

Appendix A9.2: Landscape Design Objectives

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed scheme presents opportunities to promote a sustainable design and ensure that the landscapes created are of high quality, well integrated, biodiverse, adaptable and deliver a meaningful contribution to local and national sustainability targets. At the broadest level these landscape opportunities have been identified with a view to meeting the four key aims of Fitting Landscapes: Securing more Sustainable Landscapes (Transport Scotland 2014) policy, which are to:
- ensure high quality of design and place;
 - enhance and protect natural heritage;
 - use resources wisely; and
 - build in adaptability to change.
- 1.2 In order to capture and address these opportunities, the Landscape Objectives have been developed and adapted from the above four key aims. This process of setting the objectives has been informed by engagement with statutory consultees and collaborative design working of the landscape architects with other technical and design disciplines such as ecology, cultural heritage, noise, hydrology, land use, community and private assets and highways engineers.

2 Landscape Objectives

- 2.1 The Landscape Objectives for the proposed scheme are as follows:
- Respect the character and sensitivities of the surrounding area and integrate the proposed scheme into the landscape.
 - Maintain and where possible enhance landscape connectivity and minimise fragmentation.
 - Minimise landscape and visual impacts on the land and people.
 - Create an attractive environment for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs).
 - Design for integration with a range of current and future land uses.
 - Provide for varied, interesting and scenic views both of and from the proposed scheme.
- 2.2 Details on how the Landscape Objectives would be tailored to the receiving landscape are outlined below:

Respect the character and sensitivities of the surrounding area and integrate the proposed scheme into the landscape:

- by influencing the design of the route alignment and earthworks profiling to provide the best possible landscape fit;
- by retaining and protecting as much of the existing vegetation cover as possible and 'weaving' the scheme through it;
- by respecting and reflecting existing patterns of land use and vegetation cover and using distinctive planting appropriate to the specific location;
- by drawing upon / exploiting the characteristics of the local landscape and creating a clear identity, e.g. more urban characteristics on approach to Inverness and Inshes, avenue tree planting to fit with nearby formal planting at Castlehill House and Inverness Campus and emphasise sense of arrival to Inverness, and more informal scattered tree and hedgerow planting around the more rural context in the centre and north-east end of the study area;
- by designing the shape, orientation and slopes of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) basins / ponds to achieve the best landscape fit; and

- by using a consistent and distinctive palette of soft and hard landscape elements and street furniture to tie in with the surroundings.

Maintain and where possible enhance landscape connectivity and minimise fragmentation:

- by avoiding loss of existing vegetation cover;
- by reintroduction of lost or degraded elements which make a positive contribution to the character of the landscape to increase diversity and enhance the proposed scheme corridor, e.g. planting hedgerows to mitigate the impact of severance;
- by restoring the landscape along the defunct section of the road from Inshes to Cradlehall;
- by using locally native plant species and species mixes where appropriate;
- by designing the proposed planting to tie in to existing vegetation; and
- by working closely with the ecologists on the integrated approach to habitat creation.

Minimise landscape and visual impacts on the land and people:

- by avoiding adverse impacts where practicable;
- by ensuring the protection and management of retained established vegetation where appropriate (e.g. a line of mature trees along Caulfield Road North);
- by securing sufficient land to ensure effective mitigation measures can be delivered;
- by providing screen mitigation planting where the unavoidable engineered earthwork slopes would cause adverse impacts on landscape character and nearby visual receptors, i.e. west and north-west of Cradlehall;
- by carefully considering the landscape setting, aesthetics and integration of any structures such as bridges and potential noise attenuation measures if required;
- by providing sensitively designed and sited screening measures such as planting and earth mounding where appropriate; and
- by careful choice of the form of lighting to minimise light spill and to integrate it with any existing lighting nearby.

Create an attractive environment for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs):

- by designing wet SuDS ponds in proximity to NMU routes and designing appropriate planting around them to maximise their visual amenity and biodiversity benefits;
- by careful selection of planting to provide year-round visual interest; and
- by providing street furniture and access paths where appropriate.

Design for integration with a range of current and future land uses:

- by early engagement and continued liaison with The Highland Council;
- by providing a design that can complement the potential future Inverness East development and is aligned with the aspirations of the Inverness East Development Brief (The Highland Council 2018); and
- by using suitable native planting and seeding species mixes.

Provide for varied, interesting and scenic views both of and from the proposed scheme:

- by maintaining, where practicable, existing scenic views, particularly those to the north towards the Moray Firth, Black Isle, Ben Wyvis and north-west to the Northern Highlands;
- by maximising opportunities to gain new views of attractive scenery and notable features in the landscape especially where existing scenic views would be lost as a result of the proposed scheme, i.e. west and north-west of Cradlehall;

- by creating attractive, interesting short-range views from the road, e.g. views towards SuDS features, adjacent settlements; and
- by the strategic use of new planting to create 'windows' to frame views into the local pastoral landscape.

3 References

Reports and Documents

The Highland Council (2018). Inverness East Development Brief.

Transport Scotland (2014). Fitting Landscapes: Securing more Sustainable Landscapes