

SUBMISSION FROM DOUG PIGGOTT

As a resident of the area most at risk from the A96 Corridor Development, comments apply almost exclusively to that part of the country.

NPF2 Para 44

'The government is determined that growth should benefit the whole of society and should not come at the expense of our environment.'

While many of the proposals, Scotland-wide, in NPF2 will be welcomed, the infrastructure needed to service the proposed A96 Corridor Development would appear to contradict the lead statement. Given the number of far reaching development proposals currently suggested for the area, this is of concern and will certainly breach paragraph 44. It will inevitably lead to the entire area being changed adversely, based upon an aspirational population growth, as quoted by Highland Council, which is fatally flawed and cannot be seen as factual. Coupled with the inadequate consultation processes indulged in by HC, this must call into question the inclusion of the A96 Corridor Development within NPF2.

This area has long suffered from inadequate connectivity with other parts of Scotland and beyond. Rail links from Inverness to Perth / Aberdeen should be seen as being of utmost importance and take priority over other transport development, as should be the eventual dualling of the A9 and the A96, irrespective of the inclusion or non-inclusion of the A96 Corridor Development within NPF2. Such infrastructure provision will also promote the organic growth of the region.

Stated infrastructure such as the new station serving Inverness Airport would appear to be premature, since the planned new town, Tornagrain, does not exist, and in fact has not yet been put forward for outline consent. At present the Airport Business Park is a paper exercise which seems unlikely to proceed in the current economic climate, while a similar uncertainty affects the development at Whiteness. It seems remarkable in these days of restricted budget that forced, speculative development of this nature should be included in NPF2 as national priority, rather than allowing for the carefully managed organic growth of the area as and when population increase in the Highland area demands it.

Scotland is a small country which is well served by two main airports, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and secondary sites at Aberdeen, Prestwick and Inverness. Given the uncertainty of the effects of climate change is it sensible to expand the airport at Inverness? The level of development within the A96 Corridor will have wide ranging detrimental effect upon the environment. For example the preferred water supply for the proposed development at Tornagrain is apparently Loch Ness. However we are also informed that the most popular tourist destination in Scotland is Urquhart Castle. If the loch is to become a source of water for A96 developments will this not affect the tourist industry? There is also concern

surrounding the effect of the removal of water from the loch on an ongoing basis, such as the effect on salmon fishing and on water levels in canal and river, which would affect Government's intention for the Caledonian canal as a possible method of transporting freight from the east coast to the west.

Water-borne waste will be vastly increased within the development area which will necessitate the construction of new treatment plants. The Moray Firth is home to a world famous dolphin population and while acknowledging that treatment plants deal adequately with soft waste, many items and chemicals are expelled into the sea. It should also be accepted that this is public investment in very largely speculative ventures which have as yet to be proved necessary for the greater good of the area.

While in general welcoming the expansion of green power, the proliferation of wind-farms is an area which demands more controls over siting. The area surrounding Loch an Dorb for example, an iconic site, is threatened with huge proliferation of independent turbine sites, which will destroy the visual environment. Organic development I am not against, but to base the growth of the region upon unsubstantiated speculation and aspiration is not acceptable. And as yet we have not been asked.

Doug Piggott