to alternative forms of more sustainable transport given accessibility to the A96 public transport interchange, the provision of public further transport facilities, maximum pedestrian permeability throughout the site particularly between

residential areas and the town centre, employment land and neighbourhood centres, provision for cycles, shared surfaces and other pedestrian priority devices. The applicants will take a partnership approach to pursue the delivery of an integrated transport strategy for the Dalcross area, through a legal agreement, in accordance with THC's Developer Protocol for the delivery of transport infrastructure funding, as prescribed in The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework.

Policies TC4 and TC5 encourages early improvement of the A96 Stoneyfield-Auldearn (including Nairn bypass) for enhancement of the principal Highland road network and recommends improvements to the A96 Inverness – Aberdeen Road be associated where possible by funding for improvements to the complementary railway routes. The proposal is consistent with Recommendation TC4 and TC5 as the proposed new town forms part of The Highland Council's strategy for the A96(T) as a strategic growth corridor, which would be further promoted by improvements to the A96 between the site and Inverness and the adjacent railway line. It is also proposed to comply with Policy TC9 in the provision of associated car parking in accordance with The Council's general maximum car parking standards. The masterplan and indicative layouts have demonstrated that this can be achieved within the site, and will be the subject of subsequent reserved matters applications. The proposal will also promote more integrated transport, quality of environment, and promote cycling and cycle provision, as encouraged by Policy TC10.

### **Waste**

The proposal is consistent with Waste Policies W1, W2 and W3. The planning application has been accompanied by a Waste Management Plan which will provide the best practicable environmental option for a sustainable integrated waste system, identifies the waste implications of the development and measures taken to minimise and manage the waste generated, enabling locally generated waste to be reused or recycled, where viable and sustainable. The proposal is also consistent with Policy W12. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement which contains a Technical Annex on Air Pollution which concludes that high quality air standards are maintained.

### **Utilities**

The proposal is consistent with Utilities Policies U1 and U2 as it is proposed to enhance the landscape character of the area by providing an underground distribution of electricity, safeguard the water resources of the Mid Coul Burn from the development, and avoid significant reduction in the volume and quality of water.

## Natural Hazards

Structure Plan Policy NH1 (Flood Consultation Areas) states that within “areas with a perceptible risk of flooding”:

*all development proposals will be assessed for their compatibility with the flood risk and with the flow character of the watercourse.*

The application site contains Mid Coul Burn, which SEPA's 1:200 year flood risk plan (see this Statement's Chapter on the Local Plan for details) identifies as an area with a “perceptible risk of flooding”. This issue has been fully addressed in the Drainage and Flood Risk assessments in the Environmental Statement, which concludes that while the flood risk is relatively low, the proposal has been designed to incorporate the requisite mitigation measures and installations. For these reasons, the proposal is consistent with Policy NH1.

## Inverness City-Vision 2003 & Inverness Local Plan 2006

The Inverness Local Plan was adopted in March 2006, and therefore pre-dates the A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007.

The Foreword to the Local Plan explains how following confirmation of ‘city’ status for Inverness in 2000, THC produced the Inverness City-Vision (2003) (subsequently approved by the Scottish Executive) to provide a strategic agenda for the Inverness area and provide a vision for the Local Plan to take forward. The proposal is consistent with the City-Vision's aspiration to develop the A96 Corridor through the creation of “new communities strategically located along the trunk road and rail route to Nairn”.

Although the Local Plan outlines a long-term Vision for the Inverness area to 2021, it only deals with development to 2011 (as opposed to the SPG timescale of 2041). As none of the Tornagrain development will be completed for occupation before 2011, only the Local Plan's Vision, rather than its more specific policies and allocations, apply to the proposal (and even this will only extend to the first third of the build-out period).

As such, it is considered that the Structure Plan of 2001 and Framework of 2007 provides the most appropriate strategic and local level planning policy guidance for the proposal as they apply to the period 2011-2041. This Planning Statement has therefore primarily sought to assess the development against the guidance set out in the SPG, and this assessment is set out in more detail in the next chapter.

## The Highland Wide Local Development Plan

The 2006 Planning etc. (Scotland) Act introduced a new system of development planning and plan making. Accordingly, the Highland Council has undertaken to prepare The Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HWLDP), which will guide future development for the next 20 years. The Highland Council expects to consult on the initial draft HWLDP during 2009 with a view to adopting the plan in 2011.

It is expected that the HWLDP will cover the plan period between 2011 and 2031, thereby covering the majority of the build-out period for Tornagrain. As such, the Council has proposed to integrate the provisions of the A96 SPG within the HWLDP. Reiterating this point, the Highland Development Plan Scheme states that:

*“The framework for the A96 corridor was approved in 2007 and we will use it as planning guidance until the Highland Wide Local Development Plan is complete.” (Page 19)*

In light of the comments set out above, no further analysis of the adopted Inverness Local Plan and emerging Highland-Wide Plan is considered appropriate for this Statement.

## Summary and Conclusion

This review of the provisions of the Development Plan, and assessment of the Tornagrain proposal within it, has demonstrated that the proposal complies with its primary, and most salient, strategic planning policies. Moreover, it will make a major contribution to delivering the Structure Plan's Vision, Strategic Policies, Community Plan and Strategic Themes.

Similarly, the application accords with the vision set out in both the Inverness City-Vision and adopted Inverness Local Plan.

The emerging Highland-Wide Local Development Plan makes reference to the to the A96 Framework of 2007, and it is the policy context of this document and its relevance to the Tornagrain proposal that is considered in more detail in the next chapter.

# A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007

## Introduction

The Highland Council approved The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework in September 2007, as supplementary planning guidance for the A96 Corridor, to be incorporated into the Council's Highland-wide Local Development Plan. The Development Framework therefore provides THC's principal and most recent planning policy guidance for the application site.

THC have identified the Inverness-Nairn area as a strategic corridor "*which offers huge potential for the continued growth of both the City of Inverness and the Highlands as a whole*". The Development Framework sets out THC's supplementary planning guidance for the A96 Corridor for the 30 year period from 2011 to 2041.

The Development Framework (DF) is a pro-active planning document which extends the traditional scope of a planning authority's land use policy and allocations by "*making places work through a collaborative approach*". The DF also enables, assists and co-ordinates delivery of THC's policy objectives through a partnership approach with the community and infrastructure and development stakeholders, to optimise planning and design quality and ensure co-ordinated action to deliver the requisite transportation, infrastructure provision, funding and development objectives.

## Masterplan and Green Framework

The planning application site is identified in the DF's Strategy drawing (DF Figure 1) as a Potential New Settlement. To the immediate north of the application site, the Strategy also includes dualling (and re-routing to the north) of the A96 Trunk Road, a new Rail Halt, and Airport and Business Park expansion.

The Green Framework ensures that the urban growth will be embedded within a cohesive package to enhance environmental assets and to deliver lasting and substantial benefits. It seeks to protect and enhance critical environmental and heritage assets, such as the Moray Firth SAC, SSSIs, SPAs and Ramsar sites, the airport noise-sensitive zone, critical views and historic and cultural settings; through safeguarding, land management and accessibility.

The application site is allocated under 'Development Proposals' in The Green Framework drawing (see DF Figure 2). It also indicates the A96 re-routed to the north of the site and through the IABP 'Development Proposal' zone.

The existing woodland to the southeast of the application site is allocated as a safeguard Green Wedge / Buffer, while the High Wood, to the south west of the site is safeguarded against development.

There are two 'Major Viewpoints' on the site boundary. The first, a westwards view from the western boundary of the site. The second is a northerly view from where the Croy Road meets the southern boundary of the site. There are only two other 'Major Viewpoints' which pass over the site: one from Croy, over the designated Green Wedge/Buffer and across the eastern tip of the application site; and a more distant (northwards) view from Culloden Battlefield, from which the application site lies within its easterly periphery.

## Dalcross

Dalcross is identified, within the DF's Whiteness and Dalcross chapter, as an area in which there will be three principal development proposals: Inverness Airport expansion; IABP; and the new settlement of Tornagrain.

The DF states that Tornagrain will accommodate a population of some 9,500 in 4,500 homes, led by Smart Growth and the principles of 'new urbanism', and be fully integrated in the Statutory Development Plan.

The DF contains a relatively detailed indicative street-layout plan of how Tornagrain might be designed, and an artist's perspective of a mixed use streetscene.

## Delivery and Strategic Infrastructure

The DF confirms that the majority of the development will be delivered from 2011, and identifies that the planning application site lies within the Tornagrain Development Zone (see DF Figure 7), which includes the site of the airport and IABP, and to which the DF's Corridor Outcomes are tabled under 'Dalcross'. It proposes that developer's contributions will be secured through the planning process by S.75 Agreements.

The DF's proposed development within the Dalcross / Tornagrain Development Zone is provided in Table 8 overleaf.

Table 8: Development Framework Allocations for Dalcross

Uses	Homes	Retail	Business	Industry	Schools	Health	Leisure Other
Units	4,500						
Area (m <sup>2</sup> )		1,500	238,431	131,097	21,000	1,500	24,530

As the DF makes no provision for any houses in the Airport expansion or in IABP, the 4,500 houses are all allocated within the new Tornagrain settlement and, as such have been allocated within the planning application site to which this Planning Statement relates. The IABP planning application proposes to develop 212,780m<sup>2</sup> of Business and 96,271m<sup>2</sup> of Industry, which would leave residual DF capacity for 25,651m<sup>2</sup> for Business and 34,826m<sup>2</sup> for Industry.

The DF's proposed phasing for the A96 Corridor is contained within a Development Phasing Matrix.

## Section 75 Agreement and Developer Protocols

As noted above, the applicants are supportive of the principle of ensuring infrastructure delivery through the mechanism of a section 75 legal agreement attached to any planning permission that is forthcoming, plus the creation of a Joint Venture company for the Dalcross Zone. More detailed commentary on the structure of these delivery mechanisms is set out in the DF at Section 8, where it is noted that the section 75 agreement will address the basis and type of the planning obligations relevant to the proposed development, but it will be the joint venture companies that are responsible for the cost apportionment, procurement and delivery of the necessary infrastructure. It is expected that relationships with key public agencies will need to be formed as appropriate to deliver certain elements of infrastructure e.g. with Scottish Water, Transport Scotland, etc.

The DF identifies 3 types of infrastructure works, on which each individual joint venture company will be required to contribute to fund and deliver. These are works:

- directly relating to development within a given zone;
- benefiting the Corridor as a whole and therefore to be funded through public subsidy; and
- those concerned with the Central Development Zone, where given its dispersed nature, a separate joint venture would not be appropriate.

In making an initial assessment of the cost of delivering all necessary infrastructure throughout the Corridor, the DF at page 36 makes some assumptions as to the level of funding to be provided by the public and private sector overall. The key points to note are:

- Total estimated infrastructure cost for the Corridor of £326.23 Million.
- Estimated infrastructure cost for the Dalcross Zone of £64.73 Million.
- Funding split overall of 71% private 29% public sector.
- Within this, and estimate of public sector funding intervention of specific issues of 50% for the A96, 25% for schools and 25% for greenspace. It should however be noted that the assumption in respect of the A96 does not take account of the recent Scottish Government announcement referenced earlier in this Statement that identifies the upgrades to the A96 as one of Transport Scotland's post 2012 priority projects.

As a matter of principle, the applicants are supportive of the general approach to delivery of infrastructure that is set out in the DF and summarised above. To this end, the partners within the Dalcross Zone have already commenced discussions around the creation and structure of the relevant joint venture company. These parties include: Moray Estates; IABP Ltd and Highlands and Islands Airports Limited.

The detail associated with the definition and timescale for delivery of each of the relevant planning obligations will require further discussion between the applicants and the Council as part of the process of finalising the section 75 agreement. Notwithstanding this, the applicants consider that it would be appropriate to summarise now the extent of these obligations, timescale and broad mechanism for delivery of the works. This is set out briefly below.

**Transport** – As set out in Technical Annex 11 of the Environmental Statement, improvements to the Mid Coul roundabout are proposed in the period up to 2021. Further improvements to the A96 including possible realignment to the north are identified post 2021. However, any improvements will be dependent on the pace of the Tornagrain development. As noted earlier in this Statement, improvement to the A96 post 2012 is now identified as a priority project for Transport Scotland. Traffic modelling is recommended to monitor impact and the timescale for improvements to road infrastructure. The funding of any works to be provided by the developer and Transport Scotland as appropriate.

Appropriate provision within the development plus necessary financial contributions will be made by the developer to the relevant public agency as agreed through the section 75 agreement.

**Utilities** – this will include matters such as water supply, waste water treatment, surface and flood water management, gas, electricity and telecommunications. A number of these issues are addressed in detail with the Technical Annexes included with the Environment Statement. It is expected that upgrades to existing and new infrastructure provision will be pursued by the relevant statutory authority as demand requires, and funded jointly by the developer and the public sector.

**Schools** – 4 double stream primary and 1 secondary school are proposed. It is expected that library and adult education will be provided as part of the secondary school, and pre-school

provision will be part of the primary schools. The phasing of this infrastructure is set out in more detail in Technical Annex 8 of the Environmental Statement. Funding of this provision to be provided jointly by the developer and the public sector.

**Other Civic Buildings** – these will include: emergency services (to accommodate the needs of the police, fire and ambulance), health centre, and community hall/meeting place. Funding for this provision to be provided jointly by the developer and public sector.

**Sports/Recreation/Open Space** – the indoor sports provision is proposed to include a swimming pool and be provided as part of the secondary school development. Formal outdoor recreation space is to be provided as part of all primary and secondary education provision. Informal recreation and open space provision and including bowling greens and allotments – as detailed within the Landscape Framework – will be provided to support all phases of the development. Funding for this provision to be provided jointly by the developer and public sector.

## Development Framework Context Assessment

The Tornagrain proposal is consistent with the planning policy context within which the Development Framework was devised in terms of the Draft National Planning Framework No. 2 and the allocation of the A96 Corridor, between Inverness and Nairn, as an Area of Co-ordinated Action.

The proposal is also consistent with the aspirations of the Inverness City-Vision (2003) to develop six new communities strategically located along the trunk road and rail route to Nairn.

The proposal will make a significant contribution towards the DF's encouragement to develop the *"huge potential for the continued growth of both the City of Inverness and the Highlands as a whole"* of the Inverness-Nairn area as a strategic corridor for the 30 year period from 2011 to 2041 (and beyond).

The design of the proposal is consistent with the Development Framework's desire of *"making places work through a collaborative approach"*, which was outlined in the first chapter of the Planning Statement.

## Dalcross Allocation Assessment

The proposal is consistent with the DF's development allocations for Whiteness and Dalcross as the application site is identified for the new settlement of Tornagrain, to accommodate a population of some 9,500 in 4,500 homes.

The proposal is to provide 4,576 homes in the Development Framework's 30 year period from 2011-41. As this represents an increase of only 1.7% of the allocation, this is not considered to be a material deviation from the DF's allocation; particularly when considered within the context of the DF's range of development description for Tornagrain from 10,000 population in its Strategy (Page 3) to 4,500 homes for 9,500 people in the Whiteness and Dalcross Section (P.26).

To ensure a co-ordinated and long-term approach to the design of the settlement, the planning application has also incorporated capacity for another 8.4% of units (384) in the post-DF period, from 2042-2046. This is considered to be a modest proposal as it is equivalent to half the DF's aggregate dwelling completion for the preceding five-year periods.

The application is consistent with the DF's proposal in that its design has and will continue to be led by Smart Growth and the principles of 'new urbanism'.

The proposal is also consistent with the DF's relatively detailed indicative street-layout plan of how Tornagrain might be designed, and artist's perspective of a mixed use streetscape, and these outline design details have been reflected in the planning application's Landscape Framework, Design Statement and Indicative Layout drawing.

## Summary

The Development Framework confirms that the capacity to accommodate the proposal is established, and that the proposal is consistent with the national and strategic planning policy context. The proposal is consistent with the Development Framework's Dalcross Development Zone strategy and programme for occupation from 2011.

The proposed design has been influenced by the Development Framework's Vision, Strategy, Green Framework, Masterplan, stakeholder collaboration and community participation process. It seeks to optimise planning and design quality and deliver the requisite transportation, infrastructure provision, funding and development objectives. The indicative

layout included within the application is consistent with the Development Framework's illustrative layout for Tornagrain, and provides a co-ordinated planning approach to the Dalcross development zone, illustrating how the new town will be designed in harmony with the Airport and the proposed IABP.

The applicants support the Development Framework's established principle of securing the supporting infrastructure through developers' financial contributions in a S.75 Agreement; and this has been the presumption upon which the design and submission of the planning application has been based.

The proposal is not only consistent with the Development Framework's guiding principles, but will make a significant contribution to delivering THC's growth of the wider A96 Corridor from 2011. It will meet housing demand for the longer term through a co-ordinated and integrated planning and design approach, in close collaboration with the community and other stakeholders, to provide a sustainable settlement with fully integrated links to the employment and transport opportunities to the north of the site, wide range of associated services and facilities within, and the highest quality of life.

# Environmental Impact Assessment

## Introduction

The Tornagrain proposal must be subject to an environmental impact assessment (EIA) under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations, 1999, as amended. The findings of the assessment are presented in the form of an Environmental Statement (ES) which is submitted with the application. This section summarises the main aspects of the EIA and its conclusions.

## EIA Process

EIA is a structured process for identifying the potential environmental effects of a development. The main steps are as follows:

- defining the scope;
- consulting relevant parties;
- carrying out baseline studies;
- predicting the potential effects;
- assessing the significance of those effects;
- identifying and incorporating mitigating measures;
- assessing the residual effects; and
- preparing the ES.

The ES identifies the “*likely significant effects*” of the development. These effects may be beneficial or adverse; where significant adverse effects are likely, mitigation measures have been proposed, their effectiveness assessed and the residual effects reported.

A Scoping Opinion has been obtained from The Highland Council, on the basis of which the following topics have been addressed:

- Agricultural Land;
- Air Quality;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Ecology;
- Geo-Environment;
- Landscape and Visual Amenity;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Socio-Economics;
- Surfacewater Drainage and Flood Risk;
- Sustainability;
- Transport; and
- Waste.

## Predicted Effects and Proposed Mitigation

### Agricultural Land

The development would necessitate the removal from agricultural use of about 26 hectares of prime land. In view of policy presumptions against the loss of such land, this is regarded as a significant effect. It is essentially unavoidable, although soil resources would be conserved for re-use within the site, whilst some areas of prime land would remain within open space.

### Air Quality

Residential properties within Tornagrain, together with approximately 10 properties in the surrounding area, may be affected by dust emissions during construction. With the adoption of mitigation and monitoring as part of the CEMP, any such effects are unlikely to be significant.

Development traffic using the A96 will give rise to increased emissions of fine particulates and nitrogen dioxide. The order of increase will not exceed 3%, and concentrations of these pollutants are predicted to remain comfortably below the limit values prescribed under the Air Quality Strategy; the effect on local air quality will not be significant.

Sources of operational emissions from the completed development are likely to include combustion plant for heating and power. An energy strategy would be developed as each phase is brought forward for planning, and specific proposals will aim to avoid any significant effects on air quality.

### Cultural Heritage

The development will involve widespread disturbance of the site, and in the absence of mitigation a number of archaeological effects could occur. Those relating to three features – Mid Coul Cottages, Culaird and a ruin – are considered to be potentially significant at a local level.

A programme of archaeological mitigation will be agreed with THC in the form of a written scheme of investigation (WSI). This will be secured by planning condition, to be carried out prior to and during the construction phase. As a result, the residual effects on archaeology would not be significant.

The development would not have any significant effects on the setting of cultural heritage features outside the site. These include listed buildings at Tornagrain, Croy and Dalcross Castle, a scheduled monument at Kerrowaird, and a conservation area at Ardersier.

## Ecology

No part of the site is designated for its ecological value. The development would result in the loss of more than 80% of the existing habitat resource. Although these habitats are generally of limited importance, assemblages of farmland birds and small numbers of the nationally vulnerable Corn Spurrey are likely to be lost. These impacts would be significant at a local level, but mitigated in the long-term by the enhanced biodiversity of the landscaped site.

The Kildrummie Kames SSSI could be affected by any uncontrolled access during construction or by new residents, although this part of the SSSI is primarily of geological (rather than ecological) importance. Impacts during construction would be avoided by the enforcement of a fenced buffer zone. Long-term access would be permitted only by agreement with SNH as part of an Access Management Plan, including provisions to avoid disturbance of the Loch Flemington SPA.

Designated habitats associated with the Moray Firth could be affected by any pollution of the Mid Coul Burn during construction or from the completed development. This risk would be minimised by the adoption of control measures within the CEMP and the incorporation of design features into the completed scheme.

Slavonian grebe have been recorded on an irrigation pond within the site and could use this location for breeding. In addition, a disused quarry face supports a relatively large colony of Sand Martin. Both sites will be lost during development, which in the absence of mitigation would be regarded as significant effects. The pond would be monitored to confirm whether breeding Slavonian grebe are present; if so, a replacement water body will be created off-site. A new cliff face or nesting barrels would provide replacement breeding sites for Sand Martin. With these measures in place, the residual effects would not be significant.

Otter are known to commute regularly along the burns within the site, but no evidence of breeding or resting sites has been found. Potential effects would be minimised by retaining features such as a former mill pond at Hillhead, and by designing stream crossings to facilitate access by wildlife.

Small numbers of Red Squirrel and Common Pipistrelle Bat have been found within Tornagrain Wood, which is also suspected to lie within the hunting territory of a pair of Goshawk. In the absence of mitigation, tree felling could result in significant effects on these species if active breeding sites are lost. Prior surveys would be carried out to confirm the presence of squirrel dreys, bat roosts or bird nests, and the construction programme adjusted to avoid any such effects if necessary. A

building at Mid Coul Farm supports a mixed-species summer bat roost. This building is to be retained, and conversion work would be carried out under licence, avoiding disturbance to roosting bats.

Badgers are abundant and widespread in the local area; the site falls within the territories of five social groups and includes two main setts. The development represents a fundamental habitat change within these territories, as well as introducing potential sources of impact such as traffic and dogs. Overall, the effect on the welfare of the badger group located within the site would be potentially significant.

This effect would be mitigated through the implementation of a Badger Protection Plan, which will be agreed with SNH. Key elements of this plan include the delineation of buffer zones during construction, retention of the main sett, provision of green corridors through the built-up area and enhancement of habitats both on- and off-site to improve their foraging value.

## Geo-Environment

No evidence of residual contamination has been found within the site. In view of its historic use, the risk of any such contamination being encountered is considered to be low. Appropriate practices would be adopted during construction to minimise any risk of contamination to soils, ground- or surface-waters. The proposed development is not of a type likely to represent a contamination hazard, and no groundwater abstraction is proposed.

## Landscape and Visual Amenity

The proposals would represent a fundamental change to the character of the site, resulting in a moderate impact on the Farmed Lowland and Industry/ Construction Sites local landscape character type (LLCT) and a slight impact on the Plateau Farm and Forestry LLCT.

Substantial impacts (decreasing to moderate over time) are predicted on three surrounding LLCTs, and moderate impacts (decreasing to slight over time) for five LLCTs. The overall effect on landscape character is considered to be moderate, decreasing to slight over time. A moderate impact (decreasing to slight over time) is predicted on the setting of the Moray Coast AGLV.

The visual influence of the development will extend mainly to the north and west, across the coastal plain, with topography obstructing views to the south and east. Of the 12 assessment views, substantial impacts are predicted for five and moderate impacts for three.

The landscape and visual effects are all considered to be adverse, due to the perceived displacement of countryside by urban development. These effects are unavoidable, and take account of the proposed landscape framework and retention of features such as High Wood. In the long-term, the effects would decrease as the proposed landscape framework matures and the development is assimilated into its setting.

### **Noise and Vibration**

Residential properties closest to the site may experience some disturbance due to construction noise, giving rise to potentially significant effects at two locations: Mid Coul Cottage and Tornagrain hamlet. In addition, some residents of the early phases of the development are likely to be affected during the construction of later phases. Noise control measures based on best practicable means will be agreed with THC as part of the CEMP, with the aim of minimising the risk of significant effects. Whilst vibration during construction may be perceptible at some locations, it is unlikely to give rise to significant effects.

Noise from development traffic is generally predicted to give rise to increases of no more than 1.0dB over future baseline levels, with maxima of 1.6dB and 2.0dB during peak periods at two locations. These increases are not considered to be significant.

On the basis of the noise exposure categories (NECs) set out in PAN56, most of the site falls within NEC A, with Tornagrain hamlet falling within NEC B. The site is therefore considered to be suitable for its proposed use. This suitability is unlikely to change over time, even with growth in background traffic.

### **Socio-Economics**

In recent years, the Highland labour market has experienced a shortfall in skills, and if new employment initiatives such as IABP proceed without associated housing provision, these constraints will be exacerbated. The new settlement would therefore have a significantly beneficial effect on labour supply.

The new settlement would provide around 2,650 jobs, which represent a significant beneficial contribution to employment opportunities, complementing the anticipated development of IABP. It is anticipated that a high proportion of these jobs would be filled by new residents, and that there would be little impact on other employment areas in terms of competition for labour supply.

During the construction phase, Tornagrain would directly support 349 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs per annum, together with a further 323 FTE jobs indirectly. If most

of these jobs are sourced locally, this employment could amount to a significant beneficial effect.

Direct spending by Tornagrain residents is calculated to reach £181 million per annum by 2046, of which between £74-£154 million is likely to be spent within the new settlement itself. This spending represents a potentially significant benefit to the local economy.

Tornagrain would represent about 26% of the anticipated provision of housing units within Inverness and the A96 Corridor up to 2041. In view of the constraints on housing supply within the Inverness area in recent years, this is regarded as a significant beneficial effect, both quantitatively and in terms of the range of accommodation to be provided.

The new settlement would generate a demand for around 1,000 primary school places and between 750-900 secondary school places. These places are not available within existing schools, and in the absence of mitigation the additional demand would represent a significant effect. This effect would be avoided by providing four primary schools and a secondary school as part of the development.

The development of Tornagrain would generate a demand for one additional GP by 2020, which can be accommodated by existing health services. Additional demand would be met by providing a health centre of appropriate size as part of the development. The recreational needs of the new residents would be met by incorporating a range of facilities within the masterplan, on the basis of the standards and locational requirements set by THC.

### **Surfacewater Drainage and Flood Risk**

The development would have a significant effect on the Mid Coul Burn, a pond and an agricultural dam. The effect on the burn would be mitigated by incorporating it within the layout and by detailed design measures such as minimising the need for culverting. Pollution risks to the burn would be minimised through careful management during construction and the incorporation of design features such as oil traps into the completed scheme.

Parts of the site close to the lower course of the burn fall within the 200-year indicative floodplain. The development would fundamentally alter the runoff characteristics of the site, and in the absence of mitigation would have a potentially significant effect on flood risk. This effect would be mitigated through detailed engineering design, as each phase is brought forward for planning.

In addition, a surfacewater drainage strategy has been developed on the basis of sustainable urban drainage

(SUDS) principles. It is proposed to control runoff from storms up to a 10-year event using on-site or close-to-source infiltration measures, whilst runoff from heavier storms is conveyed to designated downstream attenuation areas. The strategy will be refined at the detailed stage, possibly including amendments to the development layout.

It is assumed that the demand for water supply and wastewater treatment generated by Tornagrain has been anticipated in infrastructure planning for the A96 Corridor. With appropriate upgrading, the development can be served by existing networks.

### Transport

Development traffic is predicted to give rise to overall increases in flows on the surrounding highway network of 11% (AM peak) and 7% (PM peak) in 2016, and 13% and 10% respectively in 2021. These increases are considered to represent a minor adverse effect, but will vary substantially across the network.

The greatest impact on the A96 will occur on the B9039 to Mid Coul section, with peak period increases of between 15%-20% in 2016 and 2021. Predicted increases on the airport access road would be between 11%-97% northbound in 2016 and 20%-28% in 2021, with southbound increases of 27% and 31% respectively. The highest increase on the B9039 would be 16% in 2016 and under 10% in 2021, whilst the minor road to Croy would experience increases of over 200% southbound in 2016.

Whilst some of these percentage increases are substantial, base flows are in many cases so low that the impact would be insignificant in terms of actual vehicle movements; for example, the highest increase on the Croy road amounts to around two vehicles per hour.

The transport assessment has identified a need for upgrading of the Mid Coul junction by 2016 in order to accommodate the predicted growth in baseline flows (i.e. regardless of Tornagrain). Whilst the addition of development traffic would result in increased queuing at this junction, the increases are generally small and well within design capacity.

The development will represent a potentially significant benefit to public transport links between Inverness and Nairn due to increased patronage; for example, additional trips generated by Tornagrain residents would amount to a 50%-100% increase in the forecast passenger numbers (AM peak) using the rail halt. Significant numbers of pedestrian and cycle trips would also be generated, which would be accommodated by the circulation routes incorporated within the

masterplan. Sustainable transport choice will be encouraged through a series of Travel Plans, which will be implemented as each phase is brought forward.

### Waste

The potential effects of waste arisings during the construction phase will be minimised by implementing a waste management strategy as part of the CEMP. Substantial volumes of household and commercial waste are likely to arise from the completed development, and their effects could be significant in view of constraints on the local waste management regime. Whilst the latter are for THC to resolve, it is anticipated that the development would incorporate features such as neighbourhood composting facilities at the detailed stage.

### Sustainability

The performance of the development has been assessed against THC's guidance "*Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands*." The masterplan has developed around a number of sustainable principles, including the co-location of homes, community facilities and retail space; ease of internal access by modes other than the car; and proximity to the emerging transport node at Dalcross. The development has been submitted for consideration under the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative.

Whilst a development of this scale will have some unavoidably adverse implications for issues such as traffic generation, energy demand and waste, it also provides an opportunity to incorporate state-of-the-art features to meet the likely policy expectations over the course of its 35-year build period. Such features will be confirmed as each phase is brought forward for detailed planning, and are likely to include sustainable drainage, rainwater harvesting and renewable energy technologies at building and neighbourhood level.

### Cumulative Effects

A number of resources and receptors will experience a sequence or combination of different impacts. For example, nearby residential properties would be exposed to the risk of both noise and dust during construction, whilst site character and habitats will change over time as each phase is completed.

In addition, interaction between the impacts of this development and the impacts of other future developments (notably IABP) may increase the potential significance of some effects. This would apply in particular to effects relating to loss of prime agricultural land, loss of habitats of local importance, disturbance of protected species, changes in local landscape character, flood risk within the Mid Coul catchment, and waste generation.

# Summary & Conclusion

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Moray Estates Development Company Limited, in support of the Outline Planning Application to The Highland Council (THC) for a proposed new town at Tornagrain.

The application comprises: the application form, drawings, Indicative Layout, Landscape Framework, Design Statement, Design Code, Environmental Statement, Construction Environmental Management Plan, Access Management Plan, Sustainability Statement (within the Environmental Statement), Energy Strategy and Pre-Application Community Consultation Report.

The Environmental Statement has sought to assess the impact arising from the development proposed on the basis of a series of defined topic areas agreed with the Council. The outcome of this work is summarised in chapter 8 of this Statement. All impacts, whether positive or negative, have been noted and with measures of mitigation proposed to address possible identified concerns where appropriate.

The application site lies within the A96 Corridor, which is identified in The Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 2 (Draft) 2008, as an Area of Co-ordinated Action and which refers to the creation of a new settlement at Tornagrain. The Planning Statement has evaluated the proposal within the context of the NPF2, national planning policy and advice, the development plan, which comprises The Highland Structure Plan 2001 and the Inverness Local Plan 2006, together with The Highland Council's approved Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework 2007. This Framework was approved by THC in September 2007 following an extensive public consultation process, and which allocates the application site for a new town of 9,500-10,000 population. It also contains guidance on the protocols to be put in place to ensure funding, procurement and delivery of all infrastructure associated with the proposal.

Whilst the Development Plan sets important and relevant planning policy context, it is the applicant's opinion that significant weight should be applied to the policy guidance set out in the Framework document for the following reasons:

- It represents the local planning authority's most up to date guidance on policy for development within the A96 Corridor.
- It has been the subject of extensive public consultation.
- It is recognised within emerging Scottish Government policy in the form of the draft NPF2.
- It is to form the basis of emerging Local Plan policy in the form of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan.

As the application site lies to the immediate south of land allocated for large scale commercial development – that site controlled by IABP Limited – a co-ordinated planning approach has been taken to demonstrate how the new settlement at Tornagrain could be fully integrated with the business park, should planning permission for both sites be forthcoming. The application site also lies to the immediate south of the first phase of an approved rail halt/park and ride scheme, adjacent to the main Inverness-Aberdeen railway line.

A comprehensive approach has been taken to community involvement leading up to the submission of the application. This has included the first 'Charrette' style masterplanning workshop in the UK, held in September 2006, and an extended and detailed process of pre-application consultation, which is explained thoroughly in the Pre-Application Community Consultation Report that has been submitted as part of the application.

The vision for Tornagrain is to provide a new and sustainable town which will provide a wide, but integrated range of homes for different household sizes and incomes and the highest quality of life for residents, workers and visitors. This is to be achieved through the creation of a compact and walkable community that provides a range of employment community and leisure facilities and shops commensurate with its size and with an integrated public transport system.

In conclusion, in making this submission the applicants have sought to explain that the proposal for a new town at Tornagrain accords with planning policy, has been properly assessed in terms of environmental impact and with appropriate mitigation measures proposed, and can be delivered in terms of funding, procurement and development. The applicants therefore request that outline planning permission be granted.

# Moray Estates

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