



# **Proposed Development of Inverness Airport Business Park**

## **Environmental Statement: Non-Technical Summary**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) and Moray Estates Development Company (MEDCO) are submitting an application to The Highland Council (THC) for permission to develop a business park on land adjoining Inverness Airport.
- 1.2 An environmental impact assessment (EIA) has been completed and is presented in the form of an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES comprises a Main Report, 10 Technical Annexes and this Non-Technical Summary.

### **2. Strategic Context**

- 2.1 The site is located within the A96 Corridor, approximately mid-way between Inverness and Nairn, and adjacent to Inverness Airport.
- 2.2 The A96 Corridor is a strategic sub-regional growth area identified in the National Planning Framework for Scotland and the Highland Structure Plan. The vision for the Corridor is set out in the A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework (THC, 2007).
- 2.3 A key element of this vision is the Dalcross development zone, which comprises a new settlement at Tornagrain and a substantial amount of new employment uses adjoining the airport. Allocations for these employment uses have been made in the Inverness Local Plan, and include the application site.

### **3. Site Character**

- 3.1 The site comprises 200 hectares of land lying between Inverness Airport, the A96, the Inverness-Nairn railway and the B9039. The Airport Access Road passes through the site.
- 3.2 About 34% of the site comprises arable farmland, mainly in the areas to the south of the railway and adjoining the airport. A further 26% of the site comprises coniferous plantation, forming two main blocks: Dalcross Wood in the north and Tornagrain Wood in the south. The remainder of the site comprises grassland and bog.
- 3.3 Site topography reaches its highest elevations at around 30m AOD in Dalcross Wood and around 20m AOD along the A96. The intervening low-lying area is crossed by a series of drainage ditches feeding minor watercourses which discharge to the Inner Moray Firth.
- 3.4 The site is not covered by any environmental designations. Most of it has always been in agricultural use and is unlikely to have been contaminated. The solid geology comprises Hillhead Sandstone, which supports an aquifer of moderate sensitivity. Parts of the site are prone to flooding.

### **4. Surrounding Area**

- 4.1 The surrounding area comprises the coastal lowland bordering the Moray Firth. It is of mainly rural character, comprising a mix of farmland and woodland, together with developments such as the airport, the Dalcross industrial estate and the Norboard plant.
- 4.2 The area is sparsely populated, although a number of dwellings and farm steadings lie close to the site boundary. The nearest settlements are Tornagrain, about 300m to the south; Croy, about 2.5km to the south-east; and Ardersier, about 3km to the north.

- 4.3 The shoreline of the Inner Moray Firth lies about 300m to the north of the site. The firth is environmentally sensitive, and is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Inner Firth supports four SSSIs which collectively make up a Ramsar site and Special Protection Area (SPA). The part of the SPA closest to the site is the Longman and Castle Stuart Bays SSSI, which is about 0.5km to the north-west. The coastal area north of Ardersier is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value.
- 4.4 Other designated sites in the area comprise the Kildrummie Kames SSSI, which lies about 1.25km to the south-east; and the Loch Flemington SPA, which lies about 3km to the north-east. The nearest scheduled monuments are at Kerrowaird, about 0.75km to the south; and at Ballagan, about 2km to the north-east. The B9039, which adjoins part of the site boundary, is a former military road.
- 4.5 The nearest listed building is Scottack Farmhouse, about 1.75km to the south-west; and the nearest conservation area is at Ardersier, 3km to the north. The grounds of Dalcross Castle, 2.25km to the south-east, are on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.
- 4.6 The future character of the area will be influenced by other developments; notably the Castle Stuart golf links, which are currently under construction; Whiteness Head, for which a resolution to grant planning permission has been adopted by THC; and expansion of the airport.
- 4.7 Implementation of the development strategy for the A96 Corridor will result in further, fundamental changes, notably the emergence of the new settlement at Tornagrain. Related infrastructure improvements include a rail halt/park+ride facility (currently the subject of a separate application by HI-Trans), dualling/diversion of the A96 and upgrading of sewage treatment and water supply.

## **5. EIA Process**

- 5.1 EIA is a structured process for identifying the potential environmental effects of a development. This EIA has been carried out in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations, 1999, which implement the requirements of European Directive 97/11/EEC.
- 5.2 The main steps in the assessment process 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.
- 5.3 The scope of the EIA was established by requesting a Scoping Opinion from the Highland Council (THC). The following topics have been addressed:
- Air Quality;
  - Contaminated Land and Waste;
  - Cultural Heritage;
  - Ecology;
  - Landscape and Views;

- Land Use and Public Access;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Socio-Economics;
- Transport; and
- Water Resources.

5.4 It has been assumed that any indirect effects on aircraft movements, rail traffic or sewage discharge will have been addressed as part of the separate planning process for the relevant infrastructure.

5.5 Consultation has been undertaken with a wide range of agencies/officers, including THC, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

5.6 The assessment of each topic has followed appropriate best practice. As required by the Regulations, the ES identifies the “likely significant effects” arising from the construction, finished form and use of the development. Where any such effects are adverse, mitigation measures are proposed and their effectiveness assessed.

5.7 The EIA has taken account of relevant policy at various levels. The main sources of environmental policy are as follows:

- international statutes such as the EU Habitats, Birds and Landfill directives;
- national statutes such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and Environment Act, 1995;
- regulations such as the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations, 2005; and the Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations, 2000;
- National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) such as that relating to Natural Heritage and Transport;
- National strategies such as the National Planning Framework and National Waste Strategy;
- Scottish Planning Policies (SPPs) such as that relating to Flooding;
- Planning Advice Notes (PANs) such as those relating to Noise, Transport and Sustainable Urban Drainage;
- agency policies, such as those of SEPA;
- the Highland Structure Plan, 2001; and
- the Inverness Local Plan, 2006.

## **6. The Proposed Development**

6.1 The proposal is for a total of 345,234m<sup>2</sup> of mixed commercial floorspace, comprising the following:

- 212,781m<sup>2</sup> of Class 4 (business) space;
- 72, 542m<sup>2</sup> of Class 5 (general and special industrial) space;
- 23,728m<sup>2</sup> of Class 6 (storage and distribution) space; and
- 36,183m<sup>2</sup> of other space (including 16,000m<sup>2</sup> of hotel space).

6.2 A masterplan has been developed to provide the blueprint for the development. As required in the Local Plan, the masterplan takes account of related proposals, notably the A96 diversion, the airport expansion, the new settlement at Tornagrain and the rail halt/park+ride facility.

6.3 The masterplan proposes three development zones:

- a northern Woodland zone, comprising a mix of business and light industrial uses, together with airport hotels, set partly within Dalcross Wood;

- a southern Tornagrain zone, between the existing A96 and its proposed diversion, comprising business and related service uses in a more formal arrangement of buildings intended to complement the future Tornagrain town centre; and
- linking these, a Landscape zone, developed around the safeguarded zone of the airport runway, in which planting and open space will provide the setting for airport hotels, business units and the park & ride facility.

6.4 The buildings will be mainly one and two-storeys high, with some of the airport hotels and much of the Tornagrain commercial district at three, and occasionally four storeys. Vehicular access will be provided mainly from the Airport Access Road. The masterplan assumes that this will join the dualled A96 diversion at a new roundabout.

6.5 It is anticipated that the business park will be developed over a period of about 50 years. The following phasing is proposed (floorspace in sqm):

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Class 4</b>	<b>Class 5</b>	<b>Class 6</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
2008-2011	37,852	3,741	0	4,800	<b>36,044</b>
2012-2021	48,337	3,741	0	14,212	<b>70,582</b>
2022-2041	69,578	31,514	11,864	9,773	<b>119,502</b>
2042-2061	57,014	37,287	11,864	7,398	<b>119,106</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>212,781</b>	<b>72,542</b>	<b>23,728</b>	<b>36,183</b>	<b>345,234</b>

6.6 The main alternative to the current proposal is a previous scheme for the business park, submitted in 2004. Since that time, the Local Plan has been adopted, the A96 Corridor Development Framework has been prepared, and masterplanning for developments such as Tornagrain has progressed. It was therefore decided to prepare a new masterplan, rather than re-submit or amend the earlier version.

## 7. Predicted Effects and Proposed Mitigation

7.1 The predicted effects during the construction and operational phases are summarised below for each assessment topic, stating whether they are significant (highlighted) and whether beneficial or adverse. A distinction is made between *potential* effects and, following the adoption of mitigation, *residual* effects.

7.2 Mitigation during construction is assumed to be incorporated into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will be adopted as a condition of any planning permission. An Outline CEMP is presented as an appendix to the Main Report.

7.3 Air Quality – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Risk of nuisance to occupants of nearby properties due to dust emissions.	Yes	Adverse	Dust controls + monitoring as part of CEMP.	Not significant.

7.4 Air Quality – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Deterioration in local air quality due to emissions from on-site processes, heating plant etc.	No	Adverse	Assumes no significant sources of emissions + routine control by	Not significant.

			THC.	
Deterioration in local air quality due to emissions from development traffic.	TBC	Adverse	None specifically, but Travel Plan will restrain car use.	TBC

#### 7.5 Contaminated Land and Waste – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial Or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Contamination of ground + surface waters, plus health risk to site workers, due to disturbance of residual contamination.	Yes	Adverse	Monitoring; remediation of any contamination as agreed with SEPA.	Not significant.
Contamination of ground due to oil spills etc.	No	Adverse	Routine pollution prevention as part of CEMP.	Not significant.
Additional pressure on waste disposal capacity due to generation of construction waste.	TBC	Adverse	Waste minimisation + management as part of CEMP.	Not significant.

#### 7.6 Contaminated Land and Waste – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Risk of ground contamination due to oil spills, runoff, site processes etc.	Yes	Adverse	Incorporated into drainage design; bunding of tanks; emergency procedures etc.	Not significant.
Additional pressure on waste disposal capacity due to generation of waste.	TBC	Adverse	Adoption of best practice for waste minimisation + management.	Not significant.

#### 7.7 Cultural Heritage – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Disturbance of plantation dykes and site of Ballavaimster farm/croft.	Yes	Adverse	As agreed with THC following a written scheme of investigation.	Not significant.

#### 7.8 Cultural Heritage – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Intrusion into setting of historic sites, e.g. Dalcross Castle.	No	Adverse	Landscaping will progressively screen views.	Not significant.

#### 7.9 Ecology – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Loss of unimproved neutral grassland.	Yes	Adverse	Re-create as part of landscape	Potentially beneficial in

			strategy.	long-term.
Loss of mature coniferous woodland.	Yes	Adverse	Provide extensive area of new woodland.	Potentially beneficial and significant in long-term.
Loss of other habitats.	No	Adverse.	Enhance biodiversity through planting + management.	Potentially beneficial in long-term.
Loss of corn spurrey.	Yes	Adverse	None possible.	Significant.
Disturbance of otters.	Yes	Adverse	Re-create watercourses to provide improved habitat.	Potentially beneficial in long-term.
Disturbance of bats.	Yes	Adverse	Licensed measures as part of CEMP; provide bat boxes etc.	Potentially beneficial in long-term.
Disturbance of red squirrel.	Yes	Adverse	Timing of felling etc; provide new coniferous woodland.	Potentially beneficial and significant in long-term.
Disturbance of badgers.	Yes	Adverse	Licensed measures as part of CEMP; improved foraging through planting + management.	Potentially beneficial in long-term
Loss of breeding habitat for grey partridge + skylark.	Yes	Adverse	None possible.	Significant.
Loss of breeding habitat for other farmland birds.	Yes	Adverse	Prior inspection/timing of work.	Not significant.
Disturbance of goshawk.	Yes	Adverse	Prior inspection/timing of work.	Not significant.

#### 7.10 Ecology – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Enhanced biodiversity of site.	Yes	Beneficial	As described above.	Significant. [Check with DP]
Increased human disturbance.	Yes	Adverse	Manage access to protect sensitive areas.	Not significant. [Check with DP]

#### 7.11 Land Use and Public Access – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Loss of prime agricultural land.	Yes	Adverse	None possible; but change of use already allocated.	Not significant.
Loss of public access.	No	Adverse	Access to public parts of site will be enhanced.	Potentially beneficial in long-term.

#### 7.12 Land Use and Public Access – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
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Reduced viability of farm businesses.	No	Adverse	Alternative sources of income available; buildings to be replaced by landowner.	Not significant.
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#### 7.13 Landscape and Views – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Loss of woodland and rural landscape.	Yes	Adverse	Replacement planting as part of overall strategy.	Not significant.
Intrusion of construction features.	No	Adverse	None possible.	Not significant.

#### 7.14 Landscape and Views – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Change to local landscape character.	Yes	Initially adverse.	Landscape strategy.	Potential for long-term benefit.
Change to setting of Dalcross Castle.	Yes	Adverse	Screening of new development.	Not significant.
Change to setting of other designed/ designated landscapes.	No	Adverse	Provided by distance.	Not significant.
Change to views from nearby properties and road users.	Yes	Initially adverse	Landscape strategy.	Potential for long-term benefit in some cases.

#### 7.15 Noise and Vibration – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Risk of disturbing occupants of nearby properties.	Yes	Adverse	Best practicable means as part of CEMP.	Not significant.

#### 7.16 Noise and Vibration – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Disturbance due to noise from development traffic.	TBC	Adverse	None possible; but Travel Plan will restrain car use.	TBC
Disturbance due to noise from on-site processes + activities.	No	Adverse	Compliance with noise controls as required by THC.	Not significant

#### 7.17 Socio-Economics – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Impact on local economy due to temporary	TBC	Beneficial	None required.	Not significant.

employment + spending.				
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7.18 Socio-Economics – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Impact on local + regional economy due to employment, spending, inward investment etc.	Yes	Beneficial	None required.	Significant.

7.19 Transport – Construction TBC [Not currently assessed]

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Congestion + inconvenience to road users due to HGV traffic, closures, diversions etc.	No	Adverse	Traffic management to be agreed with THC as part of CEMP.	Not significant.

7.20 Transport – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Awaiting SBA report				

7.21 Water Resources – Construction

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Contamination risk to ground + surface-waters.	Yes	Adverse	Pollution control as part of CEMP.	Not significant.
Drawdown risk to ground-water, e.g. due to dewatering.	No	Adverse	Assumed to be temporary + localised.	Not significant.

7.22 Water Resources – Operation

<b>Potential Effect</b>	<b>Significant?</b>	<b>Beneficial or Adverse?</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Effect</b>
Contamination risk to ground + surface-waters.	Yes	Adverse	Incorporated into drainage design; bunding of tanks; emergency procedures etc.	Not significant.
Drawdown of groundwater.	No	Adverse	No abstraction proposed.	Not significant.
Increased flood risk.	Yes	Adverse	Drainage strategy to provide attenuation etc.	Not significant.
Increased demand for water supply + wastewater treatment.	Yes	Adverse.	Increased capacity to be provided by Scottish Water.	Not significant.

7.23 A number of resources and receptors will be affected by a combination of effects or by a sequence of effects during different phases of the development. Examples include nearby residents, users of the highway network, views, local air quality and watercourses.

- 7.24 There will also be a potential for synergistic effects arising from the interaction between IABP and other developments that may take place at the same time. Examples include cumulative effects on flood risk, traffic, waste management, landscape and badgers.
- 7.25 As with any development, IABP will have both positive and negative influences on sustainable development objectives. Positive influences include the opportunity to co-locate employment uses with future residential development (Tornagrain) and at an emerging transport hub focussed on the airport. Negative influences include traffic generation, initial impacts on biodiversity and the implications for water consumption and waste management.

**Copies of ES to be obtained from etc?**