

PART 10: APPENDICES

The appendices are provided in digital form on the accompanying USB drive.

**Appendix 1**  
An update of The Flow Country Comparative Study

**Appendix 2**  
Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

**Appendix 3**  
National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3)

**Appendix 4**  
Draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

**Appendix 5**  
Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)

**Appendix 6**  
Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CASPlan)

**Appendix 7**  
Peatlands of Caithness & Sutherland Management Strategy 2022 (PCSMS)

**Appendix 8**  
The Flow Country World Heritage Site Management Plan

**Appendix 9**  
Discover The Flow Country Leaflet

Enclosures		
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Encl. 1	The Flow Country World Heritage Site boundary overview	1:100k
Encl. 2	A'Mhoine-Hope-Loyal and Fiag components	1:50k
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Encl. 4	East Halladale, Munsary-Shielton and Oliclett components	1:50k





Nottingham Trent  
University

# An update of The Flow Country comparative study

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Dr Guaduneth Chico





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# 1. Highlights

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## *Comparison with other World Heritage Sites*

- Only one World Heritage Site includes blanket bogs as one of their values, **Tasmanian Wilderness WHS**; however, the main reason for designation is related to the wilderness status rather than blanket bogs. Further comparison has been made when assessing blanket bog landscapes globally.
- **New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands** also have blanket bogs but are very limited in size in comparison to The Flow Country.

## *Comparison with other World Heritage Sites on the Tentative List*

- Despite several World Heritage Sites on the Tentative List referring to blanket bog or peatlands, only **The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands** (proposed for its cultural values) and **The Great Vasyugan Mire** are relevant when comparing to The Flow Country.
- **The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands** is smaller in extent and the areas containing near-natural/natural blanket mires are very limited.
- Despite **The Great Vasyugan Mire** being an important peatland area, the climatic conditions are not suitable for blanket bog formation, so it is unlikely that this habitat is present in the area.

## *Comparison with other blanket bog areas globally*

- There are six main regions of blanket bog landscape around the world that could compete with The Flow Country with regards to the extent and quality of the habitat: West Ireland, the Kamchatka peninsula, Newfoundland Island, the Falkland Islands, Tasmania and the Cairngorms National Park including adjacent areas.
- In Europe, the blanket bogs of **West Ireland** have been under great anthropogenic pressures, fragmenting the continuity of the habitat. With limited intact blanket mires, this area is of a lesser extent and quality than The Flow Country.
- Although the **Kamchatka peninsula** has been highlighted as a potential blanket bog area, several authors agree that it is more likely to be a landscape dominated by raised bogs, which has been confirmed using satellite imagery. Further research is needed in this remote area.
- Blanket bogs are found widely across **Newfoundland Island** with a great range of pool systems that are comparable to The Flow Country; however, the blanket bog landscape is not as continuous or as extensive as The Flow Country.



- The **Falkland Islands** blanket bog landscape is of comparable size to The Flow Country and is well preserved; however, deep peat soils are less common, and the pool systems are more restricted and less diverse than those found in The Flow Country.
- **Tasmania** represents the largest area of reported blanket bog landscape in current literature; however, the peat deposits are less deep (usually about 30 cm) than The Flow Country and the pool systems that exist are not of comparable diversity or frequency. In addition, the blanket bog landscape is less continuous, as it is divided by topographical features.
- **Cairngorms National Park** and adjacent areas represent an important blanket bog landscape; however, many areas are fragmented by topographical features, and are under degradation pressures with less common pool systems in comparison to The Flow Country.
- **The Flow Country** represents the best and most extensive example globally of a continuous blanket bog landscape, with a significant diversity in blanket bog types and pool systems. This is based on both current literature and visual assessment using satellite imagery.

## 2. Introduction

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Since the instigation of the World Heritage Convention, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has sought to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Values (UNESCO, 1972). There are now 213 World Heritage Sites (WHS) that are protected because of natural heritage (UNESCO, 2021), and while some WHS contain peatland, there are no WHS listed primarily due to a peatland ecosystem.

The Flow Country of Caithness and Sutherland in Scotland has been described as one of the most important blanket bog landscapes globally (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). Some of the area benefits from national and European designated protection, and there are ongoing restoration projects of historic drainage and forestry (Hancock *et al.*, 2018). There are, however, still threats from a number of activities that will be discussed in section 4.4.1. WHS status would offer international recognition and additional protection to The Flow Country.

The Flow Country has been on the tentative list of UNESCO WHS since 2012, and in 2020 a technical evaluation of the site was submitted to the United Kingdom Government. As part of this process, a comparative study was undertaken (Joosten *et al.*, 2016) to demonstrate that The Flow Country has an exceptionally strong claim to be considered of Outstanding Universal Value in this defined context. The United Kingdom government have now given approval for the process to be taken further and a complete nomination will be submitted to UNESCO. As part of this next phase, the comparative analysis needs to be updated and expanded to reassess the Outstanding Universal Value of The Flow Country on a global scale.

This report aims to provide further scientifically robust evidence based on previous literature of the importance of The Flow Country as a global blanket bog landscape to support the WHS nomination in relation to criteria ix.

## 3. Aims

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The aims of this report are to:

- (1) To compare current WHS and other sites containing significant peatlands from the World Heritage Site Tentative List (WHS TL) with The Flow Country.
- (2) To compare the extent and quality of blanket bogs globally including total area, % of degradation, peat depth, pool systems and habitat continuity.

## 4. Criteria ix

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### 4.1. Background

The justification of Outstanding Universal Value for The Flow Country is based on two criteria: criteria (ix) focusing on the outstanding continuity, diversity and extent of the blanket mire, and the vegetation types and the on-going processes of bog formation which it exhibits; and criteria (x), the size and range of the bird populations that it supports, as well as concentrations of other rare species.

The report will focus on criteria (ix) comparing 1) The Flow Country with other current WHS and 2) WHS on the Tentative list and 3) with elsewhere in the world where blanket bogs occur, paying attention to the extent of the blanket bog, habitat continuity, pool systems and other peatland characteristics.

### 4.2. Terminology

#### 4.2.1. Defining blanket bogs

Definitions of a blanket bog landscape and their different characteristics need to be established prior to comparing blanket bogs globally. This section will establish our working terminology. Further details concerning the characteristics of peatland in relation to pool frequency and peatland fragmentation has been provided in section 4.5.

Peatlands can be classified using different environmental factors, such as water sources, geomorphology, or vegetation (Joosten *et al.*, 2017); however, a multi-scale approach known as hierarchical classification, is also widely accepted (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988; Chico, 2020). Hierarchical classification studies peatlands at different scales, combining vegetation, landforms and hydrology under the same scheme. This provides a better understanding of the complexity and relationships within the peatland environment (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988, Lindsay, 2016a).

Based on water sources, peatlands can be classified as **fens**, if water sources are from ground water or run off, and **bogs**, when water sources are mainly rainwater. This differentiation has been widely accepted when classifying peatlands (Lindsay, 2016a).

There are two types of bog clearly defined by geomorphological properties and origin: Raised bogs and Blanket bogs. **Raised bogs** are dominated by a dome of peat surround by streams and/or rivers. They usually initiate from lakes or ponds where organic material accumulates faster than the decomposition rate. The result is an independent bog unit mainly fed by precipitation (Godwin & Conway, 1939).



**Blanket bogs** are defined as an ombrotrophic (rain-fed) type of peatland, mainly located in areas with oceanic climatic conditions: high precipitation (>1,000 mm/year), high humidity, low average temperatures (<15°C) and low seasonal temperature variability (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). The surface of a blanket bog usually follows the underlying topography and covers large extents of the landscape (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). In some parts of the world, blanket bogs are located on hill summits where their development and extent are limited by steep slopes and topographical changes (Heras, 2002; Chico, 2020). Peat depth of this habitat ranges from a 30 cm average in Tasmanian blanket bogs (Bridle *et al.*, 2003) to several metres in the United Kingdom (Lindsay, 1995). While the term blanket bog could refer to one individual unit or area, **blanket bog landscape** refers to several interconnected units, forming a unique ecosystem covering most of the landscape. The Flow Country forms the type-example of this, where different individual blanket bogs are interconnected, thus creating a blanket bog landscape.

Recently, the term **Blanket mire** has been defined as more appropriate as it is broader and recognises the interconnection between individual blanket bogs and fen peatlands. This term also recognises the active peat-forming status of the habitat (Lindsay & Andersen, 2016) and therefore, if this information is known, the term blanket mire should be used.

Terms such as **blanket peat** or **blanket peatland** are also commonly used in literature to refer to this habitat; however, both terms do not specify if they contain active bogs with peat-forming vegetation.

Blanket bogs can be also defined by their subtypes, such as **watershed**, **saddle mire**, **spur** or **valleyside** depending on hydrological patterns and topographical location (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988).

Another factor to consider when classifying blanket bog landscapes is their vegetation composition. Some blanket bogs are formed mainly from sedges (e.g. Tasmania or New Zealand) whereas others are formed from *Sphagnum* mosses (e.g. The Flow Country). However, they have common climatic conditions, and the definition blanket bog landscape can be used when comparing them globally. Each blanket bog landscape will have its own specific vegetation assemblages that may affect geomorphological features (e.g. pool systems). However, these will always result in a similar landscape in terms of covering large areas with a continuous mantle of peat over the substrate, and will therefore, be comparable from a geomorphological perspective.

Local definitions of blanket bog landscape have been also considered when comparing this habitat globally. In New Zealand blanket bogs are usually called 'restiad bogs' (Selkirk and McGlone, 2005) and on the west coast of North America, research often refers to them as

‘muskeg’ (Glooschenko *et al.*, 1993). When regional terms have been detected, a reference to this term has been included in the description of the area.

In summary, when referring to our habitat of interest in this report, the terms **blanket bog landscape** and **blanket bogs** will be used when the peat-forming status is unknown or unclear. **Blanket mire** will be only used if the area of interest is confirmed to be only peat-forming.

#### 4.2.2. Degradation and pressures

The degradation of blanket bog landscapes can be caused by different natural and anthropogenic pressures, although these are usually both interconnected (e.g. erosion – livestock; Chico *et al.*, 2019). Assessing the degradation of blanket bogs globally is problematic, not least due to the lack of a consistent metric and the variability of available information. However, some useful information was gathered during the original comparative analysis (Joosten *et al.*, 2016) and this has been utilised and expanded alongside a visual assessment of habitat continuity.

Natural pressures affecting blanket bogs mainly relate to natural phenomena and are often closely related to anthropogenic pressures. Erosion caused by wind, water, ice and chemical oxidation is one of the main issues affecting blanket bog surfaces (Evans and Warburton, 2007). Wind erosion is also an important natural pressure on peatlands and usually interacts with fluvial erosion under ‘wind-rain splash’ conditions (Evans and Warburton, 2007). High precipitation regimes are essential for blanket bog formation, which also increases erosion rates and sediment transport (Evans and Warburton, 2007).

Natural wildfires are another pressure on blanket bogs. They are uncontrolled and tend to occur during the summer and dry periods. Although they can be initiated by a natural cause, such as lighting, a large proportion are started by a human actions (Tedim *et al.*, 2015). Wildfires have a negative impact on peatlands as they expose the top layer of peat to oxidation (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988), and consequently alter vegetation and peat erosion (Yeloff, 2001).

Anthropogenic pressures including drainage, grazing, peat extraction, forestry, burning and windfarm developments are common in blanket bog landscapes. Artificial drainage has been a pressure for centuries in attempts to expand agricultural land and forestry (Armentano and Menges, 1986). The impact of drainage can affect water tables, soil properties, water chemistry and peat erosion rates (Holden *et al.*, 2004). Grazing pressure also tends to be associated with drainage, but in some unique blanket bogs, grazing is the main reason for peat erosion, increasing the erosion rate by up to 4 times (Chico, 2020). Peat extraction and peat cutting for such uses as horticulture and fuel have also threatened peatlands, at least since the Neolithic period (Joosten and Tanneberger, 2017). Finally, burning is a common

practice on blanket bog landscapes (e.g. United Kingdom, Spain and Tasmania) with the potential issues and benefits of this practice being long debated. More recently, windfarms have been identified as a significant pressure on blanket bog landscapes (Wawrzyczek *et al.*, 2018). Although turbines only compromise a small area of the land, the associated infrastructure, such as access tracks or substations also impact the peatland surface (Wawrzyczek *et al.*, 2018), hydrological units (Chico *et al.*, 2019) and vegetation cover, ultimately resulting in habitat loss (Fraga *et al.*, 2008).

All these pressures affect the peatland status and the potential habitat degradation. However, definitions of degradation are not consistent across the globe, making it difficult to assess this aspect when comparing blanket bog landscapes. For this reason, the degradation defined by Joosten *et al.* (2016) has not been used alone when comparing degradation across blanket bogs globally and The Flow Country. Fragmentation as a consequence of anthropogenic activities and natural features, visible from satellite imagery, has also been utilised as a more systematic approach to focus on the continuity of the blanket bog landscape. This approach is described in detail in section 4.5.

### **4.3. Comparison of current peatlands designated as World Heritage Sites with The Flow Country**

An investigation of all WHS and WHS TL (cultural, natural and mixed) has been completed using the potential extent of blanket bogs globally (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988) to find the current WHS and WHS TL within blanket bog landscape areas. In addition, the terms 'wetland', 'peatland', 'bog' and 'peat' have been used on the official WHS and WHS TL UNESCO lists to find further potential WHS / WHS TL outside the potential blanket bog areas.

Only one WHS includes areas with recognised blanket bogs in their criteria, the Tasmanian Wilderness WHS (Table 4.1). However, when exploring peatlands as a potential term referring to blanket bogs, a total of five WHS were highlighted as containing peatlands as an element of interest within the sites; one in North America, two in Europe and two in South America (Table 4.1). In addition, and although these terms have not been included in descriptions, the New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands WHS also contain areas of blanket bog; however, in comparison to with The Flow Country, they are very small (Table 4.5).

In North America, the WHS L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site is within a blanket bog landscape area and peat is an element of importance for the designation. However, this site has been listed based on criteria vi and the site does not have an area of blanket bog comparable to The Flow Country, in terms of quality and extent.



**Table 4.1.** List of World Heritage Sites classified by UNESCO geographical regions within areas of potential blanket bog formation in relation to the criteria for which each World Heritage property is listed, the presence or not of blanket bogs as an element for the WHS designation and the inclusion of the terms mire, bog or peatlands in the descriptions.

UNESCO Region	Site name	Criteria for which World Heritage property is listed	Does the site highlight blanket bogs as an element?	Does the site highlight peatlands as an element?
<b>Europe and North America</b>				
North America	Olympic National Park	(vii) (ix)	No	No
	Gros Morne National Park	(vii) (viii)	No	No
	Joggins Fossil Cliffs	(viii)	No	No
	Mistaken Point	(viii)	No	No
	Miguasha National Park	(viii)	No	No
	SGang Gwaay	(iii)	No	No
	L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site	(vi)	No	Yes
Europe	Landscape of Grand Pré	(v) (vi)	No	No
	Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast	(vii) (viii)	No	No
	West Norwegian Fjords – Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord	(vii) (viii)	No	No
	Chaîne des Puys – Limagne fault tectonic area	(viii)	No	No
	Monte San Giorgio	(viii)	No	No
	Škocjan Caves	(vii) (viii)	No	No
	Plitvice Lakes National Park	(vii) (viii) (ix)	No	No
	Durmitor National Park	(vii) (viii) (x)	No	No
	Western Caucasus	(ix) (x)	No	No
	Colchic Rainforests and Wetlands	(ix) (x)	No	Yes
	Virgin Komi Forests	(vii) (ix)	No	Yes
	Heart of Neolithic Orkney	(i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	No	No
	The Causses and the Cévennes, Mediterranean agro-pastoral Cultural Landscape	(iii) (v)	No	No
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>				
Central America	La Amistad National Park	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	Yes
South America	Sangay National Park	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	Yes
	Los Glaciares National Park	(vii) (viii)	No	No
<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>				
Asia	Volcanoes of Kamchatka	(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)	No	No
	Mount Huangshan	(ii) (vii) (x)	No	No
	Mount Wuyi	(iii) (vi) (vii) (x)	No	No
Japan	Shirakami-Sanchi	(ix)	No	No
	Yakushima	(vii)(ix)	No	No
New Zealand	Te Wahipounamu – South West	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	No
	New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands	(ix) (x)	No	No
	Tongariro National Park	(vi) (vii) (viii)	No	No
Australia	Tasmanian Wilderness	(iii) (iv) (vi) (vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	Yes	Yes

In Europe, there are two main sites where peatlands are present: the Colchic Rainforests and Wetlands, and the Virgin Komi Forests. The Colchic Rainforests and Wetlands is located in the Black Sea, where there is potential for blanket bogs, but they are isolated and rare. Peatlands in this area are mainly found to be fens and raised bogs. This is similar to the Virgin Komi Forest, where other bogs are common, but not blanket bogs.

In Central America, one of the main values of La Amistad National Park are some high-altitude bogs that may be considered blanket bogs. However, the extent is very limited in comparison to other main blanket bog landscape areas across the world (Table 4.5) and perhaps more comparable with the high-altitude blanket bogs found in Spain or Japan covered later in section 4.6.

In the case of South America, Sangay National Park has some exceptional wetland systems, but following visual assessment of satellite imagery they appear to be dominated by other types of bogs, such as, raised bogs with very limited, if any, blanket bog areas.

The Tasmanian Wilderness WHS is the most important existing WHS to compare with The Flow Country, due to its extensive blanket bogs which cover large proportions of the landscape. Despite this, World Heritage designation of this site was mainly based on the wilderness status of the region in combination with other cultural and natural criteria, as opposed to a focus on blanket bog landscape. Further comparison of this WHS will be provided in section 4.5.5 when comparing the largest blanket bog landscapes known globally.

#### **4.4. Comparison of current peatlands included in the World Heritage Site Tentative List with The Flow Country**

Currently, only The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands on the WHS TL has highlighted blanket bogs as an element of the site in its description (Table 4.2). The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands is located in one of the main European blanket bog regions. However, this proposed site is bidding for WHS status based on cultural criteria (iv) and (v). It is important to highlight that this area could have grounds to be nominated under criteria ix for the blanket bog landscape it contains, and therefore needs to be compared to The Flow Country. However, it is also worth noting that as described later in section 4.5.4.1.b, the blanket bog landscape in Mayo is under significant anthropogenic pressures, and overall, their blanket bog landscape is of a lesser extent and quality than The Flow Country.

A large number of WHS TL use the term ‘peatland’ in their documentation, with a total of six in Asia, five in Europe, three in South America, one in New Zealand and one in North America (Table 4.2).

Despite Asia having several sites on the tentative list (Table 4.2), only a few need to be considered when comparing to The Flow Country. Firstly, the Magadansky State Nature Reserve, located on the Northern Far East mainland of the Russian Federation, shows evidence of peat deposits, ascertained from satellite imagery. However, most of the areas observed are located on flood plains, suggesting that they are most probably not blanket bog but rather another type of peatland (e.g. raised bogs or fens). It is also relevant to highlight

that the climatic conditions in this region are not suitable for blanket bog formation (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988).

**Table 4.1.** List of World Heritage Sites on the Tentative List classified by UNESCO geographical regions in relation to the criteria for which World Heritage property is listed, the presence or not of blanket bogs as an element for the WHS proposal and the inclusion of the terms mire, bog or peatlands in the descriptions. (\*) Sites on the Tentative list that may have blanket bog or peatland environments, but not included in the descriptions.

UNESCO Region	Site name	Criteria for which the World Heritage property is listed on the Tentative list	Does the site highlight blanket bogs as an element?	Does the site highlight peatlands as an element?
<b>Europe and North America</b>				
North America	Île d'Anticosti (*)	(viii)	No	No
Europe	Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe	(ix)	No	No
	The Mediterranean Alps (*)	(viii)	No	No
	Volcanic and forest areas of Martinique	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	No
	Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge	(viii) (ix) (x)	No	Yes
	The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands	(iv) (v)	Yes	Yes
	Fungal Flora of Bukovské Hills	(x)	No	Yes
	Alpine and pre-alpine meadow and marsh landscapes	(v)	No	Yes
	The Rise of Systematic Biology	(vi)	No	Yes
	Grobiņa archaeological ensemble	(iii)	No	Yes
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>				
South America	Huayllay National Sanctuary	(vii) (viii)	No	Yes
	Cultural Landscape of the Sondondo Valley	(iii) (iv) (vi)	No	Yes
	Landscape Reserve Sub Cuenca del Cotahuasi	(vii) (viii)	No	Yes
<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>				
Asia	Magadansky State Nature Reserve	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	Yes
	National Park Kytalyk	(ix) (x)	No	Yes
	The Great Vasyugan Mire	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	Yes
	Upo Wetland	(vii) (x)	No	Yes
	Virgin Komi Forests	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	Yes
	Northern Tyan-Shan	(x)	No	Yes
New Zealand	Kahurangi National Park, Farewell Spit and Canaan karst system	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	Yes
	Te Moana O Atawhenua	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)	No	No

The most important WH TL site in Asia to compare with The Flow Country is The Great Vasyugan Mire, in the Russian Federation. This site potentially represents the largest mire in the northern hemisphere and includes fens and forested mires with bogs, although these only



represents 32% of the site. The climatic conditions are mostly continental with minimum and maximum temperatures outside the range of blanket bog formation and annual precipitation under the required range, according to Lindsay *et al.* (1988). Despite the potential value of this site as a mire and WHS, the peatland features are dominated by fens and forested mires with raised bogs, rather than blanket bog, and is therefore, not comparable to The Flow Country.

Sites in the rest of Asia on the tentative list (The National Park Kytalyk, Upo Wetland, Virgin Komi Forests and Northern Tyan-Shan) are not comparable to The Flow Country because climatic conditions are not suitable for blanket bog formation. They are smaller in total area and mainly contain other type of peatlands, such as, fens.

In Europe, apart from The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands, no sites included on the tentative list (Table 4.2) are comparable to The Flow Country, although some may include peatland environments. It is likely that any site in the Alps will contain peatlands, but the majority will represent fens. However, it is worth noting that some blanket bogs have been reported in the Alps, but they are both very rare and limited in size (Moen *et al.*, 2017).

Three South American sites included on the tentative list highlight peatlands as an element of the site. Huayllay National Sanctuary and the Cultural Landscape of the Sondondo Valley are located in areas without blanket bogs. The only site with potential bogs is the Landscape Reserve Sub Cuenca del Cotahuasi, but they will be very limited, if any exist.

In New Zealand, the Kahurangi National Park, Farewell Spit and the Canaan karst system include some alpine bogs that could be defined as blanket bog; however, they are limited in extent.

Finally, Île d'Anticosti is a unique island to the west of Newfoundland Island (Canada) with the potential (climatic) to contain blanket bogs. The majority of the peatlands are located in the east of the island with fragmented bog units from the coast to the hill submits in the middle of the island (observed from aerial imagery). It is likely the peatlands are mainly raised bog, but blanket bogs also present, dominating some areas, such as the hill submits. However, the total area of all peatlands far less than that of The Flow Country.

#### **4.5. Comparison of potential extent and status of blanket bogs globally with The Flow Country**



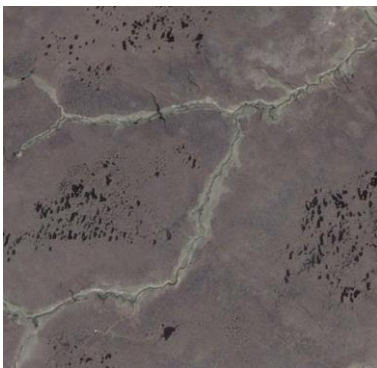
In this section, a comparative analysis of all main blanket bog landscapes across the world has been undertaken using different variables to assess the extent and quality of this global habitat. To facilitate the analysis, blanket bog landscapes have been organised by continents (Table 4.5). The key factors considered for comparison include: gross area; % degradation;

fragmentation/continuity; pool system frequency and diversity; peat depth. The approach to each of these factors is outlined below.

In order to undertake the comparative study, gross areas and degradation % of blanket bogs data has been extracted and summarised from Joosten *et al.* (2016), and augmented with reported areas of blanket bog or equivalent described in published literature and other available datasets. The quality of the bog has been assessed using the % of degradation estimated by Joosten *et al.* (2016) and assessing the fragmentation of the blanket bog landscape, as outlined in table 4.4 and expanded on below. It should be noted that a key feature of blanket bog landscapes should be its continuity and therefore, fragmentation is considered a negative attribute.

The frequency and diversity of pool systems; providing a proxy for microtopography, and increasing as a response to more suitable climatic conditions for ombrotrophic mire development (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988); provide a further metric by which the quality of a blanket bog landscape can be gauged. Visual assessment of the frequency of pools has been undertaken, placing each blanket bog area into one of three categories; rare, where pools are very dispersed or none are present; common, where pools are visible in the majority of the blanket bog landscape surface and variable, where some areas have a large number of pools, but others have none. Examples of each category has been included in Table 4.3. In addition, an example of each of the main blanket bog pool systems has been digitised using ArcGIS 10.8 to assist with the comparison (Figure 4.1).








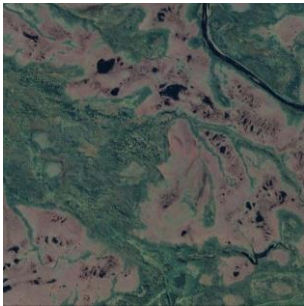

**Table 4.3.** Example of categories used for pool frequency classification in blanket bog landscapes.

Rare	Variable	Common
		
Peak District (England)	Tasmania (Australia)	The Flow Country (Scotland)

Habitat fragmentation/continuity has also been assessed using satellite imagery and is supported with previous literature where available. Each site has been classified within one of

the following categories: continuous blanket bog (A), fragmented blanket bog (B) or forest-bog association (C). Each category also contains several classes as described in Table 4.4, along with an example of each class. Peat depth has been reported when available (Table 4.5).

**Table 4.4.** Example of categories used for habitat continuity classification.

	<i>Continuous blanket bog (A)</i>	<i>Fragmented blanket bog (B)</i>	<i>Forest-bog association (C)</i>
<i>Class 1</i>	<i>Continuous natural / near natural</i>	<i>Fragmented by rock outcrops</i>	<i>Forest-bog complex</i>
			
	<i>The Flow Country (Scotland)</i>	<i>Newfoundland Island (Canada)</i>	<i>Alexander Archipelago (Canada)</i>
<i>Class 2</i>	<i>Continuous with natural fragmentation</i>	<i>Fragment by topography</i>	<i>Bog complex with forest on the edges</i>
			
	<i>Tasmania (Australia)</i>	<i>Kerry (Ireland)</i>	<i>Mitre Peninsula (Argentina)</i>
<i>Class 3</i>	<i>Continuous with anthropogenic fragmentation</i>	<i>Fragment by forest</i>	
			
	<i>Orkney (Scotland)</i>	<i>Newfoundland Island (Canada)</i>	
<i>Class 4</i>	<i>Continuous with high natural pressures</i>		
			
	<i>Pennines (England)</i>		

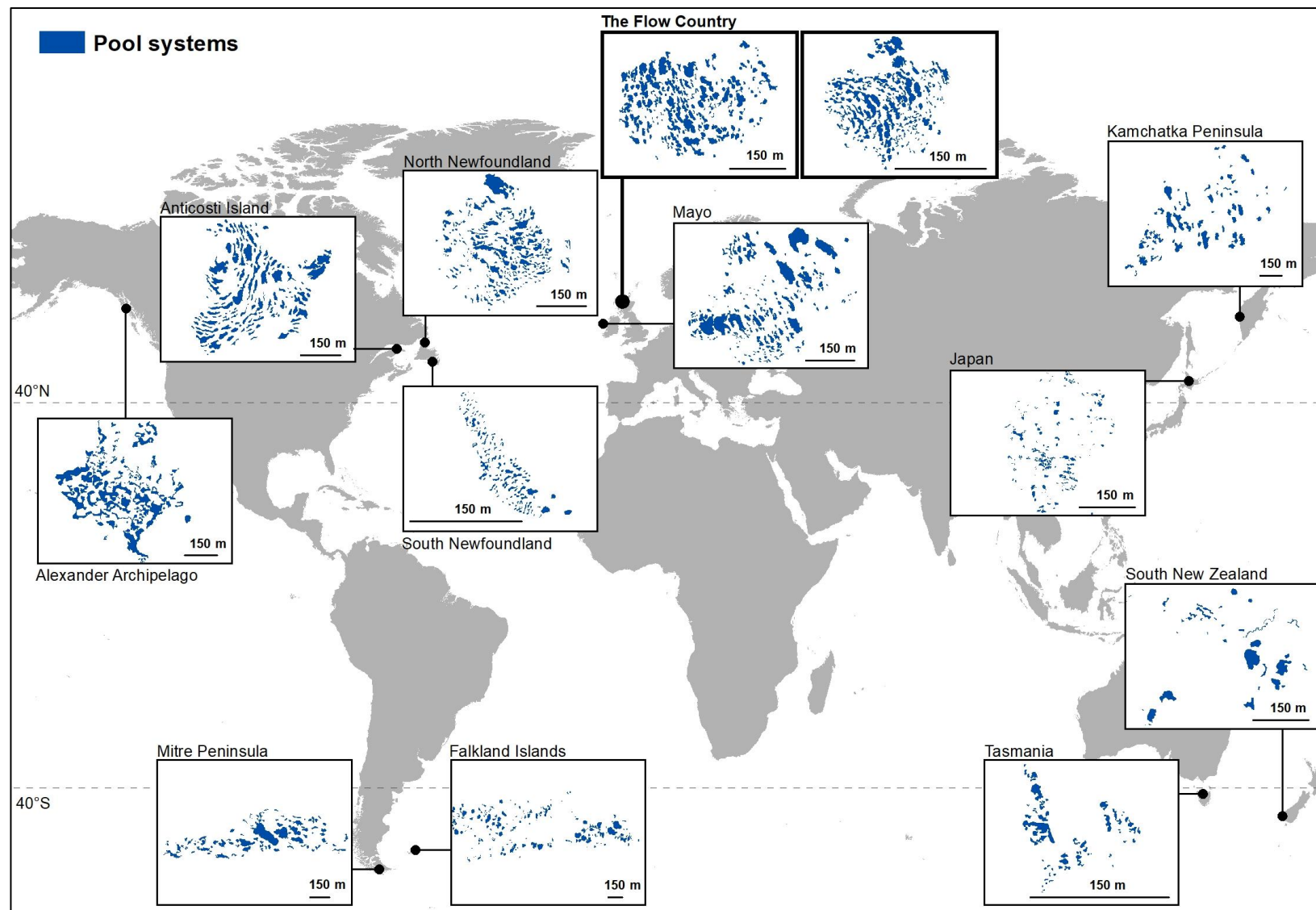
**Table 4.5.** Global comparison of gross blanket bog area, % of degraded area, reported area in previous research, and main blanket bog characteristics. \* Areas reported in previous research. <sup>1,2</sup> Areas reported in previous Comparative analysis where available (Joosten et al., 2016). <sup>3</sup>Area estimation based on the maps available in Wells (1981). <sup>4</sup>Anderson & Broughm (1986), only include sloping and flat bogs despite blanket bogs being described in Anderson & Broughm (1988). <sup>5</sup>Lindsay et al. (1988). <sup>6</sup>Wells (1981). <sup>7</sup>Glooschenko et al. (1993). <sup>8</sup>Turunen & Turunen (2002). <sup>9</sup>Carter et al. (2020). <sup>10</sup>Include all type of peatlands, Iturraspe et al. (2012). <sup>11</sup>Grootjans et al. (2014). <sup>12</sup>Include all type of peatlands, SERNAGEOMIN-GORE Los Lagos (2008). <sup>13</sup>Smith (1979). <sup>14</sup>Primary blanket bog habitat, Peak District includes adjacent areas to the National Park if connected, Pennines include Yorkshire Dales National Park, North Pennines AONB and adjacent areas if connected, Natural England (2020), <sup>15</sup>Data extracted from Class 1 and 2 in the Carbon and peatland 2016 map, NatureScot (2016) <sup>16</sup>Peat depth data, NatureScot (2020). <sup>17</sup>Protected blanket bog under the Habitats Directive; JCNN (2019). <sup>18</sup>Peak District National Park (2021). <sup>19</sup>Connolly et al. (2009). <sup>20</sup>Peat depth for blanket bogs in general. Conaghan et al. (2000). <sup>21</sup>Ramil-Rego et al. (2012). <sup>22</sup>Pontevedra-Pombal et al. (2017). <sup>23</sup>Sharpley (2003). <sup>24</sup>Pemberton et al. (2005). <sup>25</sup>Include all wetland types, Dymond et al. (2021). <sup>26</sup>Clarkson (2016). <sup>27</sup>McGlone et al. (2007). \*\* figure likely to include significant non blanket bog landscape elements.

Site	Gross area <sup>1</sup> (km <sup>2</sup> )	Degraded area <sup>2</sup> (%)	Reported area <sup>3</sup> (km <sup>2</sup> )	High frequency of pools	Peat depth (m)	Habitat continuity	Differentiating factors from The Flow Country
<b>The Flow Country</b>	5,682	45	4,014 <sup>5</sup>	Common	Up to 6.6 m <sup>16</sup>	Continuous with forestry gaps	
<b>North America</b>							
<b>East Coast</b>							
Avalon Peninsula	3,338	5	2,880 <sup>3</sup>	Common	Up to 2 m <sup>6</sup>	Fragmented by rock outcrops	More fragmented and smaller area
Burin Peninsula	1,168	5	1,241 <sup>3</sup>	Common	Up to 2 m <sup>6</sup>	Fragmented by rock outcrops	More fragmented and smaller area
North Newfoundland	-	-	-	Common	-	Fragmented by forest and rock outcrops	More fragmented
Cape Breton Island	-	-	113.8 <sup>4</sup>	Common	Up to 2 m <sup>4</sup>	Fragmented by forest	Smaller area
<b>West Coast</b>							
Vancouver Island and British Columbia Coast	3,157	0-2	-	Rare	Up to 4 m <sup>7</sup>	Forest-bog complex	More fragmented and less pool systems
Queen Charlotte Islands	2,426	0	-	Common	Up to 4 m <sup>7</sup>	Forest-bog complex	More fragmented and smaller area
Alexander Archipelago	3,672	0	-	Common	Up to 4 m <sup>8</sup>	Forest-bog complex	More Fragmented
<b>South America</b>							
Mitre Peninsula	4,609	0	2,394 <sup>10</sup>	Common	Up to 4 m <sup>11</sup>	Continuous with forest near to edges mainly	Smaller area
Falkland Islands	12,376	2	4,626 <sup>9**</sup>	Variable	Up to 3.8 m <sup>9</sup>	Continuous with rock outcrops gaps	Less continuous, less pool systems and thinner peat
Isla Grande de Chiloé	1,396	0	1,063 <sup>12</sup>	Rare	-	Fragmented by forest	Smaller area
South Georgia and Isla de los Estados	614	0	-	Rare	Up to 3 m <sup>13</sup>	Fragmented and isolated	Smaller area

<i>Site</i>	<i>Gross area<sup>1</sup> (km<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Degraded area<sup>2</sup> (%)</i>	<i>Reported area<sup>3</sup> (km<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>High frequency of pools</i>	<i>Peat depth (m)</i>	<i>Habitat continuity</i>	<i>Differentiating factors from The Flow Country</i>
<b>Europe</b>							
<b><i>The United Kingdom</i></b>							
Pennines	4,925	85	1,339 <sup>14</sup>	Rare	-	Continuous, but fragmented by topography and anthropogenic pressures	Smaller area and quality status
Peak District	1,289	90	289 <sup>14</sup>	Rare	Up to 5 m <sup>18</sup>	Continuous with anthropogenic pressures	Smaller area
Cairngorms National Park and adjacent areas	13,430	60	4,211 <sup>15</sup>	Rare	Up to 7.7 m <sup>16</sup>	Fragmented by topography	More fragmented and quality status
East Highlands			3,883 <sup>15</sup>	Variable	Up to 7.6 m <sup>16</sup>	Some continuous area, but also fragmented by topography	More fragmented and quality status
Skye	1,195	30	722 <sup>15</sup>	Variable	Up to 5.7 m <sup>16</sup>	Continuous by fragmented by anthropogenic activities (forestry)	Smaller area
Outer Hebrides	3,222	10	2,099 <sup>15</sup>	Common	Up to 3.6 m <sup>16</sup>	Continuous by fragmented by topography	Smaller area
Shetland Islands	1,480	10	528 <sup>15</sup>	Variable	Up to 6.4 m <sup>16</sup>	Continuous with high degradation (erosion)	Smaller area
Orkney	275	30	95 <sup>15</sup>	Common	Up to 7.2 m <sup>16</sup>	Fragmented by anthropogenic activities or topography	Smaller area
Wales	9,922	50	413 <sup>17</sup>	Rare	-	Fragmented	Smaller area and quality status
<b><i>Ireland</i></b>							
Donegal	2,277	70	2,026 <sup>19</sup>	Rare	Up to 7 m <sup>20</sup>	Fragmented by anthropogenic activities or topography	Smaller area, quality status and less pool systems
Mayo	1,852	60	2,017 <sup>19</sup>	Common	Up to 7 m <sup>20</sup>	Some continuous areas, fragmented by anthropogenic activities	Smaller area and quality status
Connemara	2,134	60	1,030 <sup>19</sup>	Rare	Up to 7 m <sup>20</sup>	Fragmented by anthropogenic activities or topography	Smaller area, quality status and less pool systems.
Kerry & Cork	4,103	80	1,940 <sup>19</sup>	Rare	Up to 7 m <sup>20</sup>	Fragmented by topography	Smaller area, less pool systems and more fragmented
Wicklow Mountains	810	80	248 <sup>19</sup>	Rare	Up to 7 m <sup>20</sup>	Continuous with erosion and anthropogenic pressures	Smaller area, quality status and less pool systems
<b><i>Spain</i></b>							
Serra do Xistral	108	20	31 <sup>21</sup>	Rare	Up to 4.2 m <sup>22</sup>	Continuous with erosion and anthropogenic pressures	Smaller area and less pool systems
<b>Asia and Pacific</b>							
<b><i>Japan</i></b>							
Hokkaido Island	-	-	-	Common	-	Fragmented	Smaller area



<i>Site</i>	<i>Gross area<sup>1</sup> (km<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Degraded area<sup>2</sup> (%)</i>	<i>Reported area<sup>3</sup> (km<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>High frequency of pools</i>	<i>Peat depth (m)</i>	<i>Habitat continuity</i>	<i>Differentiating factors from The Flow Country</i>
<b><i>Australia</i></b>							
Tasmania	5,352	0-3	7,500 <sup>23**</sup>	Variable	Up to 4 m <sup>24</sup>	Continuous areas divided by other habitats and topography.	More fragmented, less pool systems and geomorphological characteristics
<b><i>New Zealand</i></b>							
South Island	389	0-30	2,492 <sup>25</sup>	Variable	Up to 5 m <sup>26</sup>	Forest-bog complex	Smaller area and more fragmented
Campbell and other Islands	224	0	-	Rare	Up to 4 m <sup>27</sup>	Fragmented by topography with high degradation (erosion)	Smaller area
<b><i>Russia</i></b>							
Kamchatka Peninsula	33,639	0	-	Common	-	Continuous, but likely to be raised bogs	Different peatland type
North Sakhalin	20,121	2	-	Common	-	Continuous, but likely to be raised bogs	Different peatland type
South Sakhalin	5,484	2	-	Common	-	Continuous, but likely to be raised bogs	Different peatland type



**Figure 4.1.** An example of a representative pool system in each main blanket bog area across the world.

#### **4.5.1. The Flow Country**

##### *i. Total area*

The Flow Country, also known as the blanket mires of Caithness and Sutherland, is located in the north of Scotland and has been defined as one of the best examples of blanket bog landscape globally (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). Suitable climatic conditions (high precipitation, low temperatures and high humidity) combined with a suitable topography has provided an exceptional landscape for blanket bog formation covering over 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). However, the total active blanket mire area designated under the EU Habitats Directive is only around 1,435 km<sup>2</sup> (Ramsar, 2005) leaving some areas vulnerable and exposed to anthropogenic pressures such as forestry, drainage and windfarm development. The current WHS proposal include approximately 1,600 km<sup>2</sup> of the best near-natural blanket mires across The Flow Country.

##### *ii. Status*

Several anthropogenic pressures threaten these blanket bog landscapes with around 70% of Scottish blanket bog landscape reported to be damaged (Pike, 2021). It has been estimated that at least 27% of the blanket bog landscape in The Flow Country (as defined by Lindsay *et al.*, 1988) have been impacted by drainage affecting the hydrology of the peatlands, 4.5 % affected by peat-cutting and only around 38.5% of peatlands have not been under burning practices at some time (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). These practices are usually interconnected and have an impact on natural processes such as erosion, which has affected over 50% of The Flow Country blanket bog landscape to some degree (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). Finally, but not least important, forestry has played a critical role in the blanket bog landscape degradation in The Flow Country, representing about 17% of the peatland area in 1987 (Stroud *et al.*, 1987). Joosten *et al.* (2016) estimated that 45% of The Flow Country shows a degraded status (Table 4.5); however, a strategy to restore this habitat has been promoted by the Scottish government in order to improve the quality of the blanket bogs and recover their original extension. Despite the degradation, large areas of undisturbed blanket mire can be found across The Flow Country much of which will be included within the proposed WHS boundary.

##### *iii. Pool systems*

Across the continuous blanket bog landscape of the Flow Country, numerous pool systems can be observed with a large range of variety that is seldom seen elsewhere (Figure 4.1; Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). In the east, larger pool systems can be up to 4 m deep; these become less common in the west part of The Flow Country, where pools are shallower and sensitive to droughts (Lindsay and Anderson, 2016). This transition results in a large range of pool diversity across The Flow Country. Smaller blanket bog units can also be found at high

altitudes, increasing the diversity of blanket bog types that can be found in The Flow Country ranging from, continuous blanket mires covering entire landscapes towards the east coast to more fragmented blanket bogs in the west part of The Flow Country, mainly as a consequence of topographical changes (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). A large diversity of blanket bog macro-types has been described in The Flow Country including watershed, saddle, valleysides and spur mires, alongside ladder fens and minerotrophic fens (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988).

#### *iv. Vegetation*

The diverse blanket bog units and their interconnection with fen peatlands makes The Flow Country unique in terms of vegetation assemblages (Lindsay and Andersen, 2016). However, this factor is difficult to assess since each blanket bog landscape across the world has individual characteristics based on the unique interaction between vegetation, pool systems and geomorphological features.

An important element that influences the diverse range of vegetation in The Flow Country is the topographical changes and their geographical location from east to west, which is closely related with the pool systems described previously. In the east, *Sphagnum* spp. are common between the pools with some *Sphagnum* dominated hummocks (Lindsay and Andersen, 2016). In the west part of The Flow Country, vegetation tends to be more oceanic with some relevant hyperoceanic species, not common on the eastern part (Lindsay and Andersen, 2016).

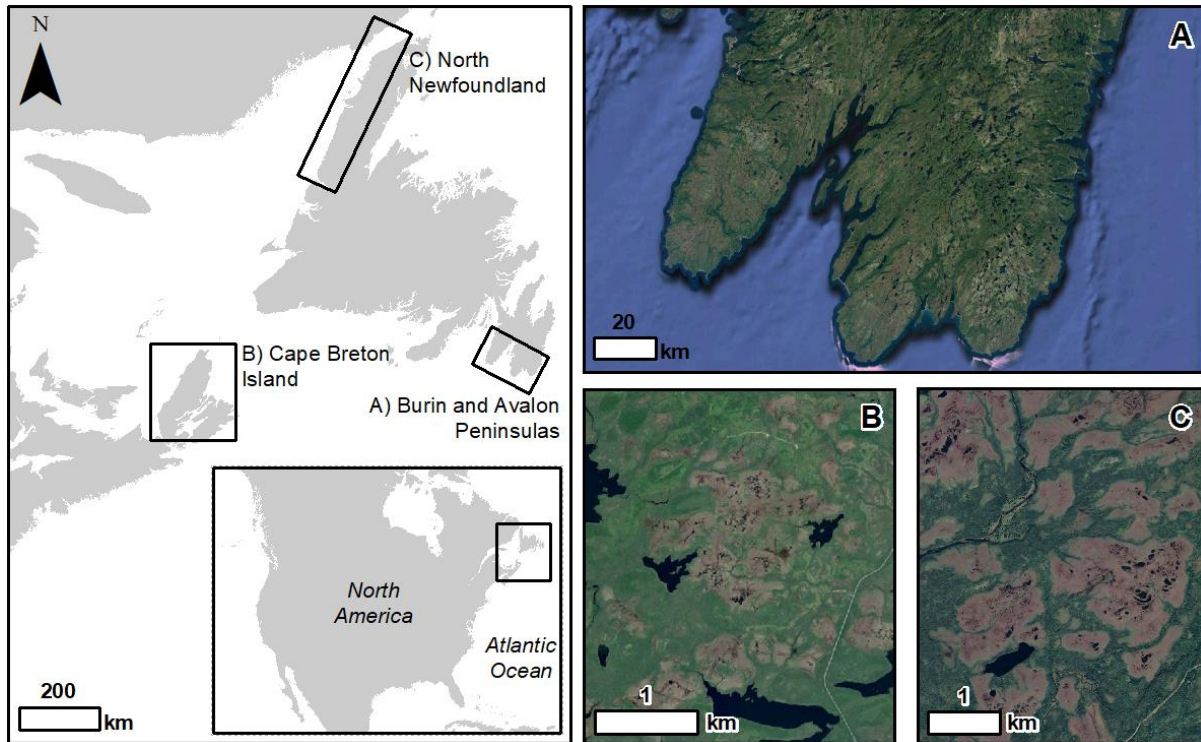
#### *v. Other remarkable elements*

Finally, peat-mounds are another important and unusual feature of The Flow Country rare elsewhere. This feature is a mound of peat that stands proud from the rest of the bog surface and can be found in some areas of Caithness (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). They are usually between 7 to 8 m in diameter and generally 1 m in height.

### **4.5.2. North America**

#### *4.5.2.1. East Coast*

The majority of reported blanket bogs across the East Coast of North America are concentrated on Newfoundland Island, with approximately 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> of bogs covering this region (Pollett, 1967); although the full extent of the blanket bog landscape is yet to be established. Nova Scotia is also an important region for bog formation, with the vast majority of blanket bogs located along the Atlantic coast from Halifax to Sydney, with further extensive areas to the north of the region on Cape Breton Island (Figure 4.2). These are described in turn.



**Figure 4.2.** Prominent blanket bogs on the East Coast of North America. A) Blanket bogs in Burin and Avalon Peninsulas to the south of Newfoundland Island demonstrating the discontinuity between both peninsulas. B) Blanket bog examples on Cape Breton Island (Nova Scotia). C) Blanket bog complex located to the North of Newfoundland Island.

#### a) Avalon and Burin Peninsulas

The most prominent blanket bog landscape on the Canadian East Coast is located to the south of Newfoundland Island, in the Avalon and Burin peninsulas (Wells, 1981). This area has recently been classified as a bog area; however, details regarding the type of bog are currently lacking within the inventory (Tarnocai *et al.*, 2002). This blanket bog landscape largely occupies a humid climatic setting, with a peat depth that rarely exceeds two metres (Wells, 1980), and usually have small pool systems covering large extents only interrupted by small streams, comparable with the ones found in The Flow Country (Wells, 1981).

Although the geographical location of these blanket bog landscapes is well established, there is currently no estimation of the total extent of this habitat, although based on previous cartography (Wells, 1981) the extent would be no more than 2,880 km<sup>2</sup> on the Avalon Peninsula, and 1,241 km<sup>2</sup> at Burin Peninsula, indicating these blanket bog landscapes are smaller than the total area of blanket bog landscape located in The Flow Country (4,014 km<sup>2</sup>; Lindsay *et al.* (1988)). Whilst being in the same geographical area, both peninsulas are separated by a bay with no connection between each blanket bog landscape (Figure 4.2). This is also supported by the most recent inventory of peatlands in Canada (Tarnocai *et al.*, 2002). In addition, from satellite imagery, it appears that the blanket bog landscapes in both

peninsulas are fragmented (Figure 4.2) and do not cover large continuous extents as in The Flow Country.

In terms of quality of the blanket bog landscapes in the south of Newfoundland, both peninsulas showed a low grade of degradation according to previous estimates (Joosten *et al.*, 2016; Table 4.5). In comparison with The Flow Country, both, Avalon and Burin peninsulas are recorded as having a better conservation status than The Flow Country. However, the continuity of the blanket bog landscape in The Flow Country is greater, thus increasing the value of this area in comparison to the southern area of Newfoundland Island.

#### *b) Cape Breton Island*

This island is located south of Newfoundland Island and is also an important area of blanket bog formation. However, peat deposits are more superficial and rarely exceed two metres in depth (Anderson and Broughm, 1988). The total area of the island covered by blanket bog has not been officially reported, but visual assessment of satellite imagery of the island indicates blanket bogs only cover small areas which tend to be very fragmented, resulting in small blanket bog units, despite the good conservation status (Table 4.5). When comparing with The Flow Country, this area is much smaller and does not cover large landscapes (Figure 4.2).

#### *c) North Newfoundland*

Blanket bog landscape in the north of Newfoundland Island has not been fully investigated, but an early report regarding peatlands highlighted the zone known as Cow Head as a blanket bog area (Pollett, 1967). More recent research has also highlighted this area as a bog (Tarnocai *et al.*, 2002) without specifying the type of bog. The most relevant area where blanket bogs are visible from satellite imagery is around Hawke's Bay, where a large number of bogs are concentrated and extend along the coast of Cow Head from north to south. However, the majority of these units are isolated, apparently disconnected, and do not cover the whole landscape (Figure 4.2), unlike in The Flow Country, despite the good conservation status of the Newfoundland bogs. The largest area of bogs covers the extreme north of Cow Head, but it is very unlikely to be larger than 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> according to the Tarnocai *et al.* (2002) dataset of Canadian peatlands.

#### *4.5.2.2. West Coast*

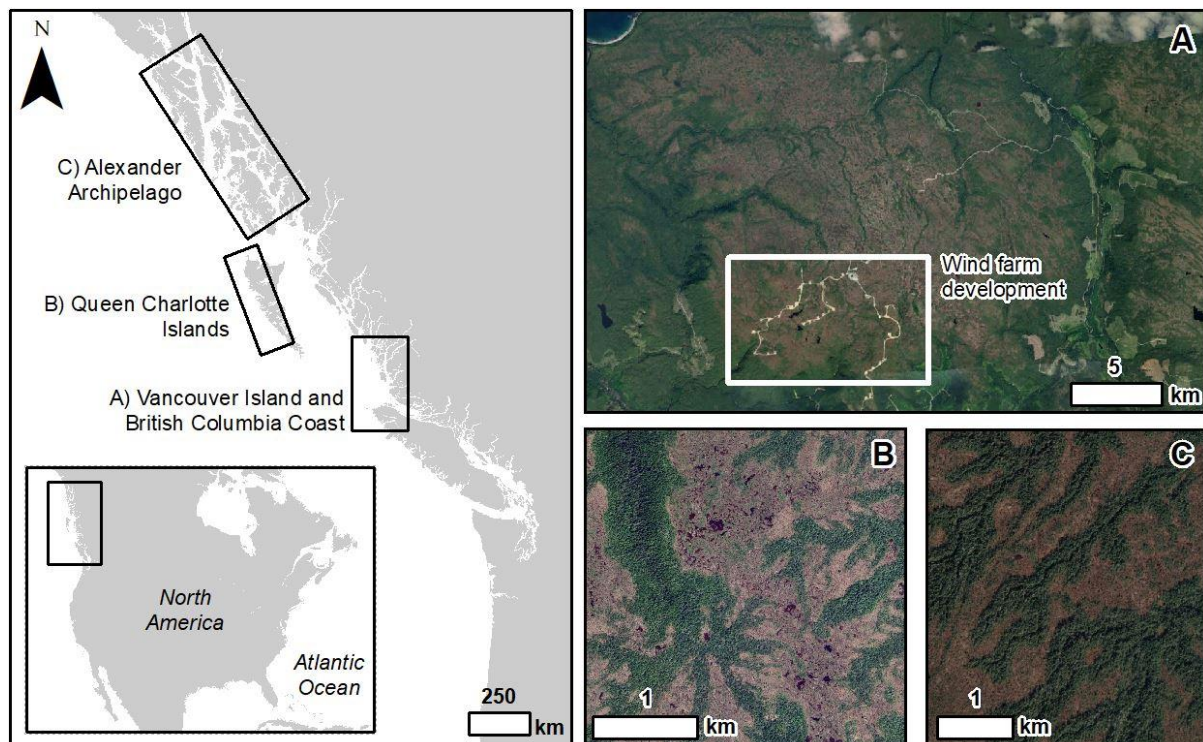
Blanket bog landscapes are common on the West Coast of North America, mainly on the North Coast of the Pacific Oceanic region where precipitation is more abundant, where they cover up to 75% of the landscape (Howie & van Meerveld, 2013). Blanket bog landscapes have



been reported on the north and west coast of Vancouver Island and Graham Island in British Columbia (Canada) and Alexander Archipelago in Alaska (EEUU); however, there is no information about the extent of this habitat (Figure 4.3). These areas are described in turn below.

#### a) Vancouver Island and British Columbia Coast

Blanket bogs are mainly located in the north of Vancouver Island and the outer mainland coast of British Columbia (Banner *et al.*, 1988). The majority are small and only cover restricted areas, apart from a large blanket bog landscape in the extreme north of Vancouver Island (Figure 4.3). However, the area is no larger than 135 km<sup>2</sup> and, therefore, not comparable with other blanket bog landscapes, such as, the East Coast of Canada or The Flow Country. This blanket bog landscape is continuous, but as with other blanket bog areas on the West Coast of North America, trees are common within the blanket bog units, making them very different to The Flow Country. The degradation of the blanket bog landscape in this area is low according to previous Joosten *et al.* (2016) (Table 4.5, 0-2%). However, the largest blanket bog landscape has been heavily damaged by windfarm development between May and October 2016, degrading it significantly (Figure 4.3). Therefore, this blanket bog landscape it is not comparable with The Flow Country in either total area or quality (Figure 4.3).



**Figure 4.3.** Main blanket bogs on the West Coast of North America. A) Blanket bogs on Vancouver Island showing a windfarm development. B) Blanket bogs example at Queen Charlotte Islands showing a pool system and the forest-bog complex. C) Blanket bog complex example at Alexander Archipelago showing the forest-bog interaction.

### *b) Queen Charlotte Islands*

Blanket bogs are well dispersed across the islands; however, the largest areas are mainly on the steeper west coast region where hypermaritime climate conditions are dominant, thus supporting blanket bog development (Banner *et al.*, 2014). These blanket bog landscapes are a good example of the forest-peatlands complex (Table 4.2) where both habitats interact covering large landscapes and forming a distinctive blanket bog landscape complex (Banner *et al.*, 2014). There are also some areas of open blanket bogs within the blanket bog landscape (Figure 4.3), although these bogs units are smaller; usually with low peat accumulations no deeper than one metre (Banner *et al.*, 2014). These blanket bog landscapes are significantly different to the continuous expanses of blanket mires covering The Flow Country as they are combined with/fragmented by other habitat types (Figure 4.3).

### *c) Alexander Archipelago*

The existence of blanket bogs, known locally as 'muskeg', in this archipelago has been reported briefly in previous research (Glooschenko *et al.*, 1993). However, blanket bogs are clearly under investigated in this area despite being visible from satellite imagery and covering large areas of Kupreanof Island, Kruzof Island and Chichagof Island. The blanket bog landscapes on these islands are mainly located in coastal areas, but small pockets can be also found on the hills across the archipelago. As with other blanket bog landscapes across the West Coast of North America, they are combined with forest, creating a forest-bog complex throughout the region (Neiland, 1971; Figure 4.3) and, therefore, very different to the continuous blanket mire landscape found in The Flow Country.

## **4.5.3. South America**

In South America, the main blanket bog regions are located in the extreme south of the continent in humid zones on the Mitre peninsula, and on several islands including the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Isla de los Estados (Figure 4.4). However, some blanket bogs can also be found along the West Coast of South America on different islands where topography is conducive for blanket bog development, with an important example found on Isla Grande de Chiloé (León *et al.*, 2012).

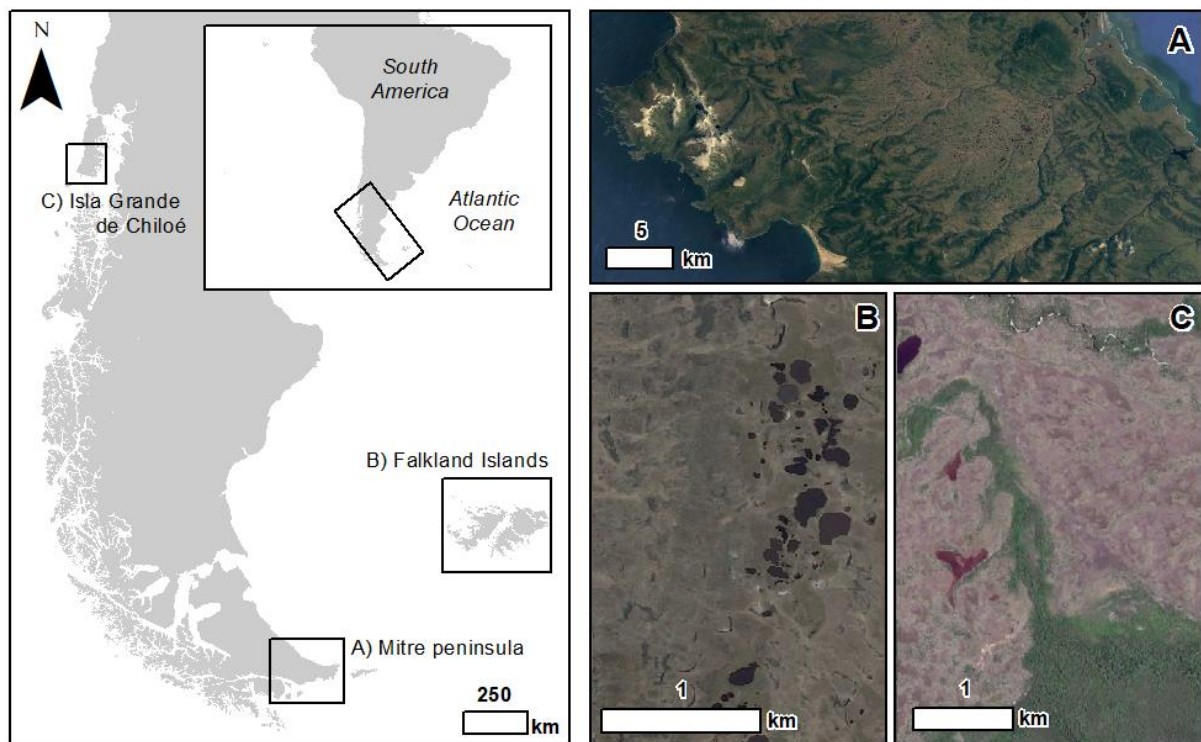
### *a) Mitre peninsula (Tierra del Fuego)*

This peninsula represents the best example of blanket bog landscape in South America and although the blanket bogs are combined with forest (Iturraspe *et al.*, 2012), there are also large expanses of potential blanket mires, particularly in the middle of the southern part of the peninsula, which are comparable to The Flow Country (Figure 4.4).



There is no specific estimation of blanket bog landscape area; however, it has been estimated that all of the peatlands together cover a total of 2,394 km<sup>2</sup> in this area. This means that the peatlands of The Flow Country are approximately twice as large (Iturraspe *et al.*, 2012; Iturraspe, 2016). It is also worth noting that a large proportion of peatlands on the Mitre peninsula comprise raised bogs, which will reduce the total area of blanket bogs.

The Mitre peninsula contains a wide range of vegetation units across a diverse range of peatlands, such as blanket mires, fens and cushion bogs, which are closely interconnected as in The Flow Country. *Sphagnum* spp. are dominant in some areas, but *Astelia pumila* is also present, and sometimes dominant, in the mire systems of the Mitre peninsula, creating very different mires in comparison to The Flow Country (Iturraspe *et al.*, 2012).



**Figure 4.4.** Main blanket bog areas in South America. A) A blanket bog landscape on the Mitre peninsula. B) An example of a blanket bog with pool system on the Falkland Islands. C) Blanket bog complex example at Isla Grande de Chiloé with forest on the edge.

#### b) Falkland Islands

Peat is widespread on the Falkland Islands, covering large continuous areas comparable with The Flow Country; however, deep peat areas are less common, and the majority of peat deposits are thin (Aldiss & Edwards, 1999). Early research defined blanket bog landscape as upland peatlands (Aldiss & Edwards, 1999) with up to two metres of accumulated peat (Aldiss & Edwards, 1999). More recent surveys have shown restricted areas with peat depths up to

3.8 m (Table 4.5; Carter, 2020). The peat deposits on elevated ground, mainly located north of East Falkland, also appear to be blanket bogs (Aldiss & Edwards, 1999).

#### *i. Area*

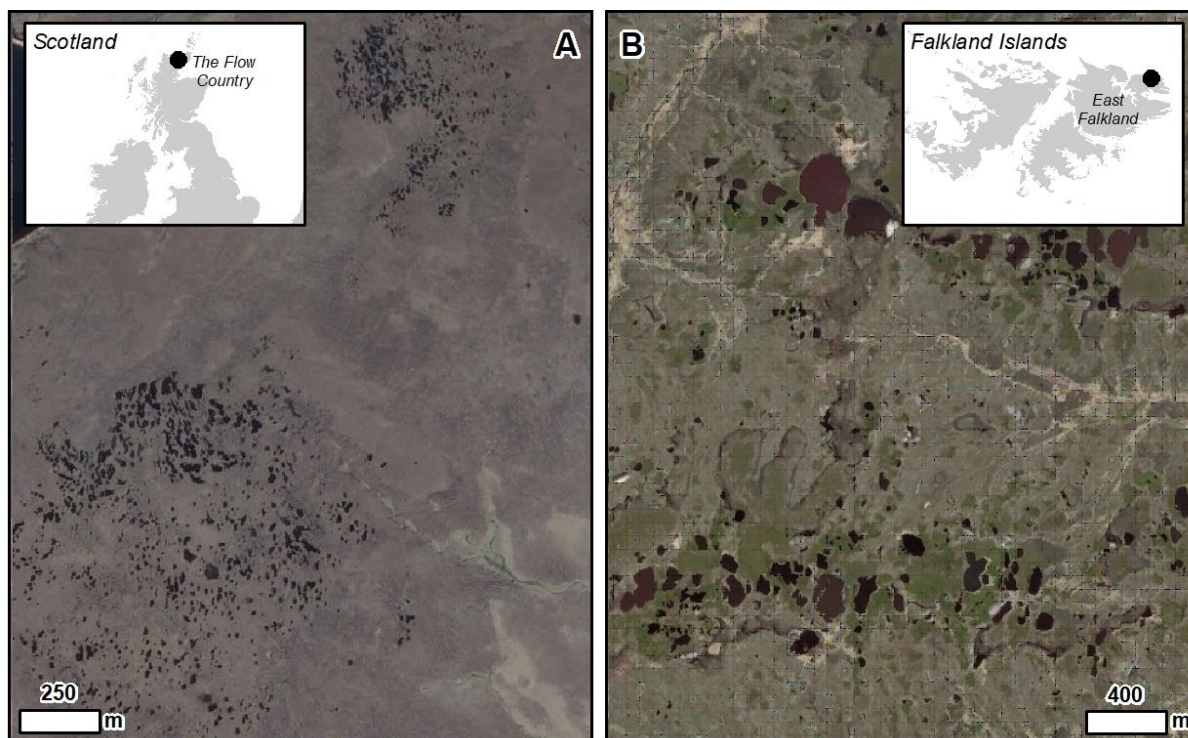
In terms of the extent of blanket bog landscape, despite the islands being mostly covered in peat, not all of the peatlands are blanket bogs, reducing the extent of this habitat. Furthermore, the area of peatlands is fragmented between the islands of the archipelago, further reducing their continuity. Deep peat peatland may only cover approximately 5,478 km<sup>2</sup> (Wilson et al., 1993) to 2,820 km<sup>2</sup> (Evans et al., 2017). The most up to date dataset indicates that a total of 4,626 km<sup>2</sup> is covered by peatlands (Carter, 2020), of which a proportion will be not be part of the blanket bog landscape. This suggests that the area of continuous blanket bog on the Falkland Islands is smaller area than that of The Flow Country, despite there not being an official total area for this specific habitat.

#### *ii. Status*

Blanket bogs in the Falkland Islands face significant challenges in terms of erosion and climatic conditions since annual rainfall ranges from 350 to 650 mm yr<sup>-1</sup> (Evans *et al.*, 2020), which is much lower than the conditions described as essential to blanket bog formation (>1,000 mm yr<sup>-1</sup>; Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). Occult precipitation (mist and fog), as in other blanket bog landscape areas (e.g. Newfoundland or Spain), could explain the additional contribution of hydric resources (Price, 1992; Chico, 2020). In addition, recent research suggests that peatlands in the Falkland Islands are likely to be actively accumulating (Scaife et al., 2019). Joosten *et al.* (2016) notes that the degradation of peatlands across the Falkland Islands is low (2%) suggesting the well-preserved status of this habitat.

#### *iii. Pool systems*

The upland peatlands of the Falkland Islands are usually associated with pond and pool systems on the ridge tops or slopes, with a pH ranging from 4 to 5.3 (Aldiss & Edwards, 1999), which is similar to those found in European blanket bogs. However, the geomorphological origin of the pools here is likely to be different to those in The Flow Country as they seem to be related to erosion and solifluction processes (mainly aeolian and ice) as defined by Weller (1975). Clear differences in the pool systems of The Flow Country and Falkland Islands can be seen from satellite imagery (Figure 4.5) and the diversity, relative to those documented in The Flow Country, seems to be lacking.



**Figure 4.5.** Comparison between pool systems in The Flow Country (A) and the Falkland Islands (B).

#### iv. Vegetation

The vegetation of the Falkland Islands peatlands is intrinsically related to its location in the landscape and geography. Upland peat forms a typical blanket bog landscape (Evans *et al.*, 2020) on these islands, covering large areas as described previously, although it is much smaller in extent than the blanket bog landscape in The Flow Country. The vegetation is a mix of sedges and shrubs with *Astelia pumila* being dominant where the water table is close to the surface. *Sphagnum* spp. are also present on the islands, but mainly where precipitation is higher. Tussac peat is mainly formed from the grass, *Poa flabellate*, and is also a distinctive type of peatland on the islands. However, this type of peatland is mostly restricted to coastal areas, and it needs a higher nutrient input (Evans *et al.*, 2020), which is not a characteristic of blanket bog landscapes.

In conclusion, despite the blanket bog landscape in the Falkland Islands being probably the most remarkable in the Southern Hemisphere, based on the limited data that are available, the extent is smaller when comparing to The Flow Country and the geomorphological attributes, such as, pool systems are less diverse (Figure 4.1; Figure 4.5).

#### c) Isla Grande de Chiloé

This island is located along the coast of Chile and represents the northernmost example of well-developed peatlands in the region. There are several types of peatlands on the island,

and the extent of blanket bogs has not been reported. However, it is likely that the total extent of this habitat is much smaller than The Flow Country since an official inventory of all peatlands together on the island provides a total of 1,062 km<sup>2</sup> as the potential total area (SERNAGEOMIN-GORE Los Lagos, 2008).

#### *d) South Georgia and Isla de los Estados*

Both islands have been highlighted as areas with blanket bogs by Joosten *et al.* (2016); however, the extent of blanket bogs is very limited in comparison with the Falkland Islands or The Flow Country. The total extent has not been reported; but considering the total area of the islands is 507 km<sup>2</sup> (Isla de los Estados) and 3,903 km<sup>2</sup> (South Georgia) with the land cover predominantly being glaciated, the total extent of blanket bogs will be smaller than that of The Flow Country.

### **4.5.4. Europe**

#### *4.5.4.1. Ireland*

In Ireland, blanket bogs are classified as two subtypes, Low Level Atlantic Blanket bogs and High Level Montane Blanket bogs. These two types are usually interconnected covering the landscape as a continuous mantle and forming a blanket bog landscape. Ireland possesses a large area of blanket bog landscape covering over 9,200 km<sup>2</sup> (Connolly *et al.*, 2009) across different zones of the country with the vast majority of the blanket bog landscape located on the west coast of the island in Donegal, Mayo, Connemara and Kerry counties; however, only about 1,432 km<sup>2</sup> of blanket bog landscape is in near-natural condition and protected status represents only a 15.6% of blanket mires in Ireland (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2015). More recent reports have increased the proportion of blanket mires in a natural state to 28% (Pike, 2021).

#### *a) Donegal*

Donegal is one the counties with the largest area of blanket bog landscape and is comparable with The Flow Country in terms of total area (Table 4.5); however, the blanket bog landscape is under high anthropogenic pressure affecting habitat continuity. A clear example is Corveen Bog, where peat extraction and windfarm development have impacted/mostly destroyed all the blanket bog units (Figure 4.6). In the south of the county, other pressures, such as, drainage and forestry have also disconnected large areas of blanket bog landscape, meaning that there is no bog comparable with The Flow Country in relation to total area. Only about 1,291 km<sup>2</sup> of the blanket mires are considered unmodified (Hammond, 1981; Conaghan *et al.*, 2000).

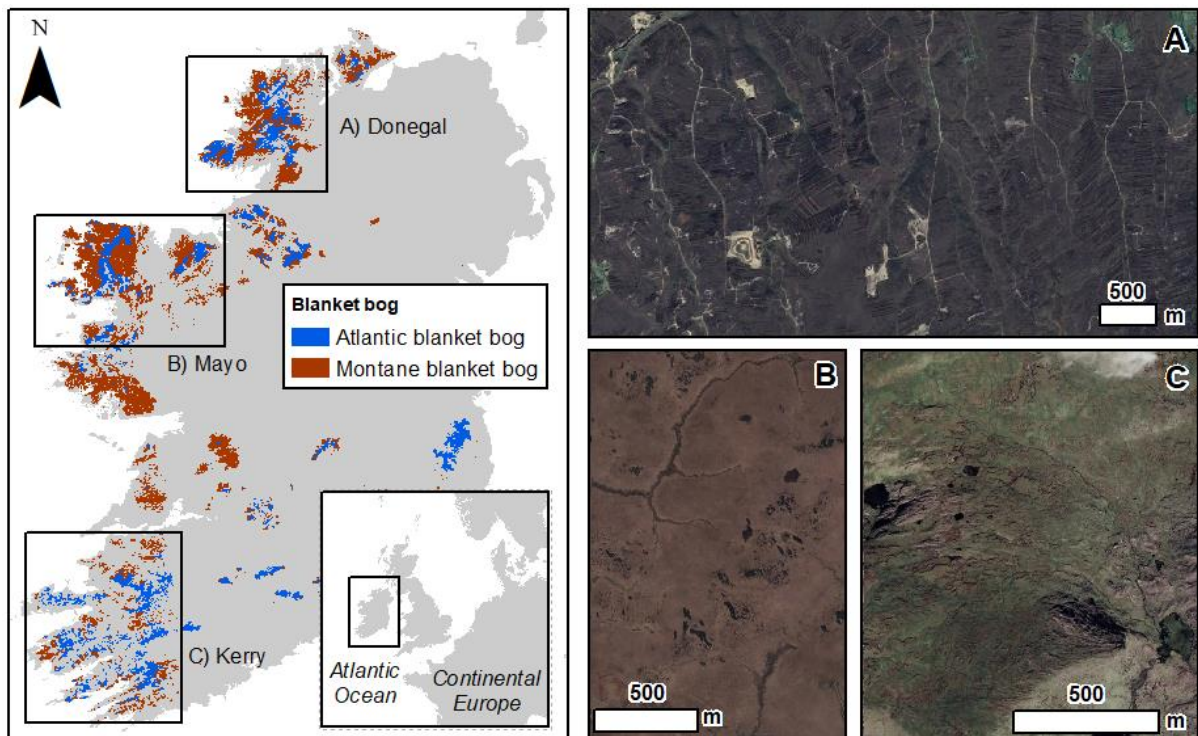


### b) Mayo

Another important region for blanket bog landscape in Ireland is Mayo. These are better preserved than those described from Donegal in some areas (Figure 4.6) with similar anthropogenic issues to those affecting The Flow Country (e.g. Forestry). However, the nearly pristine blanket bog areas (Figure 4.6) are restricted mainly to the north of the county and unmodified blanket mires only cover 1,260 km<sup>2</sup> (Hammond, 1981; Conaghan *et al.*, 2000), with large areas of degraded peatlands found in the rest of the county. This means that the total area and quality of these blanket bog landscapes are not comparable with The Flow Country. Pool systems in this county are comparable with The Flow Country in size and features (Figure 4,1); however, their extent is restricted.

### c) Kerry and Cork

Kerry and Cork counties contain extensive blanket bog landscapes, but these are similarly degraded as those described from Donegal and Mayo (Table 4.5). Furthermore, the blanket bog landscape in Kerry and Cork is very fragmented, covering mainly the tops of hills, in small pockets, as individual blanket bog units and are facing significant erosion problems (Figure 4.6). Pool systems are rare in this area.

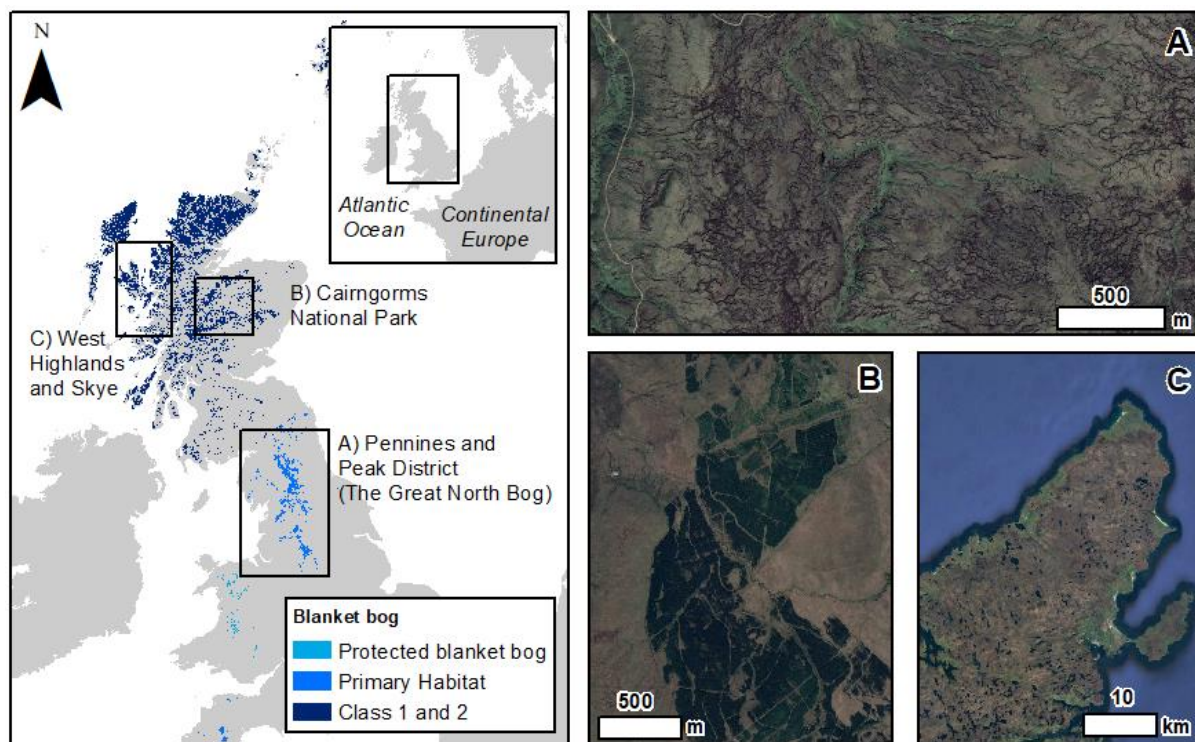


**Figure 4.6.** Blanket bog areas in Ireland based on Connolly *et al.* (2009). A) A blanket bog in Donegal showing different anthropogenic pressures, such as peat extraction and peat cutting. B) A near natural blanket bog example in Mayo. C) An example of fragmented blanket bog on a hill submits in Kerry.

#### 4.5.4.2. United Kingdom

Across the United Kingdom, blanket peat soils cover around 64,189 km<sup>2</sup>; however, when defining this as blanket bog habitat, only a total of 22,241 km<sup>2</sup> has been reported (Lindsay and Clough, 2017). The distribution of blanket bog landscapes across the United Kingdom correlates with the regions which experience a minimum number of 200 rainfall days annually (Taylor, 1983), and a further association has been documented between pool systems and annual rainfall exceeding 1,300 mm (Lindsay and Clough, 2017). Pool systems are visible across all of the blanket bog regions of the United Kingdom, but the frequency is higher in Scotland with larger and more diverse pool systems than the pools found across England and Wales (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). The Flow Country represents the best continuous example of this habitat within the United Kingdom; despite the anthropogenic pressures described previously in section 4.4.

The United Kingdom is covered by large areas of blanket bog landscape (Figure 4.7); however, around 80% of this habitat is no longer peat forming due to anthropogenic pressures (Lindsay and Clough, 2017) and only 21,822 km<sup>2</sup> is protected (JCNN, 2019). Scotland represents over 80% of blanket bog protected areas (JCNN, 2019).



**Figure 4.7.** Blanket bog landscape areas across the United Kingdom based on the best data available for England (Primary habitat; Natural England, 2020), Wales (Protected blanket bog under the Habitats Directive; JCNN, 2019) and Scotland (Class 1 and 2 of the Peat soils and Peatlands map; NatureScot, 2016). A) A blanket bog in Cairngorms National Park showing a range of erosion features affecting the blanket bog surface. B) A blanket bog unit at Skye fragmented by Forestry. C) The largest blanket bog unit at the Outer Hebrides on the north of Lewis Island.

#### a) Pennines and Peak District

In England, one of the most important areas of blanket bog landscape is located along the Pennines range. This area, also named as 'The Great North Bog', includes 2,150km<sup>2</sup> of blanket bog and several units are connected with shallow peat (The GNB, 2021). However, the main continuous areas of blanket bog landscape are located in the Peak District National Park and North Pennines, where some pool systems are visible, but are not comparable in frequency with those of the Flow Country (Lindsay *et al.*, 1988). It is also relevant to highlight that despite several projects across England are restoring this habitat, the total area is considerably less than The Flow Country (Table 4.5). The Great North Bog is also fragmented mainly because of topographic features (e.g. Aire Gap or Tyne Gap; Figure 4.7), as well as anthropogenic pressures described in section 4.4.

#### *b) Cairngorms National Park and adjacent areas*

Scotland possesses the largest areas of blanket bog habitat across The United Kingdom. The Cairngorms National Park and adjacent blanket bog areas are larger than The Flow Country; however, a large proportion is under pressure from high erosion processes (Figure 4.7), and it is very fragmented by topographic features, resulting in several separate units rather than forming a continuous blanket bog landscape as found in The Flow Country. There are very limited pool systems in this region and those that do exist are not comparable with those of The Flow Country. The maximum peat depth is higher in this area (Table 4.5), but these maximum peat depths are of restricted extent, and the largest continuous deep peat areas in the United Kingdom are located in The Flow Country and Outer Hebrides (Waldron *et al.*, 2015).

#### *c) West Highlands and Skye*

The total area of blanket bog landscape in this part of Scotland could be comparable with The Flow Country (Table 4.5); however, it is important to highlight the fragmentation occurring as a consequence of the topography of the West Highlands, and of course the fact that Skye is an island, separated from mainland Scotland. Pool systems are frequent in some areas (e.g. Invergarry or Achnasheen), but are of restricted extent. Furthermore, some of the best examples of blanket bog landscape have been heavily affected by forestry activities, which are on a greater scale than in The Flow Country, increasing the fragmentation of the better blanket bog landscape areas in this part of Scotland (Figure 4.7).

#### *d) Outer Hebrides*

The largest continuous area of blanket bog landscape in the Outer Hebrides is located on the north of the Isle of Lewis (Figure 4.7). The degradation status is lower than other blanket bogs across Scotland (10%, Joosten *et al.*, 2016; Table 4.5), but the total area is smaller than The

Flow Country and the topography (several islands and rocky outcrops) fragments the blanket bog landscape. The largest continuous unit only covers approximately 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> (NatureScot, 2016).

#### *e) Wales*

The largest areas of blanket bog landscape in Wales are concentrated along the country mountain ranges across, with some small areas in the Brecon Beacons National Park and two areas located along the Cambrian Mountains. However, blanket bog landscapes across Wales are fragmented and under high anthropogenic pressures meaning that they are not comparable to The Flow Country in terms of quality, but also in total area (Table 4.5).

#### *4.5.4.3. Norway*

Blanket bogs are not common in Norway and tend to be restricted to the most oceanic areas of the country (Moen et al., 2017). Along the Atlantic coast, blanket bogs have formed as a consequence of woodland clearance (Solem, 1989) and the southern areas are usually older than those found in the north. Blanket bogs can also be found inland where they tend to be more intact; however, it is unlikely that they cover more than 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> when combined (Moen et al., 2017). They are also fragmented, and do not cover large areas such as in the United Kingdom or Ireland.

#### *4.5.4.4. Spain*

Spain represents the southernmost edge-of-range of blanket bogs in continental Europe (Chico et al., 2020). Blanket bogs tend to be on high elevation summits, usually over 800 metres and their extent is limited by topography (Chico, 2020). The largest blanket bog landscape area is in the west of the country at Serra do Xistral covering only 31 km<sup>2</sup> (Table 4.5; Ramil-Rego et al., 2012).

### **4.5.5. Asia and Pacific**

#### *4.5.5.1. Japan*

Although blanket bogs in Japan are limited in terms of size in comparison to The Flow Country, it is worth noting there are some important blanket bog landscape units on Hokkaido Island (North Japan). Climatic conditions on the island are variable, in some instances not suiting blanket bog development, as summer temperatures can rise above 30° and precipitation can be low in summer. However, the Pacific Coast region of the island usually has lower temperatures due to the regular occurrence of dense fog, that contributes to hydric resources (Fujita et al., 2009). The majority of blanket bogs on Hokkaido Island are in mountain areas

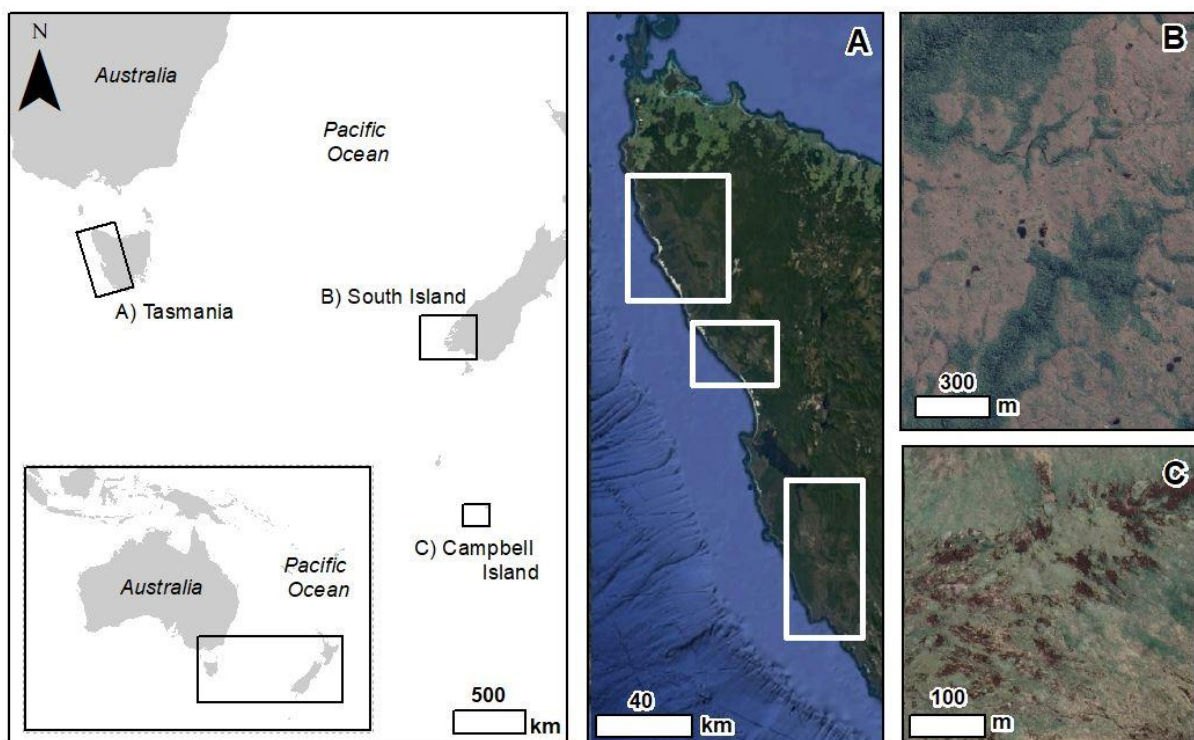


(approximately 77%, Fujita *et al.*, 2009), as described previously by Lindsay *et al.* (1988), however, they are very restricted in size in comparison to The Flow Country.

#### 4.5.5.2. Australia: Tasmania

##### i. Area

Tasmanian blanket bog landscapes, also known as ‘buttongrass’ moorlands, cover over 7,500 km<sup>2</sup> (Table 4.5) of the landscape and represent one of the most important blanket bog landscape in the southern hemisphere (Sharples, 2003). However, the blanket bog landscape is fragmented into different units with the largest extents at Southwest National Park, Southwest Conservation Area and Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area (Figure 4.8), with the largest unit covering no more than 3,500 km<sup>2</sup>, which is around 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> less than The Flow Country. These larger units also tend to contain considerable woodland elements which could further fragment the blanket bogs.



**Figure 4.8.** Most representative blanket bog areas across Australia and New Zealand. A) Three main areas where blanket bog landscapes occur in Tasmania (Australia). B) An example of blanket bog-forest complex and pool systems in the south of New Zealand (South Island). C) Degraded blanket bog example in Campbell Island (New Zealand).

##### ii. Status

In regard to the quality of the blanket bog, Joosten *et al.* (2016) reported a low degradation of Tasmanian blanket bogs (0-3%). However, a review of the geoconservation values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Site (Sharples, 2003) highlighted that the total

degraded area of blanket bog could be up to 30%, leaving around 5,500 km<sup>2</sup> of blanket bog landscape in near-natural or natural status across all areas previously described (Sharples, 2003). The blanket bogs of Tasmania are considered on the edge-of-range for their formation as a consequence of dry summers and warmer temperatures (Bridle *et al.*, 2003) and the blanket bog landscape is under increasing threat as a consequence of climate change which could affect peat formation and compromise the total area of this habitat. In addition, although some blanket bogs may reach up to four metres peat depth (Table 4.5; Pemberton *et al.*, 2005), the typical thickness is only around 30 cm at which stage they may be reaching their equilibrium in terms of peat accumulation because of the warmer temperatures and anthropogenic pressures (e.g. fires) limiting the peat accumulation rates (Balmer, 1991; Bridle *et al.*, 2003).

### *iii. Pool systems*

Pool systems are variably developed across the blanket bog landscapes on the island, with important pool systems being found mainly in the north, but with large areas without complex and diverse pool systems as those found in The Flow Country (Figure 4.1).

### *iv. Vegetation*

Another important characteristic of Tasmanian blanket bog landscape is the vegetation. The majority of the peat is formed from sedges and shrubs and not primarily from *Sphagnum* mosses (Sharples, 2003). However, small peatlands with restricted distribution mainly formed with *Sphagnum* mosses can also be found in Tasmania and Australia (Pemberton *et al.*, 2005); although they are not necessarily blanket bogs and are usually small in size in comparison to those found in The Flow Country.

### *v. Other remarkable elements*

Finally, another element described in the south of Tasmania are peat-mounds. This element, mainly exclusive to The Flow Country, can be also found in this part of the world, but in Tasmania they are bigger in both diameter and height (Macphail *et al.*, 1999) than those found in Caithness and further research in this aspect is needed.

In conclusion, despite Tasmanian blanket bog areas covering large continuous areas of the landscape; individual blanket bog landscapes cover smaller areas than those of The Flow Country. Importantly, the characteristics and development limitations in terms of peat depth, seems to be the more critical factor when comparing with The Flow Country along with the vegetation and pool systems.

#### 4.5.5.3. *New Zealand*

The largest areas of blanket bog landscape, also known locally as ‘restiad bogs’ in New Zealand, because of their vegetation, are mainly concentrated in the south of South Island, Stewart Island, Chatham Island and the Subantarctic Islands (Selkirk & McGlone, 2005). A large proportion of Chatham Island is covered by peat with around 530 km<sup>2</sup> of blanket peat described (Wright, 1959). This is still far from the large areas found in The Flow Country (Table 4.5). Small blanket bog pockets can also be found along hill submits on North Island where they contain important pool systems, but these are very limited in their development as a consequence of topographic constraints, as observed using satellite imagery. The most extensive blanket bog landscape can be found in the south, but these are not comparable to those of The Flow Country in terms of total area (Table 4.5). They have some pool systems (Figure 4.1) that are usually interconnected with forest as with the blanket bog landscape found on the West Coast of Canada (Figure 4.8). Finally, there are some degraded blanket bogs on Campbell Island, but these are not comparable with those found in The Flow Country (Figure 4.8).

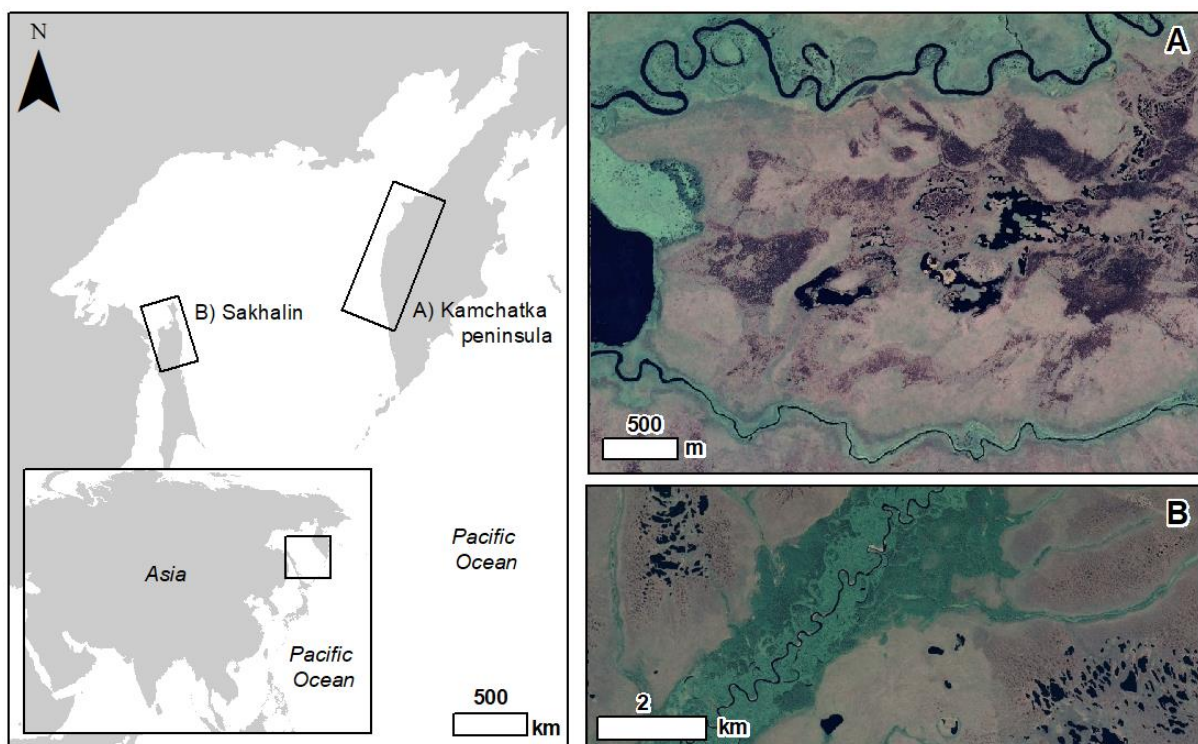
The majority of the subantarctic islands of New Zealand have blanket bogs similar to those found in the rest of the southern hemisphere subantarctic islands, but they are very limited in size and are therefore not comparable to The Flow Country (Figure 4.8). At Campbell Island, some degraded blanket bogs (Figure 4.8) have comparable geomorphological features to those observed on Isla de Los Estados (Argentina), but neither are comparable with The Flow Country.

#### 4.5.5.4. *Russia*

The most important area of blanket bog landscape in Russia is considered to be located on the west of the Kamchatka peninsula; however, this habitat has been described as being of minor importance within the context of peatlands in Russia (Masing *et al.*, 2010) and their extent has not been reported, other than by Joosten *et al.* (2016) (Table 4.5). Research in this area is very limited, and on the basis of visual assessment using satellite imagery, it is likely that most of the area is dominated by raised bogs and other peatland types primarily due to their topographical location in a basin and their association with numerous rivers and streams: common features that are found around the raised bogs (Figure 4.9; Nikonov, 1955; Katz, 1971). In fact, the area has been also defined as a ‘peat basin’, again suggesting the likely origin through raised bog formation rather than blanket bog development (Masing *et al.*, 2010). The existence of blanket bog units is a possibility within this landscape, but where satellite imagery is available, raised bog patterns are observed (Figure 4.9). In 1983 the area was described as blanket bogs (Botch & Masing, 1983). With the lack of data available from this

region, and the contradictory reports it is clear that further research is needed in order to understand the distribution of, and potential interaction between, these two types of bogs. The bogs of Sakhalin display very similar features to those of Kamchatka and are interpreted similarly.

An important aspect relating to both these areas, that may contribute to the differentiation of bog type, is the total carbon content, which is estimated to be lower since the peat has high a percentage (30 to 50%) of ash as a consequence of the volcanic eruptions and inclusions of alluvial minerals. This supports the theory of raised bog as the main element of the peatland systems (USDA Forest Service, 1998).



**Figure 4.9.** Two examples of bog areas in Russia. A) Example of bog bounded by streams and a lake, typical characteristic of a raised bog on Kamchatka peninsula. B) Example of bog in Sakhalin with similar characteristics to the bogs on Kamchatka peninsula.

## 5. Conclusions

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Based on current literature, and visual assessments using satellite imagery, The Flow Country represents one of the most important blanket bog landscape area in the world.

To date, no WHS has a comparable blanket bog landscape to those found in The Flow Country. Although several blanket bog habitats are present on the tentative list, they are not comparable with The Flow Country in extend and quality (e.g. The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands) nor do they contain this type of peatland as the main characteristic (e.g. The Great Vasyugan Mire).

Regarding the total extent of blanket bog landscape, The Flow Country represents the most important continuous blanket bog landscape globally; however, it is important to highlight that not all of this continuous peatland is currently functional, and restoration actions are needed in order to recover the total functional area. However, it should be noted that blanket bog landscapes reported as being larger than The Flow Country are usually fragmented and their geomorphological characteristics (such as peat depth and pool systems) are less diverse, making The Flow Country a remarkably unique blanket bog landscape.

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# Scottish Planning Policy

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# **Scottish Planning Policy**

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# Planning Series

The Scottish Government series of Planning and Architecture documents are material considerations in the planning system.

## Planning and Architecture Policy



## Planning and Design Advice and Guidance



Further information is available at: [www.scotland.gov.uk/planning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning)

This SPP replaces SPP (2010) and Designing Places (2001)

statutory

non-statutory



# Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

## Purpose

i. The purpose of the SPP is to set out national planning policies which reflect Scottish Ministers' priorities for operation of the planning system and for the development<sup>1</sup> and use of land. The SPP promotes consistency in the application of policy across Scotland whilst allowing sufficient flexibility to reflect local circumstances. It directly relates to:

- the preparation of development plans;
- the design of development, from initial concept through to delivery; and
- the determination of planning applications and appeals.

## Status

ii. The SPP is a statement of Scottish Government policy on how nationally important land use planning matters should be addressed across the country. It is non-statutory. However, Section 3D of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) 1997 Act requires that functions relating to the preparation of the National Planning Framework by Scottish Ministers and development plans by planning authorities must be exercised with the objective of contributing to [sustainable development](#). Under the Act, Scottish Ministers are able to issue guidance on this requirement to which planning authorities must have regard. The Principal Policy on Sustainability is guidance under section 3E of the Act.

iii. The 1997 Act requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As a statement of Ministers' priorities the content of the SPP is a material consideration that carries significant weight, though it is for the decision-maker to determine the appropriate weight in each case. Where development plans and proposals accord with this SPP, their progress through the planning system should be smoother.

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<sup>1</sup> The Planning (Scotland) Act 2006 extends the definition of development to include marine fish farms out to 12 nautical miles.

**iv.** The SPP sits alongside the following Scottish Government planning policy documents:

- the [National Planning Framework](#) (NPF)<sup>2</sup>, which provides a statutory framework for Scotland's long-term spatial development. The NPF sets out the Scottish Government's spatial development priorities for the next 20 to 30 years. The SPP sets out policy that will help to deliver the objectives of the NPF;
- [Creating Places](#)<sup>3</sup>, the policy statement on architecture and place, which contains policies and guidance on the importance of architecture and design;
- [Designing Streets](#)<sup>4</sup>, which is a policy statement putting street design at the centre of placemaking. It contains policies and guidance on the design of new or existing streets and their construction, adoption and maintenance; and
- [Circulars](#)<sup>5</sup>, which contain policy on the implementation of legislation or procedures.

**v.** The SPP should be read and applied as a whole. Where 'must' is used it reflects a legislative requirement to take action. Where 'should' is used it reflects Scottish Ministers' expectations of an efficient and effective planning system. The Principal Policies on Sustainability and Placemaking are overarching and should be applied to all development. The key documents referred to provide contextual background or more detailed advice and guidance. Unless otherwise stated, reference to Strategic Development Plans (SDP) covers Local Development Plans outwith SDP areas. The SPP does not restate policy and guidance set out elsewhere. A [glossary](#) of terms is included at the end of this document.

<sup>2</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Framework](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Framework)

<sup>3</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/9811/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/9811/0)

<sup>4</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/22120652/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/22120652/0)

<sup>5</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/publications/circulars](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/publications/circulars)

# Introduction

## The Planning System

1. The planning system has a vital role to play in delivering high-quality places for Scotland. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) focuses plan making, planning decisions and development design on the Scottish Government's Purpose of creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing [sustainable economic growth](#).
2. Planning should take a positive approach to enabling high-quality development and making efficient use of land to deliver long-term benefits for the public while protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources.
3. Further information and guidance on planning in Scotland is available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/planning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning)<sup>6</sup>. An explanation of the planning system can be found in [A Guide to the Planning System in Scotland](#)<sup>7</sup>.

## Core Values of the Planning Service

4. Scottish Ministers expect the planning service to perform to a high standard and to pursue continuous improvement. The service should:
  - focus on outcomes, maximising benefits and balancing competing interests;
  - play a key role in facilitating sustainable economic growth, particularly the creation of new jobs and the strengthening of economic capacity and resilience within communities;
  - be plan-led, with plans being up-to-date and relevant;
  - make decisions in a timely, transparent and fair way to provide a supportive business environment and engender public confidence in the system;
  - be inclusive, engaging all interests as early and effectively as possible;
  - be proportionate, only imposing conditions and obligations where necessary; and
  - uphold the law and enforce the terms of decisions made.

## People Make the System Work

5. The primary responsibility for the operation of the planning system lies with strategic development planning authorities, and local and national park authorities. However, all those involved with the system have a responsibility to engage and work together constructively and proportionately to achieve quality places for Scotland. This includes the Scottish Government and its agencies, public bodies, statutory consultees, elected members, communities, the general public, developers, applicants, agents, interest groups and representative organisations.

<sup>6</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/built-environment/planning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/built-environment/planning)

<sup>7</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/08/11133705/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/08/11133705/0)

**6.** Throughout the planning system, opportunities are available for everyone to engage in the development decisions which affect them. Such engagement between stakeholders should be early, meaningful and proportionate. Innovative approaches, tailored to the unique circumstances are encouraged, for example charrettes or mediation initiatives. Support or concern expressed on matters material to planning should be given careful consideration in developing plans and proposals and in determining planning applications. Effective engagement can lead to better plans, better decisions and more satisfactory outcomes and can help to avoid delays in the planning process.

**7.** Planning authorities and developers should ensure that appropriate and proportionate steps are taken to engage with communities during the preparation of development plans, when development proposals are being formed and when applications for planning permission are made. Individuals and [community](#) groups should ensure that they focus on planning issues and use available opportunities for engaging constructively with developers and planning authorities.

**8.** Further information can be found in the following:

- [Town and Country Planning \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#)<sup>8</sup> as amended, plus associated legislation: sets out minimum requirements for consultation and engagement
- [Circular 6/2013: Development Planning](#)<sup>9</sup>
- [Circular 3/2013: Development Management Procedures](#)<sup>10</sup>
- [The Standards Commission for Scotland: Guidance on the Councillors' Code of Conduct](#)<sup>11</sup>
- [Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement](#)<sup>12</sup>
- [A Guide to the Use of Mediation in the Planning System in Scotland \(2009\)](#)<sup>13</sup>

## Outcomes: How Planning Makes a Difference

**9.** The Scottish Government's Purpose of creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth is set out in the Government Economic Strategy. The aim is to ensure that the entire public sector is fully aligned to deliver the Purpose. The relationship of planning to the Purpose is shown on page 8.

**10.** The Scottish Government's [16 national outcomes](#)<sup>14</sup> articulate in more detail how the Purpose is to be achieved. Planning is broad in scope and cross cutting in nature and therefore contributes to the achievement of all of the national outcomes. The pursuit of these outcomes provides the impetus for other national plans, policies and strategies and many of the principles and policies set out in them are reflected in both the SPP and NPF3.

<sup>8</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents)

<sup>9</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/9924/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/9924/0)

<sup>10</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/9882/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/9882/0)

<sup>11</sup> [www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/webfm\\_send/279](http://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/webfm_send/279)

<sup>12</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/30094454/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/30094454/0)

<sup>13</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/10154116/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/10154116/0)

<sup>14</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome)

## 11. NPF3 and this SPP share a single vision for the planning system in Scotland:

We live in a Scotland with a growing, low-carbon economy with progressively narrowing disparities in well-being and opportunity. It is growth that can be achieved whilst reducing emissions and which respects the quality of environment, place and life which makes our country so special. It is growth which increases solidarity – reducing inequalities between our regions. We live in sustainable, well-designed places and homes which meet our needs. We enjoy excellent transport and digital connections, internally and with the rest of the world.

12. At the strategic and local level, planning can make a very important contribution to the delivery of [Single Outcome Agreements](#)<sup>15</sup>, through their shared focus on ‘place’. Effective integration between land use planning and community planning is crucial and development plans should reflect close working with [Community Planning Partnerships](#)<sup>16</sup>.

13. The following four planning outcomes explain how planning should support the vision. The outcomes are consistent across the NPF and SPP and focus on creating a successful sustainable place, a low carbon place, a natural, resilient place and a more connected place. For planning to make a positive difference, development plans and new development need to contribute to achieving these outcomes.

**Outcome 1: A successful, sustainable place** – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed, sustainable places.

14. NPF3 aims to strengthen the role of our city regions and towns, create more vibrant rural places, and realise the opportunities for sustainable growth and innovation in our coastal and island areas.

15. The SPP sets out how this should be delivered on the ground. By locating the right development in the right place, planning can provide opportunities for people to make sustainable choices and improve their quality of life. Well-planned places promote well-being, a sense of identity and pride, and greater opportunities for social interaction. Planning therefore has an important role in promoting strong, resilient and inclusive communities. Delivering high-quality buildings, infrastructure and spaces in the right locations helps provide choice over where to live and style of home, choice as to how to access amenities and services and choice to live more active, engaged, independent and healthy lifestyles.

16. Good planning creates opportunities for people to contribute to a growing, adaptable and productive economy. By allocating sites and creating places that are attractive to growing economic sectors, and enabling the delivery of necessary infrastructure, planning can help provide the confidence required to secure private sector investment, thus supporting innovation, creating employment and benefiting related businesses.

**Outcome 2: A low carbon place** – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.

15 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/CP/SOA2012](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/CP/SOA2012)

16 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/CP](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/CP)

**17.** NPF3 will facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy, particularly by supporting diversification of the energy sector. The spatial strategy as a whole aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and facilitate **adaptation** to climate change.

**18.** The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050, with an interim target of reducing emissions by at least 42% by 2020. Annual greenhouse gas emission targets are set in secondary legislation. Section 44 of the Act places a duty on every public body to act:

- in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions targets in the Act;
- in the way best calculated to help deliver the Scottish Government's climate change adaptation programme; and
- in a way that it considers is most sustainable.

**19.** The SPP sets out how this should be delivered on the ground. By seizing opportunities to encourage mitigation and adaptation measures, planning can support the transformational change required to meet emission reduction targets and influence climate change. Planning can also influence people's choices to reduce the environmental impacts of consumption and production, particularly through energy efficiency and the reduction of waste.

**Outcome 3: A natural, resilient place** – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets, and facilitating their sustainable use.

**20.** NPF3 emphasises the importance of our environment as part of our cultural identity, an essential contributor to well-being and an economic opportunity. Our spatial strategy aims to build resilience and promotes protection and sustainable use of our world-class environmental assets.

**21.** The SPP sets out how this should be delivered on the ground. By protecting and making efficient use of Scotland's existing resources and environmental assets, planning can help us to live within our environmental limits and to pass on healthy ecosystems to future generations. Planning can help to manage and improve the condition of our assets, supporting communities in realising their aspirations for their environment and facilitating their access to enjoyment of it. By enhancing our surroundings, planning can help make Scotland a uniquely attractive place to work, visit and invest and therefore support the generation of jobs, income and wider economic benefits.

**Outcome 4: A more connected place** – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.

**22.** NPF3 reflects our continuing investment in infrastructure, to strengthen transport links within Scotland and to the rest of the world. Improved digital connections will also play a key role in helping to deliver our spatial strategy for sustainable growth.

**23.** The SPP sets out how this should be delivered on the ground. By aligning development more closely with transport and digital infrastructure, planning can improve sustainability and connectivity. Improved connections facilitate accessibility within and between places – within Scotland and beyond – and support economic growth and an inclusive society.

SG Purpose	To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.										
SG National Outcomes	The planning system and service contribute to all 16 National Outcomes										
SG National Plans, Policies & Strategies	<b>Government Economic Strategy</b>										
	Infrastructure Investment Plan										
	Scotland's Digital Future	Electricity & Heat Generation Policy Statements	2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity	Scottish Historic Environment Strategy and Policy	Housing Strategy	National Planning Framework & Scottish Planning Policy	Land Use Strategy	Low Carbon Scotland: Report of Proposals and Policies	National Marine Plan	Regeneration Strategy	National Transport Strategy
Planning Vision	We live in a Scotland with a growing, low carbon economy with progressively narrowing disparities in well-being and opportunity. It is growth that can be achieved whilst reducing emissions and which respects the quality of environment, place and life which makes our country so special. It is growth which increases solidarity – reducing inequalities between our regions. We live in sustainable, well-designed places and homes which meet our needs. We enjoy excellent transport and digital connections, internally and with the rest of the world.										
Planning Outcomes	Planning makes Scotland <b>a successful, sustainable place</b> – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed places.			Planning makes Scotland <b>a low carbon place</b> – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.			Planning makes Scotland <b>a natural, resilient place</b> – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets, and facilitating their sustainable use.			Planning makes Scotland <b>a connected place</b> – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.	
National Planning	<b>Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)</b>										
	Principal Policies										
	Sustainability			Placemaking							
	Subject Policies										
	Town Centres	Heat and Electricity		Natural Environment	Travel		<i>Cities and Towns</i> <i>Rural Areas</i> <i>Coast and Islands</i> <i>National Developments</i>				
	Rural Development	Zero Waste		Green Infrastructure	Digital Connectivity						
Homes	Aquacultural			Minerals							
	Business & Employment			Flooding & Drainage							
	Historic Environment										
	<b>COMMUNITY PLANNING</b>										
Strategic	Strategic Development Plans										
Local	Local Development Plans										
Site	Master Plans										



# Principal Policies

## Sustainability

### NPF and wider policy context

**24.** The Scottish Government's central purpose is to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing [sustainable economic growth](#).

**25.** The Scottish Government's commitment to the concept of [sustainable development](#) is reflected in its Purpose. It is also reflected in the continued support for the five guiding principles set out in the UK's shared framework for sustainable development. Achieving a sustainable economy, promoting good governance and using sound science responsibly are essential to the creation and maintenance of a strong, healthy and just society capable of living within environmental limits.

**26.** The NPF is the spatial expression of the Government Economic Strategy (2011) and sustainable economic growth forms the foundations of its strategy. The NPF sits at the top of the development plan hierarchy and must be taken into account in the preparation of strategic and local development plans.

**27.** The Government Economic Strategy indicates that sustainable economic growth is the key to unlocking Scotland's potential and outlines the multiple benefits of delivering the Government's purpose, including creating a supportive business environment, achieving a low carbon economy, tackling health and social problems, maintaining a high-quality environment and passing on a sustainable legacy for future generations.

### Policy Principles

**This SPP introduces a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development.**

**28.** The planning system should support economically, environmentally and socially sustainable places by enabling development that balances the costs and benefits of a proposal over the longer term. The aim is to achieve the right development in the right place; it is not to allow development at any cost.

**29.** This means that policies and decisions should be guided by the following principles:

- giving due weight to net economic benefit;
- responding to economic issues, challenges and opportunities, as outlined in local economic strategies;
- supporting good design and the six qualities of successful places;
- making efficient use of existing capacities of land, buildings and infrastructure including supporting town centre and regeneration priorities;
- supporting delivery of accessible housing, business, retailing and leisure development;

- supporting delivery of infrastructure, for example transport, education, energy, digital and water;
- supporting [climate change mitigation](#) and [adaptation](#) including taking account of flood risk;
- improving health and well-being by offering opportunities for social interaction and physical activity, including sport and recreation;
- having regard to the principles for sustainable land use set out in the Land Use Strategy;
- protecting, enhancing and promoting access to cultural heritage, including the [historic environment](#);
- protecting, enhancing and promoting access to natural heritage, including green infrastructure, landscape and the wider environment;
- reducing waste, facilitating its management and promoting resource recovery; and
- avoiding over-development, protecting the amenity of new and existing development and considering the implications of development for water, air and soil quality.

## Key Documents

- [National Planning Framework](#)<sup>17</sup>
- [Government Economic Strategy](#)<sup>18</sup>
- [Planning Reform: Next Steps](#)<sup>19</sup>
- [Getting the Best from Our Land – A Land Use Strategy for Scotland](#)<sup>20</sup>
- [UK's Shared Framework for Sustainable Development](#)<sup>21</sup>

## Delivery

### Development Planning

#### 30. Development plans should:

- be consistent with the policies set out in this SPP, including the presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development;
- positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the plan area in a way which is flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances over time;
- support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area;
- be up-to-date, place-based and enabling with a spatial strategy that is implemented through policies and proposals; and
- set out a spatial strategy which is both sustainable and deliverable, providing confidence to stakeholders that the outcomes can be achieved.

<sup>17</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Framework](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Framework)

<sup>18</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/13091128/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/13091128/0)

<sup>19</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/03/3467](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/03/3467)

<sup>20</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17091927/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17091927/0)

<sup>21</sup> <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/documents/SDFramework.pdf>

**31.** Action programmes should be actively used to drive delivery of planned developments: to align stakeholders, phasing, financing and infrastructure investment over the long term.

## Development Management

**32.** The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Proposals that accord with up-to-date plans should be considered acceptable in principle and consideration should focus on the detailed matters arising. For proposals that do not accord with up-to-date development plans, the primacy of the plan is maintained and this SPP and the presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development will be material considerations.

**33.** Where relevant policies in a development plan are out-of-date<sup>22</sup> or the plan does not contain policies relevant to the proposal, then the presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development will be a significant material consideration. Decision-makers should also take into account any adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the wider policies in this SPP. The same principle should be applied where a development plan is more than five years old.

**34.** Where a plan is under review, it may be appropriate in some circumstances to consider whether granting planning permission would prejudice the emerging plan. Such circumstances are only likely to apply where the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new developments that are central to the emerging plan. Prematurity will be more relevant as a consideration the closer the plan is to adoption or approval.

**35.** To support the efficient and transparent handling of planning applications by planning authorities and consultees, applicants should provide good quality and timely supporting information that describes the economic, environmental and social implications of the proposal. In the spirit of planning reform, this should be proportionate to the scale of the application and planning authorities should avoid asking for additional impact appraisals, unless necessary to enable a decision to be made. Clarity on the information needed and the timetable for determining proposals can be assisted by good communication and project management, for example, use of processing agreements setting out the information required and covering the whole process including planning obligations.

<sup>22</sup> Development plans or their policies should not be considered out-of-date solely on the grounds that they were adopted prior to the publication of this SPP. However, the policies in the SPP will be a material consideration which should be taken into account when determining applications.

# Placemaking

## NPF and wider policy context

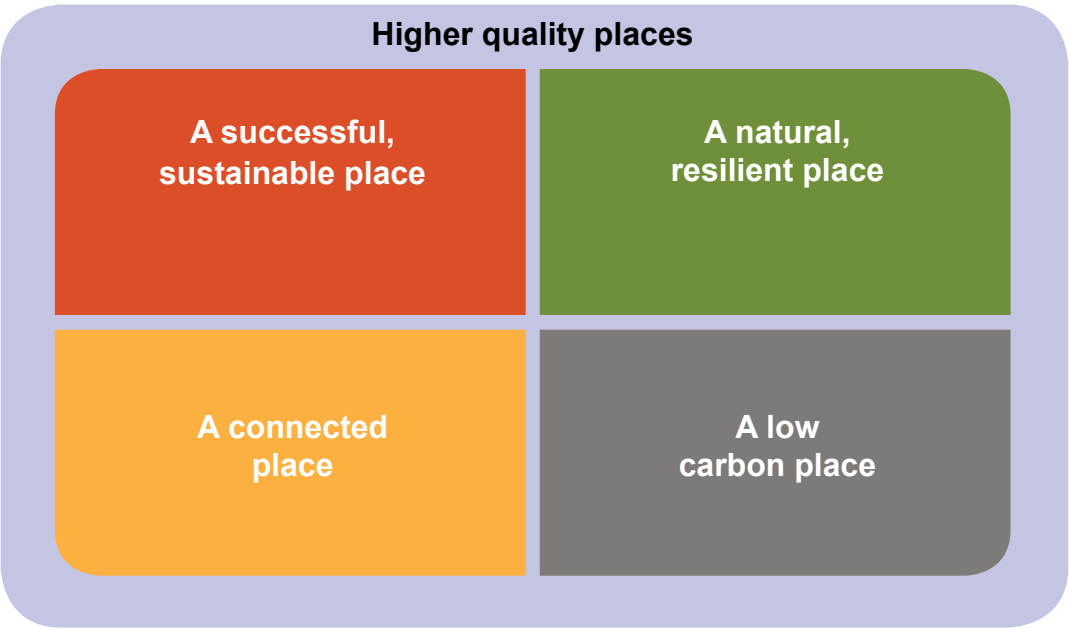
**36.** Planning’s purpose is to create better places. Placemaking is a creative, collaborative process that includes design, development, renewal or regeneration of our urban or rural built environments. The outcome should be sustainable, well-designed places and homes which meet people’s needs. The Government Economic Strategy supports an approach to place that recognises the unique contribution that every part of Scotland can make to achieving our shared outcomes. This means harnessing the distinct characteristics and strengths of each place to improve the overall quality of life for people. Reflecting this, NPF3 sets out an agenda for placemaking in our city regions, towns, rural areas, coast and islands.

**37.** The Government’s policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland, Creating Places, emphasises that quality places are successful places. It sets out the value that high-quality design can deliver for Scotland’s communities and the important role that good buildings and places play in promoting healthy, sustainable lifestyles; supporting the prevention agenda and efficiency in public services; promoting Scotland’s distinctive identity all over the world; attracting visitors, talent and investment; delivering our environmental ambitions; and providing a sense of belonging, a sense of identity and a sense of community. It is clear that places which have enduring appeal and functionality are more likely to be valued by people and therefore retained for generations to come.

## Policy Principles

**Planning should take every opportunity to create high quality places by taking a design-led approach.**

**38.** This means taking a holistic approach that responds to and enhances the existing place while balancing the costs and benefits of potential opportunities over the long term. This means considering the relationships between:



**39.** The design-led approach should be applied at all levels – at the national level in the NPF, at the regional level in strategic development plans, at the local level in local development plans and at site and individual building level within master plans that respond to how people use public spaces.

**Planning should direct the right development to the right place.**

**40.** This requires spatial strategies within development plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development appropriate to the area. To do this decisions should be guided by the following policy principles:

- optimising the use of existing resource capacities, particularly by co-ordinating housing and business development with infrastructure investment including transport, education facilities, water and drainage, energy, heat networks and digital infrastructure;
- using land within or adjacent to settlements for a mix of uses. This will also support the creation of more compact, higher density, accessible and more vibrant cores;
- considering the re-use or re-development of **brownfield land** before new development takes place on greenfield sites;
- considering whether the permanent, temporary or advanced greening of all or some of a site could make a valuable contribution to green and open space networks, particularly where it is unlikely to be developed for some time, or is unsuitable for development due to its location or viability issues; and
- locating development where investment in growth or improvement would have most benefit for the amenity of local people and the vitality of the local economy.

**Planning should support development that is designed to a high-quality, which demonstrates the six qualities of successful place.**

- ***Distinctive***

**41.** This is development that complements local features, for example landscapes, topography, ecology, skylines, spaces and scales, street and building forms, and materials to create places with a sense of identity.

- ***Safe and Pleasant***

**42.** This is development that is attractive to use because it provides a sense of security through encouraging activity. It does this by giving consideration to crime rates and providing a clear distinction between private and public space, by having doors that face onto the street creating active frontages, and by having windows that overlook well-lit streets, paths and open spaces to create natural surveillance. A pleasant, positive sense of place can be achieved by promoting visual quality, encouraging social and economic interaction and activity, and by considering the place before vehicle movement.

- **Welcoming**

**43.** This is development that helps people to find their way around. This can be by providing or accentuating landmarks to create or improve views, it can be locating a distinctive work of art to mark places such as gateways, and it can include appropriate signage and distinctive lighting to improve safety and show off attractive buildings.

- **Adaptable**

**44.** This is development that can accommodate future changes of use because there is a mix of building densities, tenures and typologies where diverse but compatible uses can be integrated. It takes into account how people use places differently, for example depending on age, gender and degree of personal mobility and providing versatile greenspace.

- **Resource Efficient**

**45.** This is development that re-uses or shares existing resources, maximises efficiency of the use of resources through natural or technological means and prevents future resource depletion, for example by mitigating and adapting to climate change. This can mean denser development that shares infrastructure and amenity with adjacent sites. It could include siting development to take shelter from the prevailing wind; or orientating it to maximise solar gain. It could also include ensuring development can withstand more extreme weather, including prolonged wet or dry periods, by working with natural environmental processes such as using landscaping and natural shading to cool spaces in built areas during hotter periods and using sustainable drainage systems to conserve and enhance natural features whilst reducing the risk of flooding. It can include using durable materials for building and landscaping as well as low carbon technologies that manage heat and waste efficiently.

- **Easy to Move Around and Beyond**

**46.** This is development that considers place and the needs of people before the movement of motor vehicles. It could include using higher densities and a mix of uses that enhance accessibility by reducing reliance on private cars and prioritising sustainable and active travel choices, such as walking, cycling and public transport. It would include paths and routes which connect places directly and which are well-connected with the wider environment beyond the site boundary. This may include providing facilities that link different means of travel.

## Key Documents

- [National Planning Framework](#)<sup>23</sup>
- [Getting the Best from Our Land – A Land Use Strategy for Scotland](#)<sup>24</sup>
- [Creating Places –A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland](#)<sup>25</sup>
- [Designing Streets](#)<sup>26</sup>
- [Planning Advice Note 77: Designing Safer Places](#)<sup>27</sup>
- [Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking](#)<sup>28</sup>

23 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Framework](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Framework)

24 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17091927/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17091927/0)

25 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/9811/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/9811/0)

26 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/22120652/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/22120652/0)

27 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/03/08094923/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/03/08094923/0)

28 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/11/04140525/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/11/04140525/0)

## Delivery

**47.** Planning should adopt a consistent and relevant approach to the assessment of design and place quality such as that set out in the forthcoming Scottish Government Place Standard.

## Development Planning

**48.** Strategic and local development plans should be based on spatial strategies that are deliverable, taking into account the scale and type of development pressure and the need for growth and regeneration. An urban capacity study, which assesses the scope for development within settlement boundaries, may usefully inform the spatial strategy, and local authorities should make use of land assembly, including the use of [compulsory purchase powers](#)<sup>29</sup> where appropriate. Early discussion should take place between local authorities, developers and relevant agencies to ensure that investment in necessary new infrastructure is addressed in a timely manner.

**49.** For most settlements, a green belt is not necessary as other policies can provide an appropriate basis for directing development to the right locations. However, where the planning authority considers it appropriate, the development plan may designate a green belt around a city or town to support the spatial strategy by:

- directing development to the most appropriate locations and supporting regeneration;
- protecting and enhancing the character, landscape setting and identity of the settlement; and
- protecting and providing access to open space.

**50.** In developing the spatial strategy, planning authorities should identify the most sustainable locations for longer-term development and, where necessary, review the boundaries of any green belt.

**51.** The spatial form of the green belt should be appropriate to the location. It may encircle a settlement or take the shape of a buffer, corridor, strip or wedge. Local development plans should show the detailed boundary of any green belt, giving consideration to:

- excluding existing settlements and major educational and research uses, major businesses and industrial operations, airports and Ministry of Defence establishments;
- the need for development in smaller settlements within the green belt, where appropriate leaving room for expansion;
- redirecting development pressure to more suitable locations; and
- establishing clearly identifiable visual boundary markers based on landscape features such as rivers, tree belts, railways or main roads<sup>30</sup>. Hedges and field enclosures will rarely provide a sufficiently robust boundary.

**52.** Local development plans should describe the types and scales of development which would be appropriate within a green belt. These may include:

- development associated with agriculture, including the reuse of historic agricultural buildings;
- development associated with woodland and forestry, including community woodlands;
- horticulture, including market gardening and directly connected retailing;

<sup>29</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/archive/National-Planning-Policy/themes/ComPur](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/archive/National-Planning-Policy/themes/ComPur)

<sup>30</sup> Note: where a main road forms a green belt boundary, any proposed new accesses would still require to meet the usual criteria.



- recreational uses that are compatible with an agricultural or natural setting;
- essential infrastructure such as digital communications infrastructure and electricity grid connections;
- development meeting a national requirement or established need, if no other suitable site is available; and
- intensification of established uses subject to the new development being of a suitable scale and form.

**53.** The creation of a new settlement may occasionally be a necessary part of a spatial strategy, where it is justified either by the scale and nature of the housing land requirement and the existence of major constraints to the further growth of existing settlements, or by its essential role in promoting regeneration or rural development.

**54.** Where a development plan spatial strategy indicates that a new settlement is appropriate, it should specify its scale and location, and supporting infrastructure requirements, particularly where these are integral to the viability and deliverability of the proposed development. Supplementary guidance can address more detailed issues such as design and delivery.

**55.** Local development plans should contribute to high-quality places by setting out how they will embed a design-led approach. This should include:

- reference to the six qualities of successful places which enable consideration of each place as distinctly different from other places and which should be evident in all development;
- using processes that harness and utilise the knowledge of communities and encourage active participation to deliver places with local integrity and relevance; and
- specifying when design tools, such as those at paragraph 57 should be used.

## **Development Management**

**56.** Design is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Planning permission may be refused and the refusal defended at appeal or local review solely on design grounds.

## **Tools for Making Better Places**

**57.** Design tools guide the quality of development in and across places to promote positive change. They can help to provide certainty for stakeholders as a contribution to sustainable economic growth. Whichever tools are appropriate to the task, they should focus on delivering the six qualities of successful places and could be adopted as supplementary guidance.

Scale	Tool
<div>STRATEGIC</div> <div>↑</div>	<p><b>Design Frameworks</b></p> <p>For larger areas of significant change, so must include some flexibility.</p> <p>To address major issues in a co-ordinated and viable way.</p> <p>May include general principles as well as maps and diagrams to show the importance of connections around and within a place.</p>
	<p><b>Development Briefs</b></p> <p>For a place or site, to form the basis of dialogue between the local authority and developers.</p> <p>To advise how policies should be implemented.</p> <p>May include detail on function, layout, plot sizes, building heights and lines, and materials.</p>
	<p><b>Master Plans</b></p> <p>For a specific site that may be phased so able to adapt over time.</p> <p>To describe and illustrate how a proposal will meet the vision and how it will work on the ground.</p> <p>May include images showing the relationship of people and place.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Planning Advice Note 83: Masterplanning</a><sup>31</sup></p>
	<p><b>Design Guides</b></p> <p>For a particular subject, e.g. shop fronts.</p> <p>To show how development can be put into practice in line with policy.</p> <p>Includes detail, e.g. images of examples.</p>
<div>↓</div> <div>SITE SPECIFIC</div>	<p><b>Design Statements</b></p> <p>Required to accompany some planning applications.</p> <p>To explain how the application meets policy and guidance, for example by close reference to key considerations of street design with Designing Streets.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Planning Advice Note 68: Design Statements</a><sup>32</sup></p>

31 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/10114526/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/10114526/0)

32 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/08/18013/25389](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/08/18013/25389)

# Subject Policies

## A Successful, Sustainable Place

### Promoting Town Centres

#### NPF and wider context

**58.** NPF3 reflects the importance of town centres as a key element of the economic and social fabric of Scotland. Much of Scotland's population lives and works in towns, within city regions, in our rural areas and on our coasts and islands. Town centres are at the heart of their communities and can be hubs for a range of activities. It is important that planning supports the role of town centres to thrive and meet the needs of their residents, businesses and visitors for the 21st century.

**59.** The town centre first principle, stemming from the Town Centre Action Plan, promotes an approach to wider decision-making that considers the health and vibrancy of town centres.

#### Policy Principles

**60.** Planning for town centres should be flexible and proactive, enabling a wide range of uses which bring people into town centres. The planning system should:

- apply a town centre first policy<sup>33</sup> when planning for uses which attract significant numbers of people, including retail and commercial leisure, offices, community and cultural facilities;
- encourage a mix of uses in town centres to support their vibrancy, vitality and viability throughout the day and into the evening;
- ensure development plans, decision-making and monitoring support successful town centres; and
- consider opportunities for promoting residential use within town centres where this fits with local need and demand.

#### Key Documents

- [National Review of Town Centres External Advisory Group Report: Community and Enterprise in Scotland's Town Centres](#)<sup>34</sup>
- [Town Centre Action Plan – the Scottish Government response](#)<sup>35</sup>
- [Planning Advice Note 59: Improving Town Centres](#)<sup>36</sup>
- [Planning Advice Note 52: Planning and Small Towns](#)<sup>37</sup>

33 A town centre first policy is intended to support town centres, where these exist, or new centres which are supported by the development plan. Where there are no town centres in the vicinity, for example in more remote rural and island areas, the expectation is that local centres will be supported. The town centre first policy is not intended to divert essential services and developments away from such rural areas. See section on Rural Development.

34 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00426972.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00426972.pdf)

35 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/6415](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/6415)

36 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1999/10/pan59-root/pan59](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1999/10/pan59-root/pan59)

37 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1997/04/pan52](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1997/04/pan52)

- [Town Centres Masterplanning Toolkit](#)<sup>38</sup>

## Development Plans

**61.** Plans should identify a network of centres and explain how they can complement each other. The network is likely to include city centres, town centres, local centres and commercial centres and may be organised as a hierarchy. Emerging or new centres designated within key new developments or land releases should also be shown within the network of centres. In remoter rural and island areas, it may not be necessary to identify a network.

**62.** Plans should identify as town centres those centres which display:

- a diverse mix of uses, including shopping;
- a high level of accessibility;
- qualities of character and identity which create a sense of place and further the well-being of communities;
- wider economic and social activity during the day and in the evening; and
- integration with residential areas.

**63.** Plans should identify as commercial centres those centres which have a more specific focus on retailing and/or leisure uses, such as shopping centres, commercial leisure developments, mixed retail and leisure developments, retail parks and factory outlet centres. Where necessary to protect the role of town centres, plans should specify the function of commercial centres, for example where retail activity may be restricted to the sale of bulky goods.

**64.** Local authorities, working with community planning partners, businesses and community groups as appropriate, should prepare a town centre health check. Annex A sets out a range of indicators which may be relevant. The purpose of a health check is to assess a town centre's strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience. It will be used to inform development plans and decisions on planning applications. Health checks should be regularly updated, to monitor town centre performance, preferably every two years.

**65.** Local authorities, working with partners, should use the findings of the health check to develop a strategy to deliver improvements to the town centre. Annex A contains guidance on key elements in their preparation.

**66.** The spatial elements of town centre strategies should be included in the development plan or supplementary guidance. Plans should address any significant changes in the roles and functions of centres over time, where change is supported by the results of a health check. Plans should assess how centres can accommodate development and identify opportunities.

**67.** There are concerns about the number and clustering of some non-retail uses, such as betting offices and high interest money lending premises, in some town and local centres. Plans should include policies to support an appropriate mix of uses in town centres, local centres and high streets. Where a town centre strategy indicates that further provision of particular activities would undermine the character and amenity of centres or the well-being of communities, plans should include policies to prevent such over-provision and clustering.

<sup>38</sup> <http://creatingplacescotland.org/people-communities/policy/town-centre-masterplanning-toolkit#overlay-context=people-communities/policy>

**68.** Development plans should adopt a sequential town centre first approach when planning for uses which generate significant footfall, including retail and commercial leisure uses, offices, community and cultural facilities and, where appropriate, other public buildings such as libraries, and education and healthcare facilities. This requires that locations are considered in the following order of preference:

- town centres (including city centres and local centres);
- edge of town centre;
- other commercial centres identified in the development plan; and
- out-of-centre locations that are, or can be, made easily accessible by a choice of transport modes.

**69.** Planning authorities, developers, owners and occupiers should be flexible and realistic in applying the sequential approach, to ensure that different uses are developed in the most appropriate locations. It is important that community, education and healthcare facilities are located where they are easily accessible to the communities that they are intended to serve.

## Development Management

**70.** Decisions on development proposals should have regard to the context provided by the network of centres identified in the development plan and the sequential approach outlined above. New development in a town centre should contribute to providing a range of uses and should be of a scale which is appropriate to that centre. The impact of new development on the character and amenity of town centres, local centres and high streets will be a material consideration in decision-making. The aim is to recognise and prioritise the importance of town centres and encourage a mix of developments which support their vibrancy, vitality and viability. This aim should also be taken into account in decisions concerning proposals to expand or change the use of existing development.

**71.** Where development proposals in edge of town centre, commercial centre or out-of-town locations are contrary to the development plan, it is for applicants to demonstrate that more central options have been thoroughly assessed and that the impact on existing town centres is acceptable. Where a new public building or office with a gross floorspace over 2,500m<sup>2</sup> is proposed outwith a town centre, and is contrary to the development plan, an assessment of the impact on the town centre should be carried out. Where a retail and leisure development with a gross floorspace over 2,500m<sup>2</sup> is proposed outwith a town centre, contrary to the development plan, a retail impact analysis should be undertaken. For smaller retail and leisure proposals which may have a significant impact on vitality and viability, planning authorities should advise when retail impact analysis is necessary.

**72.** This analysis should consider the relationship of the proposed development with the network of centres identified in the development plan. Where possible, authorities and developers should agree the data required and present information on areas of dispute in a succinct and comparable form. Planning authorities should consider the potential economic impact of development and take into account any possible displacement effect.

**73.** Out-of-centre locations should only be considered for uses which generate significant footfall<sup>39</sup> where:

- all town centre, edge of town centre and other commercial centre options have been assessed and discounted as unsuitable or unavailable;

<sup>39</sup> As noted at paragraph 69, a flexible approach is required for community, education and healthcare facilities.

- the scale of development proposed is appropriate, and it has been shown that the proposal cannot reasonably be altered or reduced in scale to allow it to be accommodated at a sequentially preferable location;
- the proposal will help to meet qualitative or quantitative deficiencies; and
- there will be no significant adverse effect on the vitality and viability of existing town centres.

## Promoting Rural Development

### NPF Context

**74.** NPF3 sets out a vision for vibrant rural, coastal and island areas, with growing, sustainable communities supported by new opportunities for employment and education. The character of rural and island areas and the challenges they face vary greatly across the country, from pressurised areas of countryside around towns and cities to more remote and sparsely populated areas. Between these extremes are extensive intermediate areas under varying degrees of pressure and with different kinds of environmental assets meriting protection. Scotland's long coastline is an important resource both for development and for its particular environmental quality, especially in the areas of the three island councils.

### Policy Principles

**75.** The planning system should:

- in all rural and island areas promote a pattern of development that is appropriate to the character of the particular rural area and the challenges it faces;
- encourage rural development that supports prosperous and sustainable communities and businesses whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality; and
- support an integrated approach to coastal planning.

### Key documents

- [Getting the Best from Our Land – A Land Use Strategy for Scotland](#)<sup>40</sup>
- National Marine Plan

### Delivery

**76.** In the pressurised areas easily accessible from Scotland's cities and main towns, where ongoing development pressures are likely to continue, it is important to protect against an unsustainable growth in car-based commuting and the suburbanisation of the countryside, particularly where there are environmental assets such as sensitive landscapes or good quality agricultural land. Plans should make provision for most new urban development to take place within, or in planned extensions to, existing settlements.

**77.** In remote and fragile areas and island areas outwith defined small towns, the emphasis should be on maintaining and growing communities by encouraging development that provides suitable sustainable economic activity, while preserving important environmental assets such as landscape and wildlife habitats that underpin continuing tourism visits and quality of place.

**78.** In the areas of intermediate accessibility and pressure for development, plans should be tailored to local circumstances, seeking to provide a sustainable network of settlements and a

<sup>40</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17091927/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17091927/0)

range of policies that provide for additional housing requirements, economic development, and the varying proposals that may come forward, while taking account of the overarching objectives and other elements of the plan.

**79.** Plans should set out a spatial strategy which:

- reflects the development pressures, environmental assets, and economic needs of the area, reflecting the overarching aim of supporting diversification and growth of the rural economy;
- promotes economic activity and diversification, including, where appropriate, sustainable development linked to tourism and leisure, forestry, farm and croft diversification and aquaculture, nature conservation, and renewable energy developments, while ensuring that the distinctive character of the area, the service function of small towns and natural and cultural heritage are protected and enhanced;
- makes provision for housing in rural areas in accordance with the spatial strategy, taking account of the different development needs of local communities;
- where appropriate, sets out policies and proposals for leisure accommodation, such as holiday units, caravans, and huts;
- addresses the resource implications of the proposed pattern of development, including facilitating access to local community services and support for public transport; and
- considers the services provided by the natural environment, safeguarding land which is highly suitable for particular uses such as food production or flood management.

**80.** Where it is necessary to use good quality land for development, the layout and design should minimise the amount of such land that is required. Development on [prime agricultural land](#), or land of lesser quality that is locally important should not be permitted except where it is essential:

- as a component of the settlement strategy or necessary to meet an established need, for example for essential infrastructure, where no other suitable site is available; or
- for small-scale development directly linked to a rural business; or
- for the generation of energy from a renewable source or the extraction of minerals where this accords with other policy objectives and there is secure provision for restoration to return the land to its former status.

**81.** In accessible or pressured rural areas, where there is a danger of unsustainable growth in long-distance car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside, a more restrictive approach to new housing development is appropriate, and plans and decision-making should generally:

- guide most new development to locations within or adjacent to settlements; and
- set out the circumstances in which new housing outwith settlements may be appropriate, avoiding use of occupancy restrictions.

**82.** In some most pressured areas, the designation of green belts may be appropriate.

**83.** In remote rural areas, where new development can often help to sustain fragile communities, plans and decision-making should generally:

- encourage sustainable development that will provide employment;
- support and sustain fragile and dispersed communities through provision for appropriate development, especially housing and community-owned energy;



- include provision for small-scale housing<sup>41</sup> and other development which supports sustainable economic growth in a range of locations, taking account of environmental protection policies and addressing issues of location, access, siting, design and environmental impact;
- where appropriate, allow the construction of single houses outwith settlements provided they are well sited and designed to fit with local landscape character, taking account of landscape protection and other plan policies;
- not impose occupancy restrictions on housing.

## National Parks

**84.** National Parks are designated under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 because they are areas of national importance for their natural and cultural heritage. The four aims of national parks are to:

- conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

**85.** These aims are to be pursued collectively. However if there is a conflict between the first aim and any of the others then greater weight must be given to the first aim. Planning decisions should reflect this weighting. Paragraph 213 also applies to development outwith a National Park that affects the Park.

**86.** Development plans for National Parks are expected to be consistent with the National Park Plan, which sets out the management strategy for the Park. The authority preparing a development plan for a National Park, or which affects a National Park, is required to pay special attention to the desirability of consistency with the National Park Plan, having regard to the contents.

## Coastal Planning

**87.** The planning system should support an integrated approach to coastal planning to ensure that development plans and regional marine plans are complementary. Terrestrial planning by planning authorities overlaps with marine planning in the intertidal zone. On the terrestrial side, mainland planning authorities should work closely with neighbouring authorities, taking account of the needs of port authorities and aquaculture, where appropriate. On the marine side, planning authorities will need to ensure integration with policies and activities arising from the National Marine Plan, Marine Planning Partnerships, Regional Marine Plans, and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, as well as aquaculture.

## Development Plans

**88.** Plans should recognise that rising sea levels and more extreme weather events resulting from climate change will potentially have a significant impact on coastal and island areas, and that a precautionary approach to flood risk should be taken. They should confirm that new development requiring new defences against coastal erosion or coastal flooding will not be supported except where there is a clear justification for a departure from the general policy to

<sup>41</sup> including clusters and groups; extensions to existing clusters and groups; replacement housing; plots for self build; holiday homes; new build or conversion linked to rural business.

avoid development in areas at risk. Where appropriate, development plans should identify areas at risk and areas where a managed realignment of the coast would be beneficial.

**89.** Plans should identify areas of largely developed coast that are a major focus of economic or recreational activity that are likely to be suitable for further development; areas subject to significant constraints; and largely unspoiled areas of the coast that are generally unsuitable for development. It should be explained that this broad division does not exclude important local variations, for example where there are areas of environmental importance within developed estuaries, or necessary developments within the largely unspoiled coast where there is a specific locational need, for example for defence purposes, tourism developments of special significance, or essential onshore developments connected with offshore energy projects or (where appropriate) aquaculture.

**90.** Plans should promote the developed coast as the focus of developments requiring a coastal location or which contribute to the economic regeneration or well-being of communities whose livelihood is dependent on marine or coastal activities. They should provide for the development requirements of uses requiring a coastal location, including ports and harbours, tourism and recreation, fish farming, land-based development associated with offshore energy projects and specific defence establishments.

**91.** Plans should safeguard unspoiled sections of coast which possess special environmental or cultural qualities, such as wild land. The economic value of these areas should be considered and maximised, provided that environmental impact issues can be satisfactorily addressed.

## Supporting Business and Employment

### NPF Context

**92.** NPF3 supports the many and varied opportunities for planning to support business and employment. These range from a focus on the role of cities as key drivers of our economy, to the continuing need for diversification of our rural economy to strengthen communities and retain young people in remote areas. Planning should address the development requirements of businesses and enable key opportunities for investment to be realised. It can support sustainable economic growth by providing a positive policy context for development that delivers economic benefits.

### Policy Principles

**93.** The planning system should:

- promote business and industrial development that increases economic activity while safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environments as national assets;
- allocate sites that meet the diverse needs of the different sectors and sizes of business which are important to the plan area in a way which is flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances and allow the realisation of new opportunities; and
- give due weight to net economic benefit of proposed development.

### Key Documents

- [Government Economic Strategy](#)<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/EconomicStrategy](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/EconomicStrategy)

- [Tourism Development Framework for Scotland](#)<sup>43</sup>
- [A Guide to Development Viability](#)<sup>44</sup>

## Delivery

### Development Planning

**94.** Plans should align with relevant local economic strategies. These will help planning authorities to meet the needs and opportunities of indigenous firms and inward investors, recognising the potential of key sectors for Scotland with particular opportunities for growth, including:

- energy;
- life sciences, universities and the creative industries;
- tourism and the food and drink sector;
- financial and business services.

**95.** Plans should encourage opportunities for home-working, live-work units, micro-businesses and community hubs.

**96.** Development plans should support opportunities for integrating efficient energy and waste innovations within business environments. Industry stakeholders should engage with planning authorities to help facilitate co-location, as set out in paragraph 179.

**97.** Strategic development plan policies should reflect a robust evidence base in relation to the existing principal economic characteristics of their areas, and any anticipated change in these.

**98.** Strategic development plans should identify an appropriate range of locations for significant business clusters. This could include sites identified in the [National Renewables Infrastructure Plan](#)<sup>45</sup>, [Enterprise Areas](#)<sup>46</sup>, business parks, science parks, large and medium-sized industrial sites and high amenity sites.

**99.** Strategic development plans and local development plans outwith SDP areas should identify any nationally important clusters of industries [handling hazardous substances](#) within their areas and safeguard them from development which, either on its own or in combination with other development, would compromise their continued operation or growth potential. This is in the context of the wider statutory requirements in the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2009<sup>47</sup> to have regard to the need to maintain appropriate distances between sites with hazardous substances and areas where the public are likely to be present and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

**100.** Development plans should be informed by the Tourism Development Framework for Scotland in order to maximise the sustainable growth of regional and local visitor economies. Strategic development plans should identify and safeguard any nationally or regionally important locations for tourism or recreation development within their areas.

43 [www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Tourism%20Development%20Framework%20-%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Tourism%20Development%20Framework%20-%20FINAL.pdf)

44 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/212607/0109620.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/212607/0109620.pdf)

45 [www.scottish-enterprise.com/~media/SE/Resources/Documents/Sectors/Energy/energy-renewables-reports/National-renewables-infrastructure-plan.ashx](http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/~media/SE/Resources/Documents/Sectors/Energy/energy-renewables-reports/National-renewables-infrastructure-plan.ashx)

46 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/EconomicStrategy/Enterprise-Areas](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/EconomicStrategy/Enterprise-Areas)

47 These statutory requirements are due to be amended in 2015 as part of the implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances.

**101.** Local development plans should allocate a range of sites for business, taking account of current market demand; location, size, quality and infrastructure requirements; whether sites are serviced or serviceable within five years; the potential for a mix of uses; their accessibility to transport networks by walking, cycling and public transport and their integration with and access to existing transport networks. The allocation of such sites should be informed by relevant economic strategies and business land audits in respect of land use classes 4, 5 and 6.

**102.** Business land audits should be undertaken regularly by local authorities to inform reviews of development plans, and updated more frequently if relevant. Business land audits should monitor the location, size, planning status, existing use, neighbouring land uses and any significant land use issues (e.g. underused, vacant, derelict) of sites within the existing business land supply.

**103.** New sites should be identified where existing sites no longer meet current needs and market expectations. Where existing business sites are underused, for example where there has been an increase in vacancy rates, reallocation to enable a wider range of viable business or alternative uses should be considered, taking careful account of the potential impacts on existing businesses on the site.

**104.** Local development plans should locate development which generates significant freight movements, such as manufacturing, processing, distribution and warehousing, on sites accessible to suitable railheads or harbours or the strategic road network. Through appraisal, care should be taken in locating such development to minimise any impact on congested, inner urban and residential areas.

**105.** Planning authorities should consider the potential to promote opportunities for tourism and recreation facilities in their development plans. This may include new developments or the enhancement of existing facilities.

## Development Management

**106.** Efficient handling of planning applications should be a key priority, particularly where jobs and investment are involved. To assist with this, pre-application discussions are strongly encouraged to determine the information that should be submitted to support applications. Such information should be proportionate and relevant to the development and sufficient for the planning authority requirements on matters such as the number of jobs to be created, hours of working, transport requirements, environmental effects, noise levels and the layout and design of buildings. Decisions should be guided by the principles set out in paragraphs 28 to 35.

**107.** Proposals for development in the vicinity of [major-accident hazard sites](#) should take into account the potential impacts on the proposal and the major-accident hazard site of being located in proximity to one another. Decisions should be informed by the Health and Safety Executive's advice, based on the [PADHI](#) tool. Similar considerations apply in respect of development proposals near licensed explosive sites (including military explosive storage sites).

**108.** Proposals for business, industrial and service uses should take into account surrounding sensitive uses, areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest and local amenity, and make a positive contribution towards placemaking.

# Enabling Delivery of New Homes

## NPF Context

**109.** NPF3 aims to facilitate new housing development, particularly in areas within our cities network where there is continuing pressure for growth, and through innovative approaches to rural housing provision. House building makes an important contribution to the economy. Planning can help to address the challenges facing the housing sector by providing a positive and flexible approach to development. In particular, provision for new homes should be made in areas where economic investment is planned or there is a need for regeneration or to support population retention in rural and island areas.

## Policy Principles

**110.** The planning system should:

- identify a generous supply of land for each housing market area within the plan area to support the achievement of the housing land requirement across all tenures, maintaining at least a 5-year supply of effective housing land at all times;
- enable provision of a range of attractive, well-designed, energy efficient, good quality housing, contributing to the creation of successful and sustainable places; and
- have a sharp focus on the delivery of allocated sites embedded in action programmes, informed by strong engagement with stakeholders.

## Key Documents

- [The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#)<sup>48</sup> requires local authorities to prepare a local housing strategy supported by an assessment of housing need and demand
- [Planning Advice Note 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits](#)<sup>49</sup>

## Delivery

**111.** Local authorities should identify functional housing market areas, i.e. geographical areas where the demand for housing is relatively self-contained. These areas may significantly overlap and will rarely coincide with local authority boundaries. They can be dynamic and complex, and can contain different tiers of sub-market area, overlain by mobile demand, particularly in city regions.

**112.** Planning for housing should be undertaken through joint working by housing market partnerships, involving both housing and planning officials within local authorities, and cooperation between authorities where strategic planning responsibilities and/or housing market areas are shared, including national park authorities. Registered social landlords, developers, other specialist interests, and local communities should also be encouraged to engage with housing market partnerships. In rural or island areas where there is no functional housing market area, the development plan should set out the most appropriate approach for the area.

<sup>48</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2001/10/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2001/10/contents)

<sup>49</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/31111624/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/31111624/0)

## Development Planning

**113.** Plans should be informed by a robust housing need and demand assessment (HNDA), prepared in line with the Scottish Government's HNDA Guidance<sup>50</sup>. This assessment provides part of the evidence base to inform both local housing strategies and development plans (including the main issues report). It should produce results both at the level of the functional housing market area and at local authority level, and cover all tenures. Where the Scottish Government is satisfied that the HNDA is robust and credible, the approach used will not normally be considered further at a development plan examination.

**114.** The HNDA, development plan, and local housing strategy processes should be closely aligned, with joint working between housing and planning teams. Local authorities may wish to wait until the strategic development plan is approved in city regions, and the local development plan adopted elsewhere, before finalising the local housing strategy, to ensure that any modifications to the plans can be reflected in local housing strategies, and in local development plans in the city regions.

**115.** Plans should address the supply of land for all housing. They should set out the [housing supply target](#) (separated into affordable and market sector) for each functional housing market area, based on evidence from the HNDA. The housing supply target is a policy view of the number of homes the authority has agreed will be delivered in each housing market area over the periods of the development plan and local housing strategy, taking into account wider economic, social and environmental factors, issues of capacity, resource and deliverability, and other important requirements such as the aims of National Parks. The target should be reasonable, should properly reflect the HNDA estimate of housing demand in the market sector, and should be supported by compelling evidence. The authority's housing supply target should also be reflected in the local housing strategy.

**116.** Within the overall housing supply target<sup>51</sup>, plans should indicate the number of new homes to be built over the plan period. This figure should be increased by a margin of 10 to 20% to establish the housing land requirement, in order to ensure that a generous supply of land for housing is provided. The exact extent of the margin will depend on local circumstances, but a robust explanation for it should be provided in the plan.

**117.** The housing land requirement can be met from a number of sources, most notably sites from the established supply which are effective or expected to become effective in the plan period, sites with planning permission, proposed new land allocations, and in some cases a proportion of windfall development. Any assessment of the expected contribution to the housing land requirement from [windfall sites](#) must be realistic and based on clear evidence of past completions and sound assumptions about likely future trends. In urban areas this should be informed by an urban capacity study.

**118.** Strategic development plans should set out the [housing supply target](#) and the housing land requirement for the plan area, each local authority area, and each functional housing market area. They should also state the amount and broad locations of land which should be allocated in local development plans to meet the housing land requirement up to year 12 from the expected year of plan approval, making sure that the requirement for each housing market area is met in full. Beyond year 12 and up to year 20, the strategic development plan should provide an indication of the possible scale and location of housing land, including by local development plan area.

<sup>50</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/supply-demand/chma/hnda](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/supply-demand/chma/hnda)

<sup>51</sup> Note: the housing supply target may in some cases include a contribution from other forms of delivery, for example a programme to bring empty properties back into use.



**119.** Local development plans in city regions should allocate a range of sites which are effective or expected to become effective in the plan period to meet the housing land requirement of the strategic development plan up to year 10 from the expected year of adoption. They should provide for a minimum of 5 years effective land supply at all times. In allocating sites, planning authorities should be confident that land can be brought forward for development within the plan period and that the range of sites allocated will enable the housing supply target to be met.

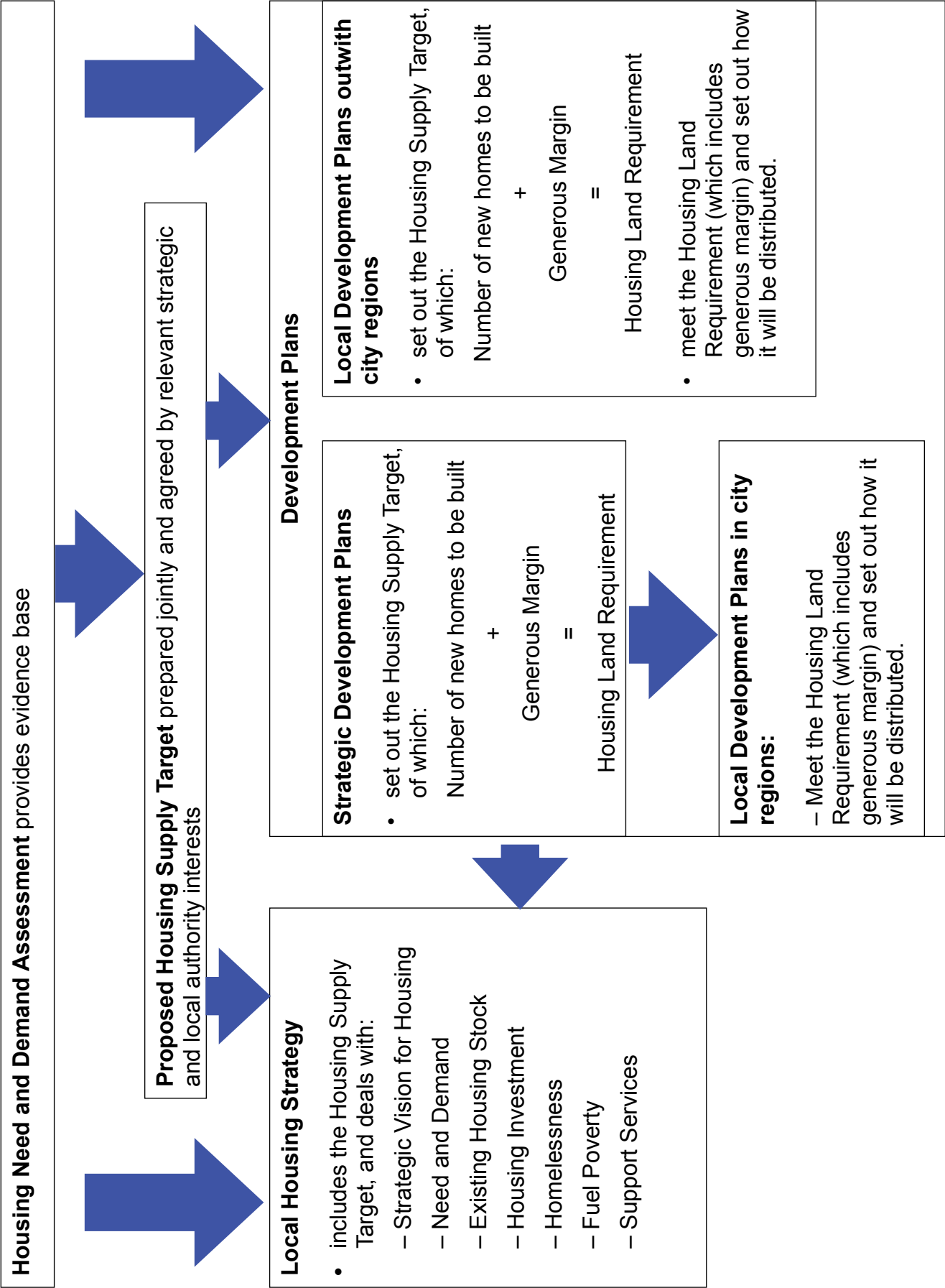
**120.** Outwith city regions, local development plans should set out the housing supply target (separated into affordable and market sector) and the housing land requirement for each housing market area in the plan area up to year 10 from the expected year of adoption. They should allocate a range of sites which are effective or expected to become effective in the plan period to meet the housing land requirement in full. They should provide a minimum of 5 years effective land supply at all times. Beyond year 10 and up to year 20, the local development plan should provide an indication of the possible scale and location of the housing land requirement.

**121.** In the National Parks, local development plans should draw on the evidence provided by the HNDAs of the constituent housing authorities. National Park authorities should aim to meet the housing land requirement in full in their area. However, they are not required to do so, and they should liaise closely with neighbouring planning authorities to ensure that any remaining part of the housing land requirement for the National Parks is met in immediately adjoining housing market areas, and that a 5-year supply of effective land is maintained.

**122.** Local development plans should allocate appropriate sites to support the creation of sustainable mixed communities and successful places and help to ensure the continued delivery of new housing.



Diagram 1: Housing Land, Development Planning and the Local Housing Strategy



## Maintaining a 5-year Effective Land Supply

**123.** Planning authorities should actively manage the housing land supply. They should work with housing and infrastructure providers to prepare an annual housing land audit as a tool to critically review and monitor the availability of effective housing land, the progress of sites through the planning process, and housing completions, to ensure a generous supply of land for house building is maintained and there is always enough effective land for at least five years. A site is only considered effective where it can be demonstrated that within five years it will be free of constraints<sup>52</sup> and can be developed for housing. In remoter rural areas and island communities, where the housing land requirement and market activity are of a more limited scale, the housing land audit process may be adapted to suit local circumstances.

**124.** The development plan action programme, prepared in tandem with the plan, should set out the key actions necessary to bring each site forward for housing development and identify the lead partner. It is a key tool, and should be used alongside the housing land audit to help planning authorities manage the land supply.

**125.** Planning authorities, developers, service providers and other partners in housing provision should work together to ensure a continuing supply of effective land and to deliver housing, taking a flexible and realistic approach. Where a shortfall in the 5-year effective housing land supply emerges, development plan policies for the supply of housing land will not be considered up-to-date, and paragraphs 32-35 will be relevant.

## Affordable Housing

**126.** Affordable housing is defined broadly as housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. Affordable housing may be provided in the form of social rented accommodation, mid-market rented accommodation, shared ownership housing, shared equity housing, housing sold at a discount (including plots for self-build), and low cost housing without subsidy.

**127.** Where the housing supply target requires provision for affordable housing, strategic development plans should state how much of the total housing land requirement this represents.

**128.** Local development plans should clearly set out the scale and distribution of the affordable housing requirement for their area. Where the HNDA and local housing strategy process identify a shortage of affordable housing, the plan should set out the role that planning will take in addressing this. Planning authorities should consider whether it is appropriate to allocate some small sites specifically for affordable housing. Advice on the range of possible options for provision of affordable housing is set out in PAN 2/2010.

**129.** Plans should identify any expected developer contributions towards delivery of affordable housing. Where a contribution is required, this should generally be for a specified proportion of the serviced land within a development site to be made available for affordable housing. Planning authorities should consider the level of affordable housing contribution which is likely to be deliverable in the current economic climate, as part of a viable housing development. The level of affordable housing required as a contribution within a market site should generally be no more than 25% of the total number of houses. Consideration should also be given to the nature of the affordable housing required and the extent to which this can be met by proposals capable of development with little or no public subsidy. Where permission is sought for specialist housing, as described in paragraphs 132-134, a contribution to affordable housing may not always be required.

<sup>52</sup> Planning Advice Note 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits sets out more fully the measure of effective sites [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/31111624/5](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/31111624/5)

**130.** Plans should consider how affordable housing requirements will be met over the period of the plan. Planning and housing officials should work together closely to ensure that the phasing of land allocations and the operation of affordable housing policies combine to deliver housing across the range of tenures. In rural areas, where significant unmet local need for affordable housing has been shown, it may be appropriate to introduce a 'rural exceptions' policy which allows planning permission to be granted for affordable housing on small sites that would not normally be used for housing, for example because they lie outwith the adjacent built-up area and are subject to policies of restraint.

**131.** Any detailed policies on how the affordable housing requirement is expected to be delivered, including any differences in approach for urban and rural areas, should be set out in supplementary guidance. Where it is considered that housing built to meet an identified need for affordable housing should remain available to meet such needs in perpetuity, supplementary guidance should set out the measures to achieve this. Any specific requirements on design may also be addressed in supplementary guidance.

## **Specialist Housing Provision and Other Specific Needs**

**132.** As part of the HNDA, local authorities are required to consider the need for specialist provision that covers accessible and adapted housing, wheelchair housing and supported accommodation, including care homes and sheltered housing. This supports independent living for elderly people and those with a disability. Where a need is identified, planning authorities should prepare policies to support the delivery of appropriate housing and consider allocating specific sites.

**133.** HNDAs will also evidence need for sites for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Development plans and local housing strategies should address any need identified, taking into account their mobile lifestyles. In city regions, the strategic development plan should have a role in addressing cross-boundary considerations. If there is a need, local development plans should identify suitable sites for these communities. They should also consider whether policies are required for small privately-owned sites for Gypsy/Travellers, and for handling applications for permanent sites for Travelling Showpeople (where account should be taken of the need for storage and maintenance of equipment as well as accommodation). These communities should be appropriately involved in identifying sites for their use.

**134.** Local development plans should address any need for houses in multiple occupation (HMO). More information is provided in Circular 2/2012 Houses in Multiple Occupation<sup>53</sup>. Planning authorities should also consider the housing requirements of service personnel and sites for people seeking self-build plots. Where authorities believe it appropriate to allocate suitable sites for self-build plots, the sites may contribute to meeting the housing land requirement.

<sup>53</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/4191](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/4191)

# Valuing the Historic Environment

## NPF and wider policy context

**135.** NPF3 recognises the contribution made by our cultural heritage to our economy, cultural identity and quality of life. Planning has an important role to play in maintaining and enhancing the distinctive and high-quality, irreplaceable historic places which enrich our lives, contribute to our sense of identity and are an important resource for our tourism and leisure industry.

**136.** The [historic environment](#) is a key cultural and economic asset and a source of inspiration that should be seen as integral to creating successful places. Culture-led regeneration can have a profound impact on the well-being of a community in terms of the physical look and feel of a place and can also attract visitors, which in turn can bolster the local economy and sense of pride or ownership.

## Policy Principles

**137.** The planning system should:

- promote the care and protection of the designated and non-designated historic environment (including individual assets, related [settings](#) and the wider cultural landscape) and its contribution to sense of place, cultural identity, social well-being, economic growth, civic participation and lifelong learning; and
- enable positive change in the historic environment which is informed by a clear understanding of the importance of the heritage assets affected and ensure their future use. Change should be sensitively managed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the fabric and setting of the asset, and ensure that its special characteristics are protected, conserved or enhanced.

## Key Documents

- [Scottish Historic Environment Policy](#)<sup>54</sup>
- [Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland](#)<sup>55</sup>
- [Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Historic Scotland’s guidance note series](#)<sup>56</sup>
- [Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology](#)<sup>57</sup>
- [Planning Advice Note 71: Conservation Area Management](#)<sup>58</sup>
- [Scottish Historic Environment Databases](#)<sup>59</sup>

54 [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/policy/shep.htm](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/policy/shep.htm)

55 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/03/8522](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/03/8522)

56 [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/managingchange](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/managingchange)

57 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/04132003/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/04132003/0)

58 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20450/49052](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20450/49052)

59 <http://smrforum-scotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/SHED-Strategy-Final-April-2014.pdf>

## Delivery

### Development Planning

**138.** Strategic development plans should protect and promote their significant historic environment assets. They should take account of the capacity of settlements and surrounding areas to accommodate development without damage to their historic significance.

**139.** Local development plans and supplementary guidance should provide a framework for protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing all elements of the historic environment. Local planning authorities should designate and review existing and potential conservation areas and identify existing and proposed [Article 4 Directions](#). This should be supported by Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

### Development Management

**140.** The siting and design of development should take account of all aspects of the historic environment. In support of this, planning authorities should have access to a Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and/or a Historic Environment Record (HER) that contains necessary information about known historic environment features and finds in their area.

### Listed Buildings

**141.** Change to a listed building should be managed to protect its special interest while enabling it to remain in active use. Where planning permission and listed building consent are sought for development to, or affecting, a listed building, special regard must be given to the importance of preserving and enhancing the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest. The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development which will affect a listed building or its setting should be appropriate to the character and appearance of the building and setting. Listed buildings should be protected from demolition or other work that would adversely affect it or its setting.

**142.** Enabling development may be acceptable where it can be clearly shown to be the only means of preventing the loss of the asset and securing its long-term future. Any development should be the minimum necessary to achieve these aims. The resultant development should be designed and sited carefully to preserve or enhance the character and setting of the historic asset.

### Conservation Areas

**143.** Proposals for development within conservation areas and proposals outwith which will impact on its appearance, character or setting, should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Proposals that do not harm the character or appearance of the conservation area should be treated as preserving its character or appearance. Where the demolition of an unlisted building is proposed through Conservation Area Consent, consideration should be given to the contribution the building makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Where a building makes a positive contribution the presumption should be to retain it.

**144.** Proposed works to trees in conservation areas require prior notice to the planning authority and statutory Tree Preservation Orders<sup>60</sup> can increase the protection given to such trees. Conservation Area Appraisals should inform development management decisions.

<sup>60</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/28152314/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/28152314/0)

## Scheduled Monuments

**145.** Where there is potential for a proposed development to have an adverse effect on a [scheduled monument](#) or on the integrity of its setting, permission should only be granted where there are exceptional circumstances. Where a proposal would have a direct impact on a scheduled monument, the written consent of Scottish Ministers via a separate process is required in addition to any other consents required for the development.

## Historic Marine Protected Areas

**146.** Where planning control extends offshore, planning authorities should ensure that development will not significantly hinder the preservation objectives of [Historic Marine Protected Areas](#).

## World Heritage Sites

**147.** World Heritage Sites are of international importance. Where a development proposal has the potential to affect a World Heritage Site, or its setting, the planning authority must protect and preserve its [Outstanding Universal Value](#).

## Gardens and Designed Landscapes

**148.** Planning authorities should protect and, where appropriate, seek to enhance gardens and designed landscapes included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes and designed landscapes of regional and local importance.

## Battlefields

**149.** Planning authorities should seek to protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the key landscape characteristics and special qualities of sites in the Inventory of Historic Battlefields.

## Archaeology and Other Historic Environment Assets

**150.** Planning authorities should protect archaeological sites and monuments as an important, finite and non-renewable resource and preserve them in situ wherever possible. Where in situ preservation is not possible, planning authorities should, through the use of conditions or a legal obligation, ensure that developers undertake appropriate excavation, recording, analysis, publication and archiving before and/or during development. If archaeological discoveries are made, they should be reported to the planning authority to enable discussion on appropriate measures, such as inspection and recording.

**151.** There is also a range of non-designated historic assets and areas of historical interest, including historic landscapes, other gardens and designed landscapes, woodlands and routes such as drove roads which do not have statutory protection. These resources are, however, an important part of Scotland's heritage and planning authorities should protect and preserve significant resources as far as possible, in situ wherever feasible.



# A Low Carbon Place

## Delivering Heat and Electricity

### NPF Context

**152.** NPF3 is clear that planning must facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy, and help to deliver the aims of the [Scottish Government's Report on Proposals and Policies](#)<sup>61</sup>. Our spatial strategy facilitates the development of generation technologies that will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector. Scotland has significant renewable energy resources, both onshore and offshore. Spatial priorities range from extending heat networks in our cities and towns to realising the potential for renewable energy generation in our coastal and island areas.

**153.** Terrestrial and marine planning facilitate development of renewable energy technologies, link generation with consumers and guide new infrastructure to appropriate locations. Efficient supply of low carbon and low cost heat and generation of heat and electricity from renewable energy sources are vital to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and can create significant opportunities for communities. Renewable energy also presents a significant opportunity for associated development, investment and growth of the supply chain, particularly for ports and harbours identified in the [National Renewables Infrastructure Plan](#)<sup>62</sup>. Communities can also gain new opportunities from increased local ownership and associated benefits.

### Policy Principles

**154.** The planning system should:

- support the transformational change to a low carbon economy, consistent with national objectives and targets<sup>63</sup>, including deriving:
  - 30% of overall energy demand from renewable sources by 2020;
  - 11% of heat demand from renewable sources by 2020; and
  - the equivalent of 100% of electricity demand from renewable sources by 2020;
- support the development of a diverse range of electricity generation from renewable energy technologies – including the expansion of renewable energy generation capacity – and the development of heat networks;
- guide development to appropriate locations and advise on the issues that will be taken into account when specific proposals are being assessed;
- help to reduce emissions and energy use in new buildings and from new infrastructure by enabling development at appropriate locations that contributes to:
  - Energy efficiency;
  - Heat recovery;
  - Efficient energy supply and storage;

61 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets)

62 [www.scottish-enterprise.com/~media/SE/Resources/Documents/Sectors/Energy/energy-renewables-reports/National-renewables-infrastructure-plan.ashx](http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/~media/SE/Resources/Documents/Sectors/Energy/energy-renewables-reports/National-renewables-infrastructure-plan.ashx)

63 Further targets may be set in due course, for example district heating targets have been proposed.



- Electricity and heat from renewable sources; and
- Electricity and heat from non-renewable sources where greenhouse gas emissions can be significantly reduced.

## Key Documents

- [Electricity Generation Policy Statement](#)<sup>64</sup>
- [2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland](#)<sup>65</sup>
- [Towards Decarbonising Heat: Maximising the opportunities for Scotland, Draft Heat Generation Policy Statement](#)<sup>66</sup>
- [Low Carbon Scotland: Meeting Our Emissions Reductions Targets 2013 - 2027](#)<sup>67</sup>

## Delivery

### Development Planning

**155.** Development plans should seek to ensure an area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources is achieved, in line with national climate change targets, giving due regard to relevant environmental, community and **cumulative impact** considerations.

**156.** Strategic development plans should support national priorities for the construction or improvement of strategic energy infrastructure, including generation, storage, transmission and distribution networks. They should address cross-boundary issues, promoting an approach to electricity and heat that supports the transition to a low carbon economy.

**157.** Local development plans should support new build developments, infrastructure or retrofit projects which deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted both in the specific development and surrounding area. They should set out the factors to be taken into account in considering proposals for energy developments. These will depend on the scale of the proposal and its relationship to the surrounding area and are likely to include the considerations set out at paragraph 169.

### Heat

**158.** Local development plans should use heat mapping to identify the potential for co-locating developments with a high heat demand with sources of heat supply. Heat supply sources include harvestable woodlands, sawmills producing biomass, biogas production sites and developments producing unused excess heat, as well as geothermal systems, heat recoverable from mine waters, aquifers, other bodies of water and heat storage systems. Heat demand sites for particular consideration include high density developments, communities off the gas grid, fuel poor areas and **anchor developments** such as hospitals, schools, leisure centres and heat intensive industry.

**159.** Local development plans should support the development of heat networks in as many locations as possible, even where they are initially reliant on carbon-based fuels if there is potential to convert them to run on renewable or low carbon sources of heat in the future. Local development plans should identify where heat networks, heat storage and **energy centres** exist or would be appropriate and include policies to support their implementation. Policies should support

64 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/EGPSMain](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/EGPSMain)

65 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/04110353/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/04110353/0)

66 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/03/2778](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/03/2778)

67 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets)

safeguarding of piperuns within developments for later connection and pipework to the curtilage of development. Policies should also give consideration to the provision of energy centres within new development. Where a district network exists, or is planned, or in areas identified as appropriate for district heating, policies may include a requirement for new development to include infrastructure for connection, providing the option to use heat from the network.

**160.** Where heat networks are not viable, microgeneration and heat recovery technologies associated with individual properties should be encouraged.

## Onshore Wind

**161.** Planning authorities should set out in the development plan a spatial framework identifying those areas that are likely to be most appropriate for onshore wind farms as a guide for developers and communities, following the approach set out below in Table 1. Development plans should indicate the minimum scale<sup>68</sup> of onshore wind development that their spatial framework is intended to apply to. Development plans should also set out the criteria that will be considered in deciding all applications for wind farms of different scales – including extensions and re-powering – taking account of the considerations set out at paragraph 169.

**162.** Both strategic and local development planning authorities, working together where required, should identify where there is strategic capacity for wind farms, and areas with the greatest potential for wind development, considering cross-boundary constraints and opportunities. Strategic development planning authorities are expected to take the lead in dealing with cross-boundary constraints and opportunities and will coordinate activity with constituent planning authorities.

**163.** The approach to spatial framework preparation set out in the SPP should be followed in order to deliver consistency nationally and additional constraints should not be applied at this stage. The spatial framework is complemented by a more detailed and exacting development management process where the merits of an individual proposal will be carefully considered against the full range of environmental, community, and [cumulative impacts](#) (see paragraph 169).

**164.** Individual properties and those settlements not identified within the development plan will be protected by the safeguards set out in the local development plan policy criteria for determining wind farms and the development management considerations accounted for when determining individual applications.

**165.** Grid capacity should not be used as a reason to constrain the areas identified for wind farm development or decisions on individual applications for wind farms. It is for wind farm developers to discuss connections to the grid with the relevant transmission network operator. Consideration should be given to underground grid connections where possible.

**166.** Proposals for onshore wind turbine developments should continue to be determined while spatial frameworks and local policies are being prepared and updated. Moratoria on onshore wind development are not appropriate.

<sup>68</sup> For example, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and Cairngorms National Parks refer to developments of more than one turbine and over 30 metres in height as large-scale commercial wind turbines.

# **Table 1: Spatial Frameworks**

<p><b>Group 1: Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable:</b></p> <p>National Parks and National Scenic Areas.</p>		
<p><b>Group 2: Areas of significant protection:</b></p> <p>Recognising the need for significant protection, in these areas wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances. Further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.</p>		
<p><b>National and international designations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Heritage Sites;</li> <li>• Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites;</li> <li>• Sites of Special Scientific Interest;</li> <li>• National Nature Reserves;</li> <li>• Sites identified in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes;</li> <li>• Sites identified in the Inventory of Historic Battlefields.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other nationally important mapped environmental interests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• areas of wild land as shown on the 2014 SNH map of wild land areas;</li> <li>• carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community separation for consideration of visual impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an area not exceeding 2km around cities, towns and villages identified on the local development plan with an identified settlement envelope or edge. The extent of the area will be determined by the planning authority based on landform and other features which restrict views out from the settlement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group 3: Areas with potential for wind farm development:</b></p> <p>Beyond groups 1 and 2, wind farms are likely to be acceptable, subject to detailed consideration against identified policy criteria.</p>		

## Other Renewable Electricity Generating Technologies and Storage

**167.** Development plans should identify areas capable of accommodating renewable electricity projects in addition to wind generation, including hydro-electricity generation related to river or tidal flows or energy storage projects of a range of scales.

**168.** Development plans should identify areas which are weakly connected or unconnected to the national electricity network and facilitate development of decentralised and mobile energy storage installations. Energy storage schemes help to support development of renewable energy and maintain stability of the electricity network in areas where reinforcement is needed to manage congestion. Strategic development planning authorities are expected to take the lead in dealing with cross-boundary constraints and opportunities and will coordinate activity between constituent planning authorities.

## Development Management

**169.** Proposals for energy infrastructure developments should always take account of spatial frameworks for wind farms and heat maps where these are relevant. Considerations will vary relative to the scale of the proposal and area characteristics but are likely to include:

- net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities;
- the scale of contribution to renewable energy generation targets;
- effect on greenhouse gas emissions;
- **cumulative impacts** – planning authorities should be clear about likely cumulative impacts arising from all of the considerations below, recognising that in some areas the cumulative impact of existing and consented energy development may limit the capacity for further development;
- impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including visual impact, residential amenity, noise and shadow flicker;
- landscape and visual impacts, including effects on wild land;
- effects on the natural heritage, including birds;
- impacts on carbon rich soils, using the carbon calculator;
- public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes identified in the NPF;
- impacts on the historic environment, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings and their settings;
- impacts on tourism and recreation;
- impacts on aviation and defence interests and seismological recording;
- impacts on telecommunications and broadcasting installations, particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised;
- impacts on road traffic;
- impacts on adjacent trunk roads;
- effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk;
- the need for conditions relating to the decommissioning of developments, including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration;

- opportunities for energy storage; and
- the need for a robust planning obligation to ensure that operators achieve site restoration.

**170.** Areas identified for wind farms should be suitable for use in perpetuity. Consents may be time-limited but wind farms should nevertheless be sited and designed to ensure impacts are minimised and to protect an acceptable level of amenity for adjacent communities.

**171.** Proposals for energy generation from non-renewable sources may be acceptable where carbon capture and storage or other emissions reduction infrastructure is either already in place or committed within the development's lifetime and proposals must ensure protection of good environmental standards.

**172.** Where new energy generation or storage proposals are being considered, the potential to connect those projects to off-grid areas should be considered.

### Community Benefit

**173.** Where a proposal is acceptable in land use terms, and consent is being granted, local authorities may wish to engage in negotiations to secure community benefit in line with the [Scottish Government Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments](#)<sup>69</sup>.

### Existing Wind Farm Sites

**174.** Proposals to repower existing wind farms which are already in suitable sites where environmental and other impacts have been shown to be capable of mitigation can help to maintain or enhance installed capacity, underpinning renewable energy generation targets. The current use of the site as a wind farm will be a material consideration in any such proposals.

## Planning for Zero Waste

### NPF and Wider Context

**175.** NPF3 recognises that waste is a resource and an opportunity, rather than a burden. Scotland has a Zero Waste Policy, which means wasting as little as possible and recognising that every item and material we use, either natural or manufactured, is a resource which has value for our economy. Planning plays a vital role in supporting the provision of facilities and infrastructure for future business development, investment and employment.

### Policy Principles

**176.** The planning system should:

- promote developments that minimise the unnecessary use of primary materials and promote efficient use of secondary materials;
- support the emergence of a diverse range of new technologies and investment opportunities to secure economic value from secondary resources, including reuse, refurbishment, remanufacturing and reprocessing;
- support achievement of Scotland's zero waste targets: recycling 70% of household waste and sending no more than 5% of Scotland's annual waste arisings to landfill by 2025; and
- help deliver infrastructure at appropriate locations, prioritising development in line with the waste hierarchy: waste prevention, reuse, recycling, energy recovery and waste disposal.

69 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/8279](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/8279)

## Key Documents

- [EU revised Waste Framework Directive](#)<sup>70</sup> (2008/98/EC)
- [Waste \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012](#)<sup>71</sup>: a statutory framework to maximise the quantity and quality of materials available for recycling and minimise the need for residual waste infrastructure;
- [Zero Waste Plan](#)<sup>72</sup> and accompanying regulations and supporting documents;
- Safeguarding Scotland's Resources: A blueprint for a more resource efficient and circular economy;
- [Circular 6/2013 Development Planning](#)<sup>73</sup>;
- SEPA waste data sources: including [Waste Data Digests](#)<sup>74</sup> and [Waste Infrastructure Maps](#)<sup>75</sup>;
- [SEPA Thermal Treatment of Waste Guidelines 2013](#)<sup>76</sup>;
- [Waste capacity tables](#)<sup>77</sup> (formerly Zero Waste Plan Annex B capacity tables)

## Delivery

**177.** Planning authorities and SEPA should work collaboratively to achieve zero waste objectives, having regard to the Zero Waste Plan, through development plans and development management. A revised version of PAN 63: Planning and Waste Management will be published in due course.

## Development Planning

**178.** Plans should give effect to the aims of the Zero Waste Plan and promote the waste hierarchy.

**179.** For new developments, including industrial, commercial, and residential, plans should promote resource efficiency and the minimisation of waste during construction and operation.

**180.** Plans should enable investment opportunities in a range of technologies and industries to maximise the value of secondary resources and waste to the economy, including composting facilities, transfer stations, materials recycling facilities, anaerobic digestion, mechanical, biological and thermal treatment plants. In line with the waste hierarchy, particular attention should be given to encouraging opportunities for reuse, refurbishment, remanufacturing and reprocessing of high value materials and products. Industry and business should engage with planning authorities to help identify sites which would enable co-location with end users of outputs where appropriate.

**181.** Planning authorities should have regard to the annual update of required capacity for source segregated and unsorted waste, mindful of the need to achieve the all-Scotland operational capacity. However, this should not be regarded as a cap and planning authorities should generally facilitate growth in sustainable resource management.

<sup>70</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/revision.htm>

<sup>71</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2012/9780111016657/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2012/9780111016657/contents)

<sup>72</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Waste-1/wastestrategy](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Waste-1/wastestrategy)

<sup>73</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/9924/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/9924/0)

<sup>74</sup> [www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste\\_data/waste\\_data\\_digest.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_data/waste_data_digest.aspx)

<sup>75</sup> [www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste\\_infrastructure\\_maps.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_infrastructure_maps.aspx)

<sup>76</sup> [www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste\\_regulation/energy\\_from\\_waste.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_regulation/energy_from_waste.aspx)

<sup>77</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Waste-1/wastestrategy/annexb](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Waste-1/wastestrategy/annexb)



**182.** The planning system should support the provision of a network of infrastructure to allow Scotland's waste and secondary resources to be managed in one of the nearest appropriate installations, by means of the most appropriate methods and technologies, in order to protect the environment and public health. While a significant shortfall of waste management infrastructure exists, emphasis should be placed on need over proximity. The achievement of a sustainable strategy may involve waste crossing planning boundaries. However, as the national network of installations becomes more fully developed, there will be scope for giving greater weight to proximity in identifying suitable locations for new waste facilities.

**183.** Any sites identified specifically for energy from waste facilities should enable links to be made to potential users of renewable heat and energy. Such schemes are particularly suitable in locations where there are premises nearby with a long-term demand for heat. Paragraphs 158 to 160 set out policy on heat networks and mapping.

**184.** Plans should safeguard existing waste management installations and ensure that the allocation of land on adjacent sites does not compromise waste handling operations, which may operate 24 hours a day and partly outside buildings.

**185.** Strategic development plans and local development plans outwith city regions should set out spatial strategies which make provision for new infrastructure, indicating clearly that it can generally be accommodated on land designated for employment, industrial or storage and distribution uses.

**186.** Local development plans should identify appropriate locations for new infrastructure, allocating specific sites where possible, and should provide a policy framework which facilitates delivery. Suitable sites will include those which have been identified for employment, industry or storage and distribution. Updated Scottish Government planning advice on identifying sites and assessing their suitability will be provided in due course.

**187.** Local development plans should identify where masterplans or development briefs will be required to guide the development of waste installations for major sites.

## **Development Management**

**188.** In determining applications for new installations, authorities should take full account of the policy set out at paragraph 176. Planning authorities should determine whether proposed developments would constitute appropriate uses of the land, leaving the regulation of permitted installations to SEPA.

**189.** SEPA's Thermal Treatment of Waste Guidelines 2013 and addendum sets out policy on thermal treatment plants.

**190.** All new development including residential, commercial and industrial properties should include provision for waste separation and collection to meet the requirements of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations.



**191.** Planning authorities should consider the need for buffer zones between dwellings or other **sensitive receptors** and some waste management facilities. As a guide, appropriate buffer distances may be:

- 100m between sensitive receptors and recycling facilities, small-scale thermal treatment or leachate treatment plant;
- 250m between sensitive receptors and operations such as outdoor composting, anaerobic digestion, mixed waste processing, thermal treatment or landfill gas plant; and
- greater between sensitive receptors and landfill sites.

**192.** Planning authorities should:

- consider requiring the preparation of site waste management plans for construction sites;
- secure decommissioning or restoration (including landfill) to agreed standards as a condition of planning permission for waste management facilities; and
- ensure that landfill consents are subject to an appropriate financial bond unless the operator can demonstrate that their programme of restoration, including the necessary financing, phasing and aftercare of sites, is sufficient.

# A Natural, Resilient Place

## Valuing the Natural Environment

### NPF Context

**193.** The natural environment forms the foundation of the spatial strategy set out in NPF3. The environment is a valued national asset offering a wide range of opportunities for enjoyment, recreation and sustainable economic activity. Planning plays an important role in protecting, enhancing and promoting access to our key environmental resources, whilst supporting their sustainable use.

### Policy Principles

**194.** The planning system should:

- facilitate positive change while maintaining and enhancing distinctive landscape character;
- conserve and enhance protected sites and species, taking account of the need to maintain healthy ecosystems and work with the natural processes which provide important services to communities;
- promote protection and improvement of the water environment, including rivers, lochs, estuaries, wetlands, coastal waters and groundwater, in a sustainable and co-ordinated way;
- seek to protect soils from damage such as erosion or compaction;
- protect and enhance ancient semi-natural woodland as an important and irreplaceable resource, together with other native or long-established woods, hedgerows and individual trees with high nature conservation or landscape value;
- seek benefits for **biodiversity** from new development where possible, including the restoration of degraded habitats and the avoidance of further fragmentation or isolation of habitats; and
- support opportunities for enjoying and learning about the natural environment.

### Key Documents

- [Getting the Best from Our Land – A Land Use Strategy for Scotland](#)<sup>78</sup>
- [The 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity](#)<sup>79</sup>
- [European Landscape Convention](#)<sup>80</sup>
- [Nature Conservation \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#)<sup>81</sup>
- [The Conservation \(Natural Habitats etc\) Regulations](#)<sup>82</sup>
- [The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)<sup>83</sup>

<sup>78</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Countryside/Landusestrategy](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Countryside/Landusestrategy)

<sup>79</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/5538](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/5538)

<sup>80</sup> [www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/landscape/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/landscape/default_en.asp)

<sup>81</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/6/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/6/contents)

<sup>82</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1994/2716/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1994/2716/contents/made)

<sup>83</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69)

- [EU Birds Directive – 2009/147/EC](#)<sup>84</sup>
- [EU Habitats Directive – 92/43/EEC](#)<sup>85</sup>
- [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance](#)<sup>86</sup>
- [National Parks \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#)<sup>87</sup>
- [River Basin Management Plans](#)<sup>88</sup>

## Delivery

**195.** Planning authorities, and all public bodies, have a duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 to further the conservation of **biodiversity**. This duty must be reflected in development plans and development management decisions. They also have a duty under the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 to protect and improve Scotland's water environment. The Scottish Government expects public bodies to apply the Principles for Sustainable Land Use, as set out in the Land Use Strategy, when taking significant decisions affecting the use of land.

## Development Plans

**196.** International, national and locally designated areas and sites should be identified and afforded the appropriate level of protection in development plans. Reasons for local designation should be clearly explained and their function and continuing relevance considered when preparing plans. Buffer zones should not be established around areas designated for their natural heritage importance. Plans should set out the factors which will be taken into account in development management. The level of protection given to local designations should not be as high as that given to international or national designations.

**197.** Planning authorities are encouraged to limit non-statutory local designations to areas designated for their local landscape or nature conservation value:

- the purpose of areas of local landscape value should be to:
  - safeguard and enhance the character and quality of a landscape which is important or particularly valued locally or regionally; or
  - promote understanding and awareness of the distinctive character and special qualities of local landscapes; or
  - safeguard and promote important local settings for outdoor recreation and tourism.
- local nature conservation sites should seek to accommodate the following factors:
  - species diversity, species or habitat rarity, naturalness and extent of habitat;
  - contribution to national and local **biodiversity** objectives;
  - potential contribution to the protection or enhancement of connectivity between habitats or the development of **green networks**; and
  - potential to facilitate enjoyment and understanding of natural heritage.

<sup>84</sup> [ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index_en.htm)

<sup>85</sup> [ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm)

<sup>86</sup> [www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-home/main/ramsar/1\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-home/main/ramsar/1_4000_0)

<sup>87</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/10/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/10/contents)

<sup>88</sup> [www.sepa.org.uk/water/river\\_basin\\_planning.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx)

**198.** Local nature conservation sites designated for their geodiversity should be selected for their value for scientific study and education, their historical significance and cultural and aesthetic value, and for their potential to promote public awareness and enjoyment.

**199.** Plans should address the potential effects of development on the natural environment, including proposals for [major-accident hazard sites](#) and the cumulative effects of incremental changes. They should consider the natural and cultural components together, and promote opportunities for the enhancement of degraded landscapes, particularly where this helps to restore or strengthen the natural processes which underpin the well-being and resilience of communities.

**200.** Wild land character is displayed in some of Scotland's remoter upland, mountain and coastal areas, which are very sensitive to any form of intrusive human activity and have little or no capacity to accept new development. Plans should identify and safeguard the character of areas of wild land as identified on the 2014 SNH map of wild land areas.

**201.** Plans should identify woodlands of high nature conservation value and include policies for protecting them and enhancing their condition and resilience to climate change. Forestry Commission Scotland's [Native Woodland Survey of Scotland](#)<sup>89</sup> provides information and guidance. Planning authorities should consider preparing forestry and woodland strategies as supplementary guidance to inform the development of forestry and woodland in their area, including the expansion of woodland of a range of types to provide multiple benefits. Scottish Government advice on planning for forestry and woodlands is set out in [The Right Tree in the Right Place](#)<sup>90</sup>.

## Development Management

**202.** The siting and design of development should take account of local landscape character. Development management decisions should take account of potential effects on landscapes and the natural and water environment, including cumulative effects. Developers should seek to minimise adverse impacts through careful planning and design, considering the services that the natural environment is providing and maximising the potential for enhancement.

**203.** Planning permission should be refused where the nature or scale of proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment. Direct or indirect effects on statutorily protected sites will be an important consideration, but designation does not impose an automatic prohibition on development.

**204.** Planning authorities should apply the precautionary principle where the impacts of a proposed development on nationally or internationally significant landscape or natural heritage resources are uncertain but there is sound evidence indicating that significant irreversible damage could occur. The precautionary principle should not be used to impede development without justification. If there is any likelihood that significant irreversible damage could occur, modifications to the proposal to eliminate the risk of such damage should be considered. If there is uncertainty, the potential for research, surveys or assessments to remove or reduce uncertainty should be considered.

**205.** Where peat and other carbon rich soils are present, applicants should assess the likely effects of development on carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. Where peatland is drained or otherwise disturbed, there is liable to be a release of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere. Developments should aim to minimise this release.

89 [www.forestry.gov.uk/nwss](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/nwss)

90 [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc129.pdf/\\$file/fcfc129.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc129.pdf/$file/fcfc129.pdf)

**206.** Where non-native species are present on site, or where planting is planned as part of a development, developers should take into account the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 relating to non-native species.

## International Designations

### Natura 2000 Sites

**207.** Sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) make up the Natura 2000 network of protected areas. Any development plan or proposal likely to have a significant effect on these sites which is not directly connected with or necessary to their conservation management must be subject to an “appropriate assessment” of the implications for the conservation objectives. Such plans or proposals may only be approved if the competent authority has ascertained by means of an “appropriate assessment” that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

**208.** A derogation is available for authorities to approve plans or projects which could adversely affect the integrity of a Natura site if:

- there are no alternative solutions;
- there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature; and
- compensatory measures are provided to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura network is protected.

**209.** If an authority wishes to use this derogation, Scottish Ministers must be notified. For sites hosting a priority habitat or species (as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive), prior consultation with the European Commission via Scottish Ministers is required unless either the proposal is necessary for public health or safety reasons or it will have beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment.

**210.** Authorities should afford the same level of protection to proposed SACs and SPAs (i.e. sites which have been approved by Scottish Ministers for formal consultation but which have not yet been designated) as they do to sites which have been designated.

### Ramsar Sites

**211.** All [Ramsar sites](#) are also Natura 2000 sites and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest and are protected under the relevant statutory regimes.

## National Designations

**212.** Development that affects a National Park, [National Scenic Area](#), [Site of Special Scientific Interest](#) or a [National Nature Reserve](#) should 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, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

**213.** Planning decisions for development within National Parks must be consistent with paragraphs 84-85.

## Protected Species

**214.** The presence (or potential presence) of a legally protected species is an important consideration in decisions on planning applications. If there is evidence to suggest that a protected species is present on site or may be affected by a proposed development, steps must be taken to establish their presence. The level of protection afforded by legislation must be factored into the planning and design of the development and any impacts must be fully considered prior to the determination of the application. Certain activities – for example those involving European Protected Species as specified in the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 and wild birds, protected animals and plants under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – may only be undertaken under licence. Following the introduction of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011, Scottish Natural Heritage is now responsible for the majority of wildlife licensing in Scotland.

## Areas of Wild Land

**215.** In areas of wild land (see paragraph 200), development may be appropriate in some circumstances. Further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.

## Woodland

**216.** Ancient semi-natural woodland is an irreplaceable resource and, along with other woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees, especially veteran trees of high nature conservation and landscape value, should be protected from adverse impacts resulting from development. [Tree Preservation Orders](#)<sup>91</sup> can be used to protect individual trees and groups of trees considered important for amenity or their cultural or historic interest.

**217.** Where appropriate, planning authorities should seek opportunities to create new woodland and plant native trees in association with development. If a development would result in the severing or impairment of connectivity between important woodland habitats, workable mitigation measures should be identified and implemented, preferably linked to a wider green network (see also the section on green infrastructure).

**218.** The Scottish Government's [Control of Woodland Removal Policy](#)<sup>92</sup> includes a presumption in favour of protecting woodland. Removal should only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits. Where woodland is removed in association with development, developers will generally be expected to provide compensatory planting. The criteria for determining the acceptability of woodland removal and further information on the implementation of the policy is explained in the Control of Woodland Removal Policy, and this should be taken into account when preparing development plans and determining planning applications.

91 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/28152314/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/28152314/0)

92 [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc125.pdf/%24FILE/fcfc125.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc125.pdf/%24FILE/fcfc125.pdf)

# Maximising the Benefits of Green Infrastructure

## NPF Context

**219.** NPF3 aims to significantly enhance green infrastructure networks, particularly in and around our cities and towns. [Green infrastructure](#) and improved access to [open space](#) can help to build stronger, healthier communities. It is an essential part of our long-term environmental performance and climate resilience. Improving the quality of our places and spaces through integrated green infrastructure networks can also encourage investment and development.

## Policy Principles

**220.** Planning should protect, enhance and promote green infrastructure, including open space and green networks, as an integral component of successful placemaking.

**221.** The planning system should:

- consider green infrastructure as an integral element of places from the outset of the planning process;
- assess current and future needs and opportunities for green infrastructure to provide multiple benefits;
- facilitate the provision and long-term, integrated management of green infrastructure and prevent fragmentation; and
- provide for easy and safe access to and within green infrastructure, including core paths and other important routes, within the context of statutory access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

## Key Documents

- [Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking](#)<sup>93</sup>
- [Getting the Best from Our Land – A Land Use Strategy for Scotland](#)<sup>94</sup>
- [Planning Advice Note 65: Planning and Open Space](#)<sup>95</sup>
- [Reaching Higher – Scotland’s National Strategy for Sport](#)<sup>96</sup>
- [The Play Strategy for Scotland and Action Plan](#)<sup>97</sup>
- [Let’s Get Scotland Walking: The National Walking Strategy](#)<sup>98</sup>

## Delivery

### Development Planning

**222.** Development plans should be based on a holistic, integrated and cross-sectoral approach to green infrastructure. They should be informed by relevant, up-to-date audits, strategies and action plans covering green infrastructure’s multiple functions, for example open space, playing fields, pitches, outdoor access, core paths, active travel strategies, the historic environment, [biodiversity](#), forestry and woodland, river basins, flood management, coastal zones and the marine environment.

<sup>93</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/11/04140525/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/11/04140525/0)

<sup>94</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17091927/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17091927/0)

<sup>95</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/30100623/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/30100623/0)

<sup>96</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/Sport/NationalStrategies/Sport-21](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/Sport/NationalStrategies/Sport-21)

<sup>97</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/10/9424](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/10/9424)

<sup>98</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/06/5743](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/06/5743)



Plans should promote consistency with these and reflect their priorities and spatial implications.

**223.** Strategic development plans should safeguard existing strategic or regionally important assets and identify strategic priorities for green infrastructure addressing cross-boundary needs and opportunities.

**224.** Local development plans should identify and protect open space identified in the open space audit and strategy as valued and functional or capable of being brought into use to meet local needs.

**225.** Local development plans should seek to enhance existing and promote the creation of new green infrastructure, which may include retrofitting. They should do this through a design-led approach, applying standards which facilitate appropriate provision, addressing deficits or surpluses within the local context. The standards delivered through a design-led approach should result in a proposal that is appropriate to place, including connections to other green infrastructure assets. Supplementary guidance or master plans may be used to achieve this.

**226.** Local development plans should identify sites for new indoor or outdoor sports, recreation or play facilities where a need has been identified in a local facility strategy, playing field strategy or similar document. They should provide for good quality, accessible facilities in sufficient quantity to satisfy current and likely future community demand. [Outdoor sports facilities](#) should be safeguarded from development except where:

- the proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as an outdoor sports facility;
- the proposed development involves only a minor part of the outdoor sports facility and would not affect its use and potential for sport and training;
- the outdoor sports facility which would be lost would be replaced either by a new facility of comparable or greater benefit for sport in a location that is convenient for users, or by the upgrading of an existing outdoor sports facility to provide a facility of better quality on the same site or at another location that is convenient for users and maintains or improves the overall playing capacity in the area; or
- the relevant strategy (see paragraph 224) and consultation with **sportscotland** show that there is a clear excess of provision to meet current and anticipated demand in the area, and that the site would be developed without detriment to the overall quality of provision.

**227.** Local development plans should safeguard existing and potential allotment sites to ensure that local authorities meet their statutory duty to provide allotments where there is proven demand. Plans should also encourage opportunities for a range of community growing spaces.

**228.** Local development plans should safeguard access rights and core paths, and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access linked to wider networks.

**229.** Local development plans should encourage the temporary use of unused or underused land as green infrastructure while making clear that this will not prevent any future development potential which has been identified from being realised. This type of greening may provide the advance structure planting to create the landscape framework for any future development.

## Development Management

**230.** Development of land allocated as green infrastructure for an unrelated purpose should have a strong justification. This should be based on evidence from relevant audits and strategies that the proposal will not result in a deficit of that type of provision within the local area and that alternative sites have been considered. Poor maintenance and neglect should not be used as a justification for development for other purposes.

**231.** Development proposals that would result in or exacerbate a deficit of green infrastructure should include provision to remedy that deficit with accessible infrastructure of an appropriate type, quantity and quality.

**232.** In the design of green infrastructure, consideration should be given to the qualities of successful places. Green infrastructure should be treated as an integral element in how the proposal responds to local circumstances, including being well-integrated into the overall design layout and multi-functional. Arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of green infrastructure, and associated water features, including common facilities, should be incorporated into any planning permission.

**233.** Proposals that affect regional and country parks must have regard to their statutory purpose of providing recreational access to the countryside close to centres of population, and should take account of their wider objectives as set out in their management plans and strategies.

## Promoting Responsible Extraction of Resources

### NPF Context

**234.** Minerals make an important contribution to the economy, providing materials for construction, energy supply and other uses, and supporting employment. NPF3 notes that minerals will be required as construction materials to support our ambition for diversification of the energy mix. Planning should safeguard mineral resources and facilitate their responsible use. Our spatial strategy underlines the need to address restoration of past minerals extraction sites in and around the Central Belt.

### Policy Principles

**235.** The planning system should:

- recognise the national benefit of indigenous coal, oil and gas production in maintaining a diverse energy mix and improving energy security;
- safeguard workable resources and ensure that an adequate and steady supply is available to meet the needs of the construction, energy and other sectors;
- minimise the impacts of extraction on local communities, the environment and the built and natural heritage; and
- secure the sustainable restoration of sites to beneficial afteruse after working has ceased.

## Key Documents

- [Electricity Generation Policy Statement](#)<sup>99</sup>
- [Management of Extractive Waste \(Scotland\) Regulations 2010](#)<sup>100</sup>
- [PAN 50: Controlling the Environmental Effects of Surface Mineral Workings](#)<sup>101</sup>
- [Planning Advice Note 64: Reclamation of Surface Mineral Workings](#)<sup>102</sup>
- [Circular 2/2003: Safeguarding of Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas](#)<sup>103</sup>
- [Circular 34/1996: Environment Act 1995 Section 96](#)<sup>104</sup>

## Delivery

### Development Planning

**236.** Strategic development plans should ensure that adequate supplies of construction aggregates can be made available from within the plan area to meet the likely development needs of the city region over the plan period.

**237.** Local development plans should safeguard all workable mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value and ensure that these are not sterilised by other development. Plans should set out the factors that specific proposals will need to address, including:

- disturbance, disruption and noise, blasting and vibration, and potential pollution of land, air and water;
- impacts on local communities, individual houses, [sensitive receptors](#) and economic sectors important to the local economy;
- benefits to the local and national economy;
- [cumulative impact](#) with other mineral and landfill sites in the area;
- effects on natural heritage, habitats and the historic environment;
- landscape and visual impacts, including cumulative effects;
- transport impacts; and
- restoration and aftercare (including any benefits in terms of the remediation of existing areas of dereliction or instability).

**238.** Plans should support the maintenance of a landbank of permitted reserves for construction aggregates of at least 10 years at all times in all market areas through the identification of areas of search. Such areas can be promoted by developers or landowners as part of the plan preparation process or by planning authorities where they wish to guide development to particular areas. As an alternative, a criteria-based approach may be taken, particularly where a sufficient landbank already exists or substantial unconstrained deposits are available.

99 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/5757](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/5757)

100 [www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2010/60/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2010/60/contents/made)

101 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1996/10/17729/23424](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1996/10/17729/23424)

102 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/01/16122/16256](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/01/16122/16256)

103 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/01/16204/17030](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/01/16204/17030)

104 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1996/11/circular-34-1996-root/circular-34-1996-guidance](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1996/11/circular-34-1996-root/circular-34-1996-guidance)

**239.** Local development plans should identify areas of search where surface coal extraction is most likely to be acceptable during the plan period and set out the preferred programme for the development of other safeguarded areas beyond the plan period, with particular emphasis on protecting local communities from significant cumulative impacts. Where possible, plans should secure extraction prior to permanent development above workable coal reserves.

**240.** For areas covered by a Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence (PEDL), local development plans should also:

- identify licence areas;
- encourage operators to be as clear as possible about the minimum and maximum extent of operations (e.g. number of wells and duration) at the exploration phase whilst recognising that the factors to be addressed by applications should be relevant and proportionate to the appropriate exploration, appraisal and production phases of operations;
- confirm that applicants should engage with local communities, residents and other stakeholders at each stage of operations, beginning in advance of any application for planning permission and in advance of any operations;
- ensure that when developing proposals, applicants should consider, where possible, transport of the end product by pipeline, rail or water rather than road; and
- provide a consistent approach to extraction where licences extend across local authority boundaries.

**241.** Policies should protect areas of peatland and only permit commercial extraction in areas suffering historic, significant damage through human activity and where the conservation value is low and restoration is impossible.

## Development Management

**242.** Operators should provide sufficient information to enable a full assessment to be made of the likely effects of development together with appropriate control, mitigation and monitoring measures. This should include the provision of an adequate buffer zone between sites and settlements, taking account of the specific circumstances of individual proposals, including size, duration, location, method of working, topography, the characteristics of the various environmental effects likely to arise and the mitigation that can be provided.

**243.** Borrow pits should only be permitted if there are significant environmental or economic benefits compared to obtaining material from local quarries; they are time-limited; tied to a particular project and appropriate reclamation measures are in place.

**244.** Consent should only be granted for surface coal extraction proposals which are either environmentally acceptable (or can be made so by planning conditions) or provide local or community benefits which clearly outweigh the likely impacts of extraction. Site boundaries within 500 metres of the edge of settlements will only be environmentally acceptable where local circumstances, such as the removal of dereliction, small-scale prior extraction or the stabilisation of mining legacy, justify a lesser distance. Non-engineering works and mitigation measures within 500 metres may be acceptable.

**245.** To assist planning authorities with their consideration of impacts on local communities, neighbouring uses and the environment, applicants should undertake a risk assessment for all proposals for shale gas and coal bed methane extraction. The assessment can, where appropriate, be undertaken as part of any environmental impact assessment and should also be developed in consultation with statutory consultees and local communities so that it informs the design of the proposal. The assessment should clearly identify those onsite activities (i.e. emission of pollutants, the creation and disposal of waste) that pose a potential risk using a source–pathway–receptor model and explain how measures, including those under environmental and other legislation, will be used to monitor, manage and mitigate any identified risks to health, amenity and the environment. The evidence from, and outcome of, the assessment should lead to buffer zones being proposed in the application which will protect all **sensitive receptors** from unacceptable risks. When considering applications, planning authorities and statutory consultees must assess the distances proposed by the applicant. Where proposed distances are considered inadequate the Scottish Government expects planning permission to be refused.

**246.** Conditions should be drafted in a way which ensures that hydraulic fracturing does not take place where permission for such operations is not sought and that any subsequent application to do so is subject to appropriate consultation. If such operations are subsequently proposed, they should, as a matter of planning policy, be regarded as a substantial change in the description of the development for which planning permission is sought or a material variation to the existing planning permission. Where PEDL and Underground Coal licences are granted for the same or overlapping areas, consideration should be given to the most efficient sequencing of extraction.

**247.** The Scottish Government is currently exploring a range of options relating to the effective regulation of surface coal mining. This is likely to result in further guidance on effective restoration measures in due course. In the meantime, planning authorities should, through planning conditions and legal agreements, continue to ensure that a high standard of restoration and aftercare is managed effectively and that such work is undertaken at the earliest opportunity. A range of financial guarantee options is currently available and planning authorities should consider the most effective solution on a site-by-site basis. All solutions should provide assurance and clarity over the amount and period of the guarantee and in particular, where it is a bond, the risks covered (including operator failure) and the triggers for calling in a bond, including payment terms. In the aggregates sector, an operator may be able to demonstrate adequate provision under an industry-funded guarantee scheme.

**248.** Planning authorities should ensure that rigorous procedures are in place to monitor consents, including restoration arrangements, at appropriate intervals, and ensure that appropriate action is taken when necessary. The review of mineral permissions every 15 years should be used to apply up-to-date operating and environmental standards although requests from operators to postpone reviews should be considered favourably if existing conditions are already achieving acceptable standards. Conditions should not impose undue restrictions on consents at quarries for building or roofing stone to reflect the likely intermittent or low rate of working at such sites.

# Supporting Aquaculture

## NPF Context

**249.** Aquaculture makes a significant contribution to the Scottish economy, particularly for coastal and island communities. Planning can help facilitate sustainable aquaculture whilst protecting and maintaining the ecosystem upon which it depends. Planning can play a role in supporting the sectoral growth targets to grow marine finfish (including farmed Atlantic salmon) production sustainably to 210,000 tonnes; and shellfish, particularly mussels, sustainably to 13,000 tonnes with due regard to the marine environment by 2020.

## Policy Principles

**250.** The planning system should:

- play a supporting role in the sustainable growth of the finfish and shellfish sectors to ensure that the aquaculture industry is diverse, competitive and economically viable;
- guide development to coastal locations that best suit industry needs with due regard to the marine environment;
- maintain a presumption against further marine finfish farm developments on the north and east coasts to safeguard migratory fish species.

## Key Documents

- National Marine Plan

## Delivery

### Development Planning

**251.** Local development plans should make positive provision for aquaculture developments. Plans, or supplementary guidance, should take account of Marine Scotland's locational policies when identifying areas potentially suitable for new development and sensitive areas which are unlikely to be appropriate for such development. They should also set out the issues that will be considered when assessing specific proposals, which could include:

- impacts on, and benefits for, local communities;
- economic benefits of the sustainable development of the aquaculture industry;
- landscape, seascape and visual impact;
- biological carrying capacity;
- effects on coastal and marine species (including wild salmonids) and habitats;
- impacts on the historic environment and the sea or loch bed;
- interaction with other users of the marine environment (including commercial fisheries, Ministry of Defence, navigational routes, ports and harbours, anchorages, tourism, recreational and leisure activities); and
- cumulative effects on all of the above factors.



## Development Management

**252.** Applications should be supported, where necessary, by sufficient information to demonstrate:

- operational arrangements (including noise, light, access, waste and odour) are satisfactory and sufficient mitigation plans are in place; and
- the siting and design of cages, lines and associated facilities are appropriate for the location. This should be done through the provision of information on the extent of the site; the type, number and physical scale of structures; the distribution of the structures across the planning area; on-shore facilities; and ancillary equipment.

**253.** Any land-based facilities required for the proposal should, where possible, be considered at the same time. The planning system should not duplicate other control regimes such as controlled activities regulation licences from SEPA or fish health, sea lice and containment regulation by Marine Scotland.

## Managing Flood Risk and Drainage

### NPF Context

**254.** NPF3 supports a catchment-scale approach to sustainable flood risk management. The spatial strategy aims to build the resilience of our cities and towns, encourage sustainable land management in our rural areas, and to address the long-term vulnerability of parts of our coasts and islands. Flooding can impact on people and businesses. Climate change will increase the risk of flooding in some parts of the country. Planning can play an important part in reducing the vulnerability of existing and future development to flooding.

### Policy Principles

**255.** The planning system should promote:

- a precautionary approach to **flood risk** from all sources, including coastal, water course (fluvial), surface water (**pluvial**), groundwater, reservoirs and drainage systems (sewers and culverts), taking account of the predicted effects of climate change;
- **flood** avoidance: by safeguarding flood storage and conveying capacity, and locating development away from **functional flood plains** and medium to high risk areas;
- flood reduction: assessing flood risk and, where appropriate, undertaking natural and structural flood management measures, including flood protection, restoring natural features and characteristics, enhancing flood storage capacity, avoiding the construction of new culverts and opening existing culverts where possible; and
- avoidance of increased surface water flooding through requirements for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and minimising the area of impermeable surface.

**256.** To achieve this the planning system should prevent development which would have a significant probability of being affected by flooding or would increase the probability of flooding elsewhere. Piecemeal reduction of the functional floodplain should be avoided given the cumulative effects of reducing storage capacity.

**257.** Alterations and small-scale extensions to existing buildings are outwith the scope of this policy, provided that they would not have a significant effect on the storage capacity of the functional floodplain or local flooding problems.



## Key Documents

- [Flood Risk Management \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)<sup>105</sup>
- Updated Planning Advice Note on Flooding
- [Delivering Sustainable Flood Risk Management](#)<sup>106</sup> (Scottish Government, 2011).
- [Surface Water Management Planning Guidance](#)<sup>107</sup> (Scottish Government, 2013).

## Delivery

**258.** Planning authorities should have regard to the probability of flooding from all sources and take flood risk into account when preparing development plans and determining planning applications. The calculated probability of flooding should be regarded as a best estimate and not a precise forecast. Authorities should avoid giving any indication that a grant of planning permission implies the absence of flood risk.

**259.** Developers should take into account flood risk and the ability of future occupiers to insure development before committing themselves to a site or project, as applicants and occupiers have ultimate responsibility for safeguarding their property.

## Development Planning

**260.** Plans should use [strategic flood risk assessment](#) (SFRA) to inform choices about the location of development and policies for flood risk management. They should have regard to the flood maps prepared by Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and take account of finalised and approved Flood Risk Management Strategies and Plans and River Basin Management Plans.

**261.** Strategic and local development plans should address any significant cross boundary flooding issues. This may include identifying major areas of the [flood plain](#) and storage capacity which should be protected from inappropriate development, major flood protection scheme requirements or proposals, and relevant drainage capacity issues.

**262.** Local development plans should protect land with the potential to contribute to managing flood risk, for instance through natural flood management, managed coastal realignment, [washland](#) or green infrastructure creation, or as part of a scheme to manage flood risk.

**263.** Local development plans should use the following flood risk framework to guide development. This sets out three categories of coastal and watercourse flood risk, together with guidance on surface water flooding, and the appropriate planning approach for each (the annual probabilities referred to in the framework relate to the land at the time a plan is being prepared or a planning application is made):

- **Little or No Risk** – annual probability of coastal or [watercourse](#) flooding is less than 0.1% (1:1000 years)
  - No constraints due to coastal or watercourse flooding.

<sup>105</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/6/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/6/contents)

<sup>106</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/15150211/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/15150211/0)

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/02/7909/0>

- **Low to Medium Risk** – annual probability of coastal or watercourse flooding is between 0.1% and 0.5% (1:1000 to 1:200 years)
  - Suitable for most development. A flood risk assessment may be required at the upper end of the probability range (i.e. close to 0.5%), and for **essential infrastructure** and the **most vulnerable uses**. Water resistant materials and construction may be required.
  - Generally not suitable for **civil infrastructure**. Where civil infrastructure must be located in these areas or is being substantially extended, it should be designed to be capable of remaining operational and accessible during extreme flood events.
- **Medium to High Risk** – annual probability of coastal or watercourse flooding is greater than 0.5% (1:200 years)
  - May be suitable for:
    - residential, institutional, commercial and industrial development within built-up areas provided flood protection measures to the appropriate standard already exist and are maintained, are under construction, or are a planned measure in a current flood risk management plan;
    - essential infrastructure within built-up areas, designed and constructed to remain operational during floods and not impede water flow;
    - some recreational, sport, amenity and nature conservation uses, provided appropriate evacuation procedures are in place; and
    - job-related accommodation, e.g. for caretakers or operational staff.
  - Generally not suitable for:
    - civil infrastructure and the most vulnerable uses;
    - additional development in undeveloped and sparsely developed areas, unless a location is essential for operational reasons, e.g. for navigation and water-based recreation, agriculture, transport or utilities infrastructure (which should be designed and constructed to be operational during floods and not impede water flow), and an alternative, lower risk location is not available; and
    - new caravan and camping sites.
  - Where built development is permitted, measures to protect against or manage flood risk will be required and any loss of flood storage capacity mitigated to achieve a neutral or better outcome.
  - Water-resistant materials and construction should be used where appropriate. Elevated buildings on structures such as stilts are unlikely to be acceptable.

## Surface Water Flooding

- Infrastructure and buildings should generally be designed to be free from surface water flooding in rainfall events where the annual probability of occurrence is greater than 0.5% (1:200 years).
- Surface water drainage measures should have a neutral or better effect on the risk of flooding both on and off the site, taking account of rain falling on the site and run-off from adjacent areas.

## Development Management

**264.** It is not possible to plan for development solely according to the calculated probability of flooding. In applying the risk framework to proposed development, the following should therefore be taken into account:

- the characteristics of the site;
- the design and use of the proposed development;
- the size of the area likely to flood;
- depth of flood water, likely flow rate and path, and rate of rise and duration;
- the vulnerability and risk of wave action for coastal sites;
- committed and existing flood protection methods: extent, standard and maintenance regime;
- the effects of climate change, including an [allowance for freeboard](#);
- surface water run-off from adjoining land;
- culverted watercourses, drains and field drainage;
- cumulative effects, especially the loss of storage capacity;
- cross-boundary effects and the need for consultation with adjacent authorities;
- effects of flood on access including by emergency services; and
- effects of flood on proposed open spaces including gardens.

**265.** Land raising should only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where it is shown to have a neutral or better impact on flood risk outside the raised area. Compensatory storage may be required.

**266.** The flood risk framework set out above should be applied to development management decisions. Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) should be required for development in the medium to high category of flood risk, and may be required in the low to medium category in the circumstances described in the framework above, or where other factors indicate heightened risk. FRA will generally be required for applications within areas identified at high or medium likelihood of flooding/flood risk in SEPA's flood maps.

**267.** Drainage Assessments, proportionate to the development proposal and covering both surface and foul water, will be required for areas where drainage is already constrained or otherwise problematic, or if there would be off-site effects.

**268.** Proposed arrangements for SuDS should be adequate for the development and appropriate long-term maintenance arrangements should be put in place.

# A Connected Place

## Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

### NPF Context

**269.** The spatial strategy set out in NPF3 is complemented by an ongoing programme of investment in transport infrastructure. The economy relies on efficient transport connections, within Scotland and to international markets. Planning can play an important role in improving connectivity and promoting more sustainable patterns of transport and travel as part of the transition to a low carbon economy.

### Policy Principles

**270.** The planning system should support patterns of development which:

- optimise the use of existing infrastructure;
- reduce the need to travel;
- provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling for both active travel and recreation, and facilitate travel by public transport;
- enable the integration of transport modes; and
- facilitate freight movement by rail or water.

**271.** Development plans and development management decisions should take account of the implications of development proposals on traffic, patterns of travel and road safety.

### Key Documents

- [National Transport Strategy](#)<sup>108</sup>
- [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)<sup>109</sup>
- [Low Carbon Scotland: Meeting the Emissions Reduction Targets 2013-2027](#)<sup>110</sup>
- [Infrastructure Investment Plan](#)<sup>111</sup>
- [Strategic Transport Projects Review](#)<sup>112</sup>
- [Transport Assessment Guidance](#)<sup>113</sup>
- [Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance \(DPMTAG\)](#)<sup>114</sup>
- [PAN 66: Best Practice in Handling Applications Affecting Trunk Roads](#)<sup>115</sup>

108 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/04104414/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/04104414/0)

109 [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/12/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/12/contents)

110 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets)

111 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/12/05141922/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/12/05141922/0)

112 [www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategic-transport-projects-review](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategic-transport-projects-review)

113 [www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/documents/tsc-basic-pages/Planning\\_Reform\\_-\\_DPMTAG\\_-\\_Development\\_Management\\_DPMTAG\\_Ref\\_17\\_-\\_Transport\\_Assessment\\_Guidance\\_FINAL\\_-\\_June\\_2012.pdf](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/documents/tsc-basic-pages/Planning_Reform_-_DPMTAG_-_Development_Management_DPMTAG_Ref_17_-_Transport_Assessment_Guidance_FINAL_-_June_2012.pdf)

114 [www.transportscotland.gov.uk/development-planning-and-management-transport-appraisal-guidance-dpmtag](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/development-planning-and-management-transport-appraisal-guidance-dpmtag)

115 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47021/0026434.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47021/0026434.pdf)

- [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges](#)<sup>116</sup>
- [Designing Streets](#)<sup>117</sup>
- [Roads for All](#)<sup>118</sup>
- [Cycling Action Plan in Scotland](#)<sup>119</sup> (CAPS)
- [Let's Get Scotland Walking: The National Walking Strategy](#)<sup>120</sup>
- [A More Active Scotland – Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games](#)<sup>121</sup>
- [Switched On Scotland: A Roadmap to Widespread Adoption of Plug-in Vehicles](#)<sup>122</sup>
- [Tourism Development Framework for Scotland](#)<sup>123</sup>

## Delivery

### Development Planning

**272.** Development plans should take account of the relationship between land use and transport and particularly the capacity of the existing transport network, environmental and operational constraints, and proposed or committed transport projects.

**273.** The spatial strategies set out in plans should support development in locations that allow walkable access to local amenities and are also accessible by cycling and public transport. Plans should identify active travel networks and promote opportunities for travel by more sustainable modes in the following order of priority: walking, cycling, public transport, cars. The aim is to promote development which maximises the extent to which its travel demands are met first through walking, then cycling, then public transport and finally through use of private cars. Plans should facilitate integration between transport modes.

**274.** In preparing development plans, planning authorities are expected to appraise the impact of the spatial strategy and its reasonable alternatives on the transport network, in line with Transport Scotland's DPMTAG guidance. This should include consideration of previously allocated sites, transport opportunities and constraints, current capacity and committed improvements to the transport network. Planning authorities should ensure that a transport appraisal is undertaken at a scale and level of detail proportionate to the nature of the issues and proposals being considered, including funding requirements. Appraisals should be carried out in time to inform the spatial strategy and the strategic environmental assessment. Where there are potential issues for the [strategic transport network](#), the appraisal should be discussed with Transport Scotland at the earliest opportunity.

<sup>116</sup> [www.dft.gov.uk/ha/standards/dmr/index.htm](http://www.dft.gov.uk/ha/standards/dmr/index.htm)

<sup>117</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/22120652/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/22120652/0)

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/guides/j256264-00.htm>

<sup>119</sup> [www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/cycling-action-plan-2013](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/cycling-action-plan-2013)

<sup>120</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/06/5743](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/06/5743)

<sup>121</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/02/8239/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/02/8239/0)

<sup>122</sup> [www.transportscotland.gov.uk/report/j272736-00.htm](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/report/j272736-00.htm)

<sup>123</sup> [www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Tourism%20Development%20Framework%20-%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Tourism%20Development%20Framework%20-%20FINAL.pdf)

**275.** Development plans should identify any required new transport infrastructure or public transport services, including cycle and pedestrian routes, trunk road and rail infrastructure. The deliverability of this infrastructure, and by whom it will be delivered, should be key considerations in identifying the preferred and alternative land use strategies. Plans and associated documents, such as supplementary guidance and the action programme, should indicate how new infrastructure or services are to be delivered and phased, and how and by whom any developer contributions will be made. These should be prepared in consultation with all of the parties responsible for approving and delivering the infrastructure. Development plans should support the provision of infrastructure necessary to support positive changes in transport technologies, such as charging points for electric vehicles.

**276.** Where public transport services required to serve a new development cannot be provided commercially, a contribution from the developer towards an agreed level of service may be appropriate. The development plan action programme should set out how this will be delivered, and the planning authority should coordinate discussions with the public transport provider, developer, Transport Scotland where appropriate, and relevant regional transport partnerships at an early stage in the process. In rural areas the plan should be realistic about the likely viability of public transport services and innovative solutions such as demand-responsive public transport and small-scale park and ride facilities at nodes on rural bus corridors should be considered.

**277.** Disused railway lines with a reasonable prospect of being reused as rail, tram, bus rapid transit or active travel routes should be safeguarded in development plans. The strategic case for a new station should emerge from a complete and robust multimodal transport appraisal in line with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance. Any appraisal should include consideration of making best use of current rail services; and should demonstrate that the needs of local communities, workers or visitors are sufficient to generate a high level of demand, and that there would be no adverse impact on the operation of the rail service franchise. Funding partners must be identified. Agreement should be reached with Transport Scotland and Network Rail before rail proposals are included in a development plan or planning application and it should be noted that further technical assessment and design work will be required before any proposed new station can be confirmed as viable.

**278.** While new junctions on trunk roads are not normally acceptable, the case for a new junction will be considered where the planning authority considers that significant economic growth or regeneration benefits can be demonstrated. New junctions will only be considered if they are designed in accordance with DMRB and where there would be no adverse impact on road safety or operational performance.

**279.** Significant travel-generating uses should be sited at locations which are well served by public transport, subject to parking restraint policies, and supported by measures to promote the availability of high-quality public transport services. New development areas should be served by public transport providing access to a range of destinations. Development plans should indicate when a travel plan will be required to accompany a proposal for a development which will generate significant travel.

**280.** Along with sound choices on the location of new development, appropriate street layout and design are key to achieving the policy principles at paragraph 270. The design of all new development should follow the placemaking approach set out in this SPP and the principles of Designing Streets, to ensure the creation of places which are distinctive, welcoming, adaptable, resource efficient, safe and pleasant and easy to move around and beyond.



**281.** National maximum parking standards for certain types and scales of development have been set to promote consistency (see [Annex B: Parking Policies and Standards](#)). Where an area is well served by sustainable transport modes, planning authorities may set more restrictive standards, and where public transport provision is limited, planning authorities may set less restrictive standards. Local authorities should also take account of relevant town centre strategies when considering appropriate parking provision (see paragraphs 64-65 and [Annex A: Town Centre Health Checks and Strategies](#)).

**282.** When preparing development plans, planning authorities should consider the need for improved and additional freight transfer facilities. Strategic freight sites should be safeguarded in development plans. Existing roadside facilities and provision for lorry parking should be safeguarded and, where required, development plans should make additional provision for the overnight parking of lorries at appropriate locations on routes with a high volume of lorry traffic. Where appropriate, development plans should also identify suitable locations for new or expanded rail freight interchanges to support increased movement of freight by rail. Facilities allowing the transfer of freight from road to rail or water should also be considered.

**283.** Planning authorities and port operators should work together to address the planning and transport needs of ports and opportunities for rail access should be safeguarded in development plans. Planning authorities should ensure that there is appropriate road access to ferry terminals for cars and freight, and support the provision of bus and train interchange facilities.

**284.** Planning authorities, airport operators and other stakeholders should work together to prepare airport masterplans and address other planning and transport issues relating to airports. Relevant issues include public safety zone safeguarding, surface transport access for supplies, air freight, staff and passengers, related on- and off-site development such as transport interchanges, offices, hotels, car parks, warehousing and distribution services, and other development benefiting from good access to the airport.

**285.** Canals, which are scheduled monuments, should be safeguarded as assets which can contribute to sustainable economic growth through sensitive development and regeneration. Consideration should be given to planning for new uses for canals, where appropriate.

## Development Management

**286.** Where a new development or a change of use is likely to generate a significant increase in the number of trips, a transport assessment should be carried out. This should identify any potential [cumulative effects](#) which need to be addressed.

**287.** Planning permission should not be granted for significant travel-generating uses at locations which would increase reliance on the car and where:

- direct links to local facilities via walking and cycling networks are not available or cannot be made available;
- access to local facilities via public transport networks would involve walking more than 400m; or
- the transport assessment does not identify satisfactory ways of meeting sustainable transport requirements.

Guidance is available in [Transport Assessment and Implementation: A Guide](#)<sup>124</sup>

<sup>124</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/1792325/23264](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/1792325/23264)



**288.** Buildings and facilities should be accessible by foot and bicycle and have appropriate operational and servicing access for large vehicles. Cycle routes, cycle parking and storage should be safeguarded and enhanced wherever possible.

**289.** Consideration should be given to how proposed development will contribute to fulfilling the objectives of Switched On Scotland – A Roadmap to Widespread Adoption of Plug-in Vehicles. Electric vehicle charge points should always be considered as part of any new development and provided where appropriate.

**290.** Development proposals that have the potential to affect the performance or safety of the strategic transport network need to be fully assessed to determine their impact. Where existing infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate a development without adverse impacts on safety or unacceptable impacts on operational performance, further investment in the network is not likely to be required. Where such investment is required, the cost of the mitigation measures required to ensure the continued safe and effective operation of the network will have to be met by the developer.

**291.** Consideration should be given to appropriate planning restrictions on construction and operation related transport modes when granting planning permission, especially where bulk material movements are expected, for example freight from extraction operations.

## Supporting Digital Connectivity

### NPF Context

**292.** NPF3 highlights the importance of our digital infrastructure, across towns and cities, and in particular our more remote rural and island areas. Our economy and social networks depend heavily on high-quality digital infrastructure. To facilitate investment across Scotland, planning has an important role to play in strengthening digital communications capacity and coverage across Scotland.

### Policy Principles

**293.** The planning system should support:

- development which helps deliver the Scottish Government's commitment to world-class digital connectivity;
- the need for networks to evolve and respond to technology improvements and new services;
- inclusion of digital infrastructure in new homes and business premises; and
- infrastructure provision which is sited and designed to keep environmental impacts to a minimum.

### Key Documents

- [Scotland's Digital Future](#)<sup>125</sup> and associated [Infrastructure Action Plan](#)<sup>126</sup>
- [Scotland's Cities: Delivering for Scotland](#)<sup>127</sup>
- [A National Telehealth and Telecare Delivery Plan for Scotland to 2015](#)<sup>128</sup>

<sup>125</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/981/0114237.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/981/0114237.pdf)

<sup>126</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/01/1487](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/01/1487)

<sup>127</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/01/05104741/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/01/05104741/0)

<sup>128</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00411586.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00411586.pdf)

- [Planning Advice Note 62, Radio Telecommunications provides advice on siting and design](#)<sup>129</sup>
- [Circular 2/2003: Safeguarding of Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas](#)<sup>130</sup>

## Delivery

### Development Planning

**294.** Local development plans should reflect the infrastructure roll-out plans of digital communications operators, community groups and others, such as the Scottish Government, the UK Government and local authorities.

**295.** Local development plans should provide a consistent basis for decision-making by setting out the criteria which will be applied when determining planning applications for communications equipment. They should ensure that the following options are considered when selecting sites and designing base stations:

- mast or site sharing;
- installation on buildings or other existing structures;
- installing the smallest suitable equipment, commensurate with technological requirements;
- concealing or disguising masts, antennas, equipment housing and cable runs using design and camouflage techniques where appropriate; and
- installation of ground-based masts.

**296.** Local development plans should set out the matters to be addressed in planning applications for specific developments, including:

- an explanation of how the proposed equipment fits into the wider network;
- a description of the siting options (primarily for new sites) and design options which satisfy operational requirements, alternatives considered, and the reasons for the chosen solution;
- details of the design, including height, materials and all components of the proposal;
- details of any proposed landscaping and screen planting, where appropriate;
- an assessment of the cumulative effects of the proposed development in combination with existing equipment in the area;
- a declaration that the equipment and installation is designed to be in full compliance with the appropriate ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to radiofrequency radiation<sup>131</sup>; and
- an assessment of visual impact, if relevant.

**297.** Policies should encourage developers to explore opportunities for the provision of digital infrastructure to new homes and business premises as an integral part of development. This should be done in consultation with service providers so that appropriate, universal and future-proofed infrastructure is installed and utilised.

<sup>129</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2001/09/pan62/pan62-](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2001/09/pan62/pan62-)

<sup>130</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/01/16204/17030](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/01/16204/17030)

<sup>131</sup> The radiofrequency public exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection, as expressed in EU Council recommendation 1999/519/ EC on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields.

## Development Management

**298.** Consideration should be given to how proposals for infrastructure to deliver new services or infrastructure to improve existing services will contribute to fulfilling the objectives for digital connectivity set out in the Scottish Government's World Class 2020 document. For developments that will deliver entirely new connectivity – for example, mobile connectivity in a “not spot” – consideration should be given to the benefits of this connectivity for communities and the local economy.

**299.** All components of equipment should be considered together and designed and positioned as sensitively as possible, though technical requirements and constraints may limit the possibilities. Developments should not physically obstruct aerodrome operations, technical sites or existing transmitter/receiver facilities. The cumulative visual effects of equipment should be taken into account.

**300.** Planning authorities should not question the need for the service to be provided nor seek to prevent competition between operators. The planning system should not be used to secure objectives that are more properly achieved under other legislation. Emissions of radiofrequency radiation are controlled and regulated under other legislation and it is therefore not necessary for planning authorities to treat radiofrequency radiation as a material consideration.

## Annex A – Town Centre Health Checks and Strategies

**Town centre health checks should cover a range of indicators, such as:**

### **Activities**

- retailer representation and intentions (multiples and independents);
- employment;
- cultural and social activity;
- community activity;
- leisure and tourism facilities;
- resident population; and
- evening/night-time economy.

### **Physical environment**

- space in use for the range of town centre functions and how it has changed;
- physical structure of the centre, condition and appearance including constraints and opportunities and assets;
- historic environment; and
- public realm and green infrastructure.

### **Property**

- vacancy rates, particularly at street level in prime retail areas;
- vacant sites;
- committed developments;
- commercial yield; and
- prime rental values.

### **Accessibility**

- pedestrian footfall;
- accessibility;
- cycling facilities and ease of movement;
- public transport infrastructure and facilities;
- parking offer; and
- signage and ease of navigation.

### **Community**

- attitudes, perceptions and aspirations.

## Town centre strategies should:

- be prepared collaboratively with community planning partners, businesses and the local community;
- recognise the changing roles of town centres and networks, and the effect of trends in consumer activity;
- establish an agreed long-term vision for the town centre;
- seek to maintain and improve accessibility to and within the town centre;
- seek to reduce the centre's environmental footprint, through, for example, the development or extension of sustainable urban drainage or district heating networks;
- identify how green infrastructure can enhance air quality, open space, landscape/settings, reduce urban heat island effects, increase capacity of drainage systems, and attenuate noise;
- indicate the potential for change through redevelopment, renewal, alternative uses and diversification based on an analysis of the role and function of the centre;
- promote opportunities for new development, using master planning and design, while seeking to safeguard and enhance built and natural heritage;
- consider constraints such as fragmented site ownership, unit size and funding availability, and recognise the rapidly changing nature of retail formats;
- identify actions, tools and delivery mechanisms to overcome these constraints, for example improved management, Town Teams, Business Improvement Districts or the use of [compulsory purchase powers](#)<sup>132</sup>; and
- include monitoring against the baseline provided by the health check to assess the extent to which it has delivered improvements.

More detailed advice on town centre health checks and strategies can be found in the Town Centre Masterplanning Toolkit.

<sup>132</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/archive/National-Planning-Policy/themes/ComPur](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/archive/National-Planning-Policy/themes/ComPur)

## Annex B – Parking Policies and Standards

### **Parking Restraint Policy – National Maximum Parking Standards for New Development**

In order to achieve consistency in the levels of parking provision for specific types and scales of development, the following national standards have been set:

- retail (food) (Use Class 1) 1000m<sup>2</sup> and above – up to 1 space per 14m<sup>2</sup>;
- retail (non-food) (Use Class 1) 1000m<sup>2</sup> and above – up to 1 space per 20m<sup>2</sup>;
- business (Use Class 4) 2500m<sup>2</sup> and above – up to 1 space per 30m<sup>2</sup>;
- cinemas (Use Class 11a) 1000m<sup>2</sup> and above – up to 1 space per 5 seats;
- conference facilities 1000m<sup>2</sup> and above – up to 1 space per 5 seats;
- stadia 1500 seats and above – up to 1 space per 15 seats;
- leisure (other than cinemas and stadia) 1000m<sup>2</sup> and above – up to 1 space per 22m<sup>2</sup>; and
- higher and further education (non-residential elements) 2500m<sup>2</sup> and above – up to 1 space per 2 staff plus 1 space per 15 students.

Local standards should support the viability of town centres. Developers of individual sites within town centres may be required to contribute to the overall parking requirement for the centre in lieu of individual parking provision.

### **Parking for Disabled People – Minimum Provision Standards for New Development**

Specific provision should be made for parking for disabled people in addition to general provision. In retail, recreation and leisure developments, the minimum number of car parking spaces for disabled people should be:

- 3 spaces or 6% (whichever is greater) in car parks with up to 200 spaces; or
- 4 spaces plus 4% in car parks with more than 200 spaces.

Employers have a duty under employment law to consider the disabilities of their employees and visitors to their premises. The minimum number of car parking spaces for disabled people at places of employment should be:

- 1 space per disabled employee plus 2 spaces or 5% (whichever is greater) in car parks with up to 200 spaces; or
- 6 spaces plus 2% in car parks with more than 200 spaces.

# Glossary

Affordable housing	Housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes.
Anchor development (in the context of heat demand)	A large scale development which has a constant high demand for heat.
Article 4 Direction	Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 gives the Scottish Government and planning authorities the power to remove permitted development rights by issuing a direction.
Biodiversity	The variability in living organisms and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems (UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992).
Brownfield land	Land which has previously been developed. The term may cover vacant or derelict land, land occupied by redundant or unused building and developed land within the settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.
Civil infrastructure (in the context of flood risk)	Hospitals, fire stations, emergency depots, schools, care homes, ground-based electrical and telecommunications equipment.
Climate change adaptation	The adjustment in economic, social or natural systems in response to actual or expected climatic change, to limit harmful consequences and exploit beneficial opportunities.
Climate change mitigation	Reducing the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and reducing activities which emit greenhouse gases to help slow down or make less severe the impacts of future climate change.
Community	A body of people. A community can be based on location (for example people who live or work in or use an area) or common interest (for example the business community, sports or heritage groups).
Cumulative impact	Impact in combination with other development. That includes existing developments of the kind proposed, those which have permission, and valid applications which have not been determined. The weight attached to undetermined applications should reflect their position in the application process.
Cumulative effects (in the context of the strategic transport network)	The effect on the operational performance of transport networks of a number of developments in combination, recognising that the effects of a group of sites, or development over an area may need different mitigation when considered together than when considered individually.



Ecosystems services	The benefits people obtain from ecosystems; these include provisioning services such as food, water, timber and fibre; regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, waste and water quality; cultural services with recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis and nutrient cycling.
Effective housing land supply	The part of the established housing land supply which is free or expected to be free of development constraints in the period under consideration and will therefore be available for the construction of housing.
Energy Centre	A stand alone building or part of an existing or proposed building where heat or combined heat and electricity generating plant can be installed to service a district network.
Essential infrastructure (in a flood risk area for operational reasons)	Defined in SEPA guidance on vulnerability as 'essential transport infrastructure and essential utility infrastructure which may have to be located in a flood risk area for operational reasons. This includes electricity generating stations, power stations and grid and primary sub stations, water treatments works and sewage treatment works and wind turbines'.
Flood	The temporary covering by water from any source of land not normally covered by water, but not including the overflow of a sewage system.
Flood plain	The generally flat areas adjacent to a watercourse or the sea where water flows in time of flood or would flow but for the presence of flood prevention measures. The limits of a flood plain are defined by the peak water level of an appropriate return period event. See also 'Functional flood plain'.
Flood risk	The combination of the probability of a flood and the potential adverse consequences associated with a flood, for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.
Freeboard allowance	A height added to the predicted level of a flood to take account of the height of waves or turbulence and uncertainty in estimating the probability of the flooding.
Functional flood plain	The areas of land where water flows in times of flood which should be safeguarded from further development because of their function as flood water storage areas. For planning purposes the functional floodplain will generally have a greater than 0.5% (1:200) probability of flooding in any year. See also 'Washland'.
Green infrastructure	<p>Includes the 'green' and 'blue' (water environment) features of the natural and built environments that can provide benefits without being connected.</p> <p>Green features include parks, woodlands, trees, play spaces, allotments, community growing spaces, outdoor sports facilities, churchyards and cemeteries, swales, hedges, verges and gardens.</p> <p>Blue features include rivers, lochs, wetlands, canals, other water courses, ponds, coastal and marine areas including beaches, porous paving and sustainable urban drainage systems.</p>

Green networks	Connected areas of green infrastructure and open space that together form an integrated and multi-functional network.
Hazardous substances	Substances and quantities as currently specified in and requiring consent under the Town and Country Planning (Hazardous Substances) (Scotland) Regulations 1993 as amended (due to be replaced in 2015 as part of the implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU).
Historic environment	Scotland's historic environment is the physical evidence for human activity that connects people with place, linked with the associations we can see, feel and understand.
Historic Marine Protected Areas	Areas designated in Scottish territorial waters (0-12 miles) under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 for the purpose of preserving marine historic assets of national importance.
Housing supply target	The total number of homes that will be delivered.
Hut	A simple building used intermittently as recreational accommodation (ie. not a principal residence); having an internal floor area of no more than 30m <sup>2</sup> ; constructed from low impact materials; generally not connected to mains water, electricity or sewerage; and built in such a way that it is removable with little or no trace at the end of its life. Huts may be built singly or in groups.
Major-accident hazard site	Site with or requiring hazardous substances consent.
Most vulnerable uses (in the context of flood risk and drainage)	Basement dwellings, isolated dwellings in sparsely populated areas, dwelling houses behind informal embankments, residential institutions such as residential care homes/prisons, nurseries, children's homes and educational establishments, caravans, mobile homes and park homes intended for permanent residential use, sites used for holiday or short-let caravans and camping, installations requiring hazardous substance consent.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	An area considered to be of national importance for its nature conservation interests.
National Scenic Area (NSA)	An area which is nationally important for its scenic quality.
Open space	Space within and on the edge of settlements comprising green infrastructure and/or civic areas such as squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped areas with a civic function.  Detailed typologies of open space are included in PAN65.

Outdoor sports facilities	<p>Uses where <b>sportscotland</b> is a statutory consultee under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, which establishes 'outdoor sports facilities' as land used as:</p> <p>(a) an outdoor playing field extending to not less than 0.2ha used for any sport played on a pitch;</p> <p>(b) an outdoor athletics track;</p> <p>(c) a golf course;</p> <p>(d) an outdoor tennis court, other than those within a private dwelling, hotel or other tourist accommodation; and</p> <p>(e) an outdoor bowling green.</p>
Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)	<p>The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) states that OUV means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. The Statement of OUV is the key reference for the future effective protection and management of the World Heritage Site.</p>
PADHI	<p>Planning Advice for Development near Hazardous Installations, issued by the Health and Safety Executive.</p>
Prime agricultural land	<p>Agricultural land identified as being Class 1, 2 or 3.1 in the land capability classification for agriculture developed by Macaulay Land Use Research Institute (now the James Hutton Institute).</p>
Place	<p>The environment in which we live; the people that inhabit these spaces; and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their surroundings. Architecture, public space and landscape are central to this.</p>
Pluvial flooding	<p>Flooding as a result of rainfall runoff flowing or ponding over the ground before it enters a natural (e.g. watercourse) or artificial (e.g. sewer) drainage system or when it cannot enter a drainage system (e.g. because the system is already full to capacity or the drainage inlets have a limited capacity).</p>
Ramsar sites	<p>Wetlands designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.</p>
Scheduled monument	<p>Archaeological sites, buildings or structures of national or international importance. The purpose of scheduling is to secure the long-term legal protection of the monument in the national interest, in situ and as far as possible in its existing state and within an appropriate setting.</p>
Sensitive receptor	<p>Aspect of the environment likely to be significantly affected by a development, which may include for example, population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, landscape and the inter-relationship between these factors.</p> <p>In the context of planning for Zero Waste, sensitive receptors may include aerodromes and military air weapon ranges.</p>

Setting	Is more than the immediate surroundings of a site or building, and may be related to the function or use of a place, or how it was intended to fit into the landscape of townscape, the view from it or how it is seen from areas round about, or areas that are important to the protection of the place, site or building.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	An area which is designated for the special interest of its flora, fauna, geology or geomorphological features.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Provides an overview of flood risk in the area proposed for development. An assessment involves the collection, analysis and presentation of all existing available and readily derivable information on flood risk from all sources. SFRA applies a risk-based approach to identifying land for development and can help inform development plan flood risk policy and supplementary guidance.
Strategic Transport Network	Includes the trunk road and rail networks. Its primary purpose is to provide the safe and efficient movement of strategic long-distance traffic between major centres, although in rural areas it also performs important local functions.
Sustainable Development	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.  The Brundtland Definition. Our Common Future, The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987.
Sustainable Economic Growth	Building a dynamic and growing economy that will provide prosperity and opportunities for all, while ensuring that future generations can enjoy a better quality of life too.
Washland	An alternative term for the functional flood plain which carries the connotation that it floods very frequently.
Watercourse	All means of conveying water except a water main or sewer.
Windfall Sites	Sites which become available for development unexpectedly during the life of the development plan and so are not identified individually in the plan.





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[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

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**w w w . s c o t l a n d . g o v . u k**



# Ambition · Opportunity · Place

Scotland's Third National Planning Framework





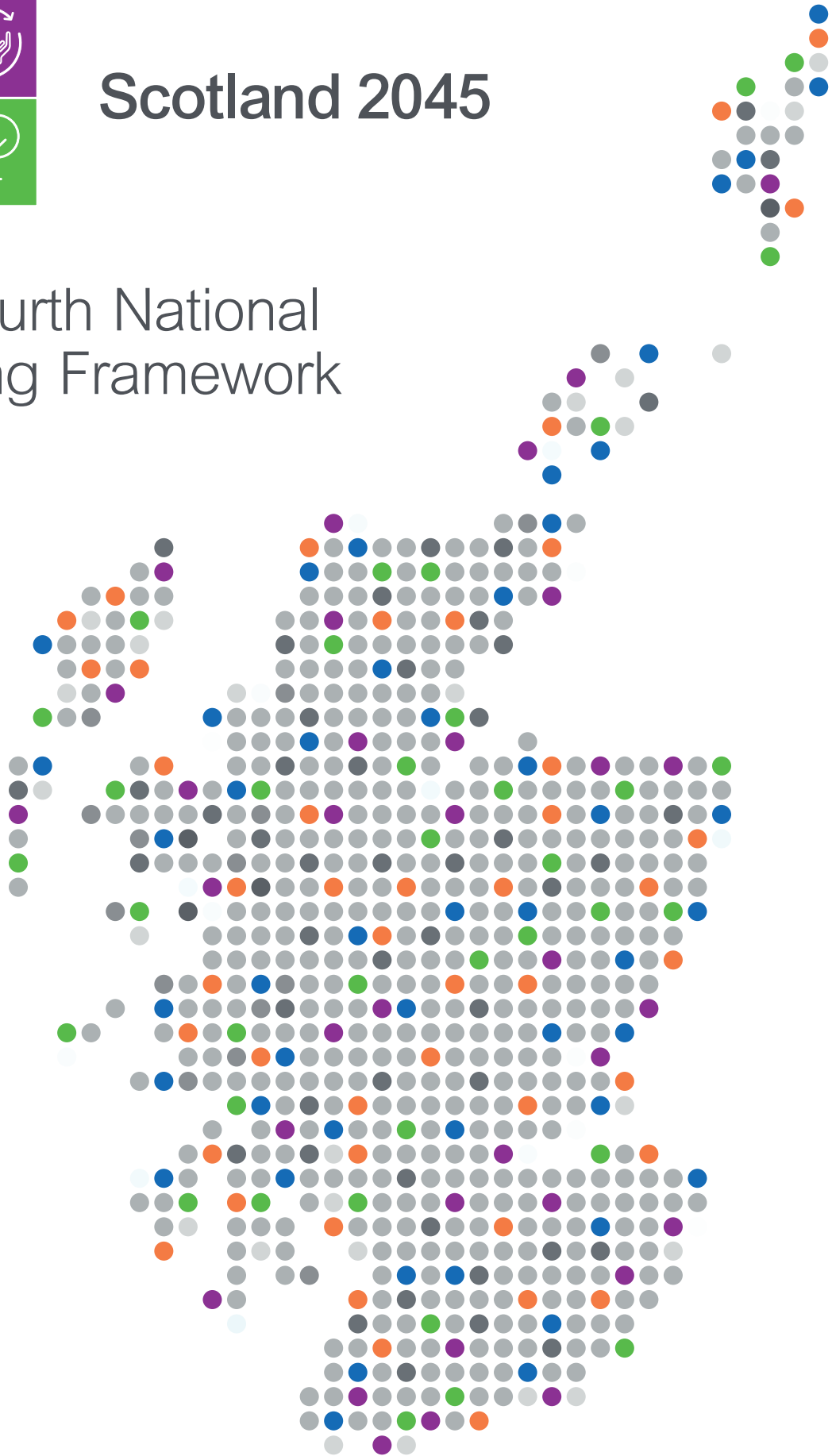
SG Purpose	To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.																
SG National Outcomes	The planning system and service contribute to all 16 National Outcomes																
SG National Plans, Policies & Strategies	Government Economic Strategy																
	Infrastructure Investment Plan																
	Scotland's Digital Future	Electricity & Heat Generation Policy Statements	2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity	Scottish Historic Environment Strategy and Policy	Housing Strategy	National Planning Framework & Scottish Planning Policy	Land Use Strategy	Low Carbon Scotland: Report of Proposals and Policies	National Marine Plan	Regeneration Strategy	National Transport Strategy						
Planning Vision	We live in a Scotland with a growing, low carbon economy with progressively narrowing disparities in well-being and opportunity. It is growth that can be achieved whilst reducing emissions and which respects the quality of environment, place and life which makes our country so special. It is growth which increases solidarity – reducing inequalities between our regions. We live in sustainable, well-designed places and homes which meet our needs. We enjoy excellent transport and digital connections, internally and with the rest of the world.																
Planning Outcomes	Planning makes Scotland <b>a successful, sustainable place</b> – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed places.			Planning makes Scotland <b>a low carbon place</b> – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.		Planning makes Scotland <b>a natural, resilient place</b> – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets, and facilitating their sustainable use.			Planning makes Scotland <b>a connected place</b> – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.								
National Planning	Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)					National Planning Framework (NPF)											
	Principal Policies																
	Sustainability		Placemaking														
	Subject Policies																
	Town Centres	Heat and Electricity	Natural Environment	Travel			Cities and Towns	Rural Areas	Coast and Islands	National Developments							
	Rural Development		Green Infrastructure														
	Homes																
	Business & Employment	Zero Waste	Aquacultural	Digital Connectivity													
Historic Environment	Minerals																
		Flooding & Drainage															
	COMMUNITY PLANNING																
Strategic	Strategic Development Plans																
Local	Local Development Plans																
Site	Master Plans																



# Scotland 2045

## Our Fourth National Planning Framework

Draft



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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## How to use this document

This is a consultation draft document and comments are invited from all stakeholders. Further details about how to get involved along with additional supporting materials, including an Integrated Impact Assessment, can be found at [www.transformingplanning.scot](http://www.transformingplanning.scot).

Once approved by the Scottish Parliament and adopted by the Scottish Ministers (expected during 2022), this plan will become part of the statutory development plan and will directly influence planning decisions.

The amended Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 directs that the National Planning Framework must contribute to a series of six outcomes: improving the health and wellbeing of our people; increasing the population of rural areas; meeting housing needs; improving equality and eliminating discrimination; meeting targets for emissions of greenhouse gases; and securing positive effects for biodiversity. A draft statement of the outcomes and how this draft has contributed to them is set out in Annex A.

Part 1 – sets out an overarching spatial strategy for Scotland in the future. This includes priorities, spatial principles and action areas. This should be used to guide the preparation of regional spatial strategies, local development plans and local place plans. The strategy will also be relevant to wider policies and strategies relating to land use.

Part 2 – sets out proposed national developments that support the spatial strategy.

Part 3 – sets out policies for the development and use of land which are to be applied in the preparation of local development plans; local place plans; masterplans and briefs; and for determining the range of planning consents. This part should be taken as a whole, and all relevant policies should be applied to each application.

Part 4 – provides an outline of how we will deliver this strategy. This will be developed into a standalone, live delivery programme once NPF4 has been approved and adopted.

# Ministerial Foreword



**Tom Arthur MSP**

Minister for Public Finance,  
Planning and Community Wealth

This, our fourth National Planning Framework, sets out how our approach to planning and development will help to achieve a net zero, sustainable Scotland by 2045.

The challenges that we are facing today demand a change in the way we plan our places for tomorrow. As we recover from the pandemic we have an opportunity to work towards net zero in a way which also tackles longstanding challenges and inequalities. We will need to future-proof places, be more innovative, and involve a wider range of people in planning. A shared spatial strategy can enable the investment and development that we will need, but we must do this in a way that benefits business and communities, our health and wellbeing and the environment. This will require us all to work collectively to ensure that decisions we make today are in the long-term public interest.

This draft National Planning Framework sets out a vision for how our places will change in the future. It reflects priorities across Scottish Government portfolios and brings together a wide range of plans, programmes and policies. It explains how we will work together to build sustainable, liveable, productive and distinctive places. Once adopted, we will support its delivery collectively.

I am very grateful for the thoughts and ideas that we have received from a wide range of stakeholders over the past two years to inform this new draft strategy. We began early engagement in 2020 and whilst the preparation was paused for a time during the pandemic, we have still been able to work collaboratively. We received many well-informed and constructive responses to the Position Statement which we published in November 2020. This input has informed both the strategy and a comprehensive and radical review of our national planning policies.

Our Position Statement engagement showed broad support for the priorities for National Planning Framework and we are now ready to take forward those early conversations and to discuss how we can achieve these outcomes in more detail. I am open to having a wide ranging debate on this – the Scottish Parliament will scrutinise this draft version and set out its views at the end of a period of up to 120 days. Alongside this, we will be consulting widely with stakeholders and the public and I want to see as many, and as wide a range of people as possible, involved in a rich debate about the future of our places. Our Participation Statement sets out opportunities for getting involved and I would encourage everyone to share their views on planning Scotland's future in response to this consultation draft National Planning Framework.

# Part 1 – A National Spatial Strategy For Scotland 2045

**The purpose of planning is to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest. The decisions we make today will have implications for future generations. Scotland in 2045 will be different. We must embrace and deliver radical change so we can tackle and adapt to climate change, restore biodiversity loss, improve health and wellbeing, build a wellbeing economy and create great places.**

We have set a target of net zero emissions by 2045, and must make significant progress towards this by 2030. This will require new development and infrastructure across Scotland. We will also have to adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already locked in, including increased flood risk, water scarcity, environmental change, coastal erosion, impacts on forestry and agriculture, extreme weather events, and risks to health, food security and safety. These impacts will not be equal and are likely to particularly affect communities who already face disadvantage. A concerted effort will be needed, with people and places working together to plan for a just transition, so our journey to a net zero society and nature recovery involves, and is fair to, everyone. Just Transition sector plans, co-designed and co-delivered with those impacted, will play an important role in delivering this ambition.

Our approach to planning and development will also play a critical role in supporting nature restoration and recovery. Global declines in biodiversity are mirrored here in Scotland with urbanisation recognised as a key pressure. We will need to invest in nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change whilst also addressing biodiversity loss, so we can safeguard the natural systems on which our economy, health and wellbeing depend. Scotland's natural environment, and the natural capital it supports, underpins our economy and is fundamental to our health and wellbeing. It provides the essentials we all need to survive – including healthier food and clean air and water. A new Scottish biodiversity strategy will set 2030 targets and will respond to a new global framework. Planning will play a critical role in supporting its delivery.

We will plan the place we want Scotland to be carefully. The way we live, learn, work and play in the future will need to be consistent with our ambition to achieve net zero emissions and nature recovery.

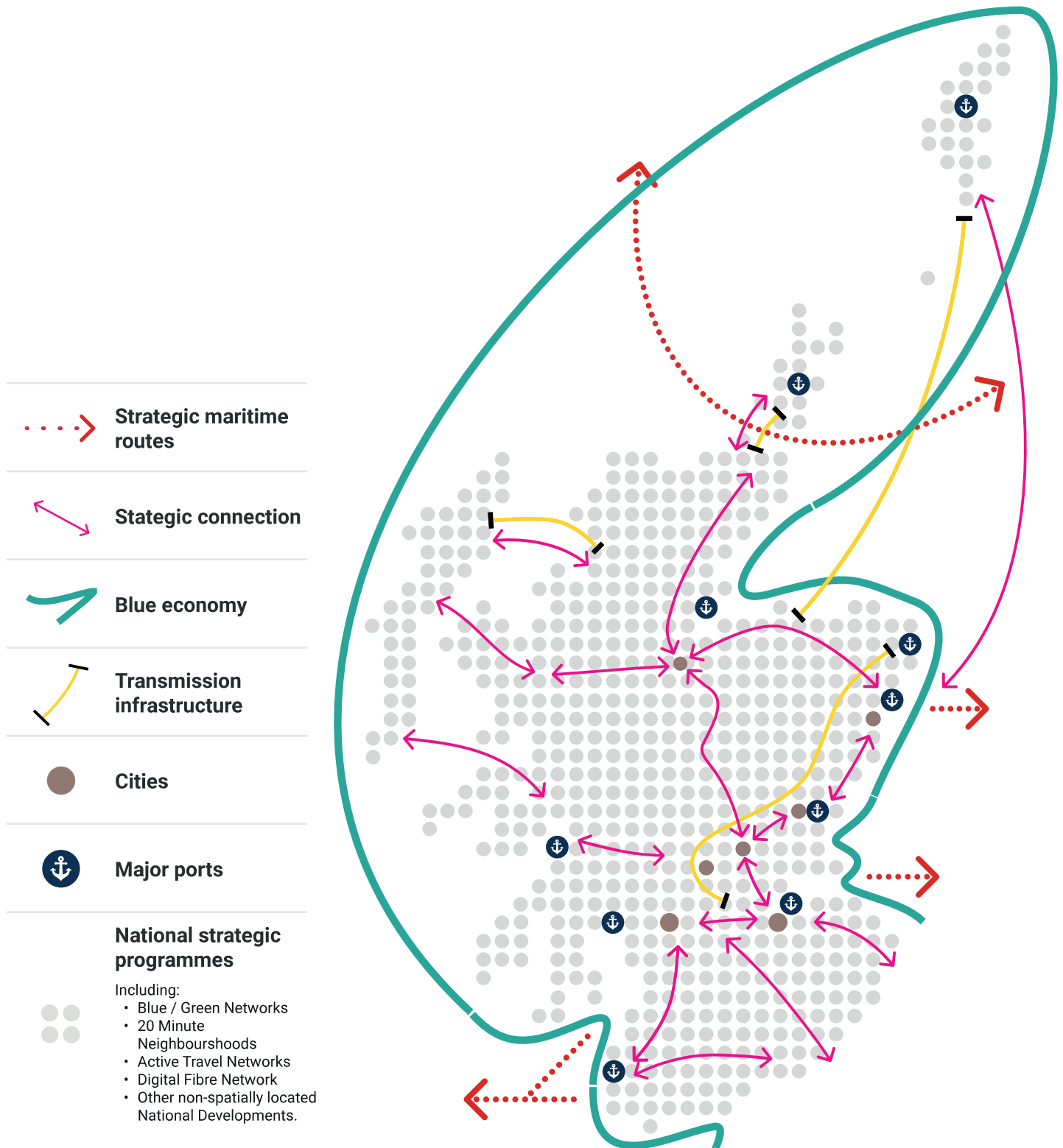
Our spatial strategy is a shared vision that will guide future development in a way which reflects our overarching spatial principles. Each part of Scotland can contribute to realising this shared vision. Our rural areas will have vibrant communities and their natural assets are a significant opportunity for long-term carbon sequestration and a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy. Cities and towns will be models of healthier and greener living, and a focus for investment in the wellbeing economy. And our islands and coasts will support climate innovation and the blue economy. Physical gateways and virtual connections will bring our places together and maintain our links with the rest of the world.

Each part of Scotland can be planned and developed to create: **sustainable places**, where we reduce emissions and restore and better connect biodiversity; **liveable places**, where we can live better, healthier lives; **productive places**, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy; and **distinctive places**, where we recognise and work with our assets.





# National Spatial Strategy



## Sustainable places

**Our future net zero, nature-positive places will be more resilient to the impacts of climate change and support the recovery and restoration of our natural environment.**

This will help Scotland's places to thrive within the planet's sustainable limits and will maximise the new economic and wellbeing opportunities from a just transition to a net zero, nature-positive economy.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made clear the very real threat and heightened risk the climate emergency poses to the planet; and the health of the planet's ecosystems is declining faster than at any point in human history. Scotland must play its full role in tackling these crises and invest in reducing carbon emissions and restoring the richness and resilience of our natural environment.

Our strategy is to transform the way we use our land and buildings so that every decision we make contributes to making Scotland a more sustainable place. In particular, we want to encourage low- and zero-carbon design and energy efficiency, reduce the need to travel unsustainably, and diversify and expand renewable energy generation. We will secure positive effects for biodiversity, creating and strengthening nature networks and investing in nature-based solutions to support nature recovery and create multiple benefits for our natural capital, health, wellbeing, resilience and jobs. And we will encourage sustainable design and use of resources, including circular economy approaches to construction and development.

**Q1: Do you agree that this approach will deliver our future net zero places which will be more resilient to the impacts of climate change and support recovery of our natural environment?**

## Liveable places

**Our future places, homes and neighbourhoods will be better, healthier and more vibrant places to live.**

This will ensure that we live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe. It will also help us to be healthy and active, creative and diverse, so that people grow up loved, safe and respected, and realise their full potential.

The COVID-19 pandemic has left a social legacy that requires urgent action, and longer term restructuring. Although these are unprecedented challenges, they also create an opportunity to significantly improve our places, address longstanding inequality and eliminate

discrimination, helping to transform our country for the better. We will need better places to create the conditions for lifelong health and wellbeing for all, restore biodiversity and strengthen our future resilience.

Our strategy is to change the way we live in the future – transformative social and economic change will be needed. We will create places with good-quality homes close to local facilities and services by applying the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods. We want to make better use of our spaces to support physical activity, relaxation and play, to bring people together and to celebrate our culture, diversity and heritage. We hope to empower more people to shape their places.

**Q2: Do you agree that this approach will deliver our future places, homes and neighbourhoods which will be better, healthier and more vibrant places to live?**

## Productive places

**Our future places will attract new investment, build business confidence, stimulate entrepreneurship and facilitate future ways of working – improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing.**

This will help us to have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy, with thriving and innovative businesses, quality jobs and fair work for everyone.

A new National Strategy for Economic Transformation will set out how we can work together to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and build a sustainable economy in the longer term. By helping to deliver this, planning will contribute to our short-term recovery, as well as our long term just transition to a net zero, nature-positive economy.

Our strategy is to build a wellbeing economy that benefits everyone, and every place, in Scotland. The transformations needed to tackle the climate and nature crises, together with the impact of the pandemic, means that green investment is a key priority for the coming years. The way we work is changing, and we will need to be flexible to facilitate future business and employment that benefits communities and improves places. We will play to the economic strengths and opportunities of each part of Scotland. We want to encourage development that supports the prosperity of key sectors, builds community wealth and creates fair work and good green jobs where they are most needed. We will need to support, and be supported by, businesses and communities across Scotland.

**Q3: Do you agree that this approach will deliver our future places which will attract new investment, build business confidence, stimulate entrepreneurship and facilitate future ways of working – improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing?**

## Distinctive places

**Our future places will be distinctive, safe and pleasant, easy to move around, welcoming, nature-positive and resource efficient.**

This will ensure that people value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment.

Scotland has a rich and high quality natural and historic environment. We must also tackle challenges in some parts of the country. This may mean changes at local, regional and national scales, for example where there has been past decline, where the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities, or where there is a need to make more efficient and equitable use of our assets. To respond to the global biodiversity crisis, nature recovery and connected blue and green infrastructure must be at the heart of all our future places.

Our strategy is to value, enhance, conserve and celebrate our best places and to build better places for future generations. A stronger commitment to place-making, through a designed approach and a focus on quality, will ensure every new development improves the experience of our places. We will reshape future city and town centres, reuse vacant and derelict land and buildings, enhance our natural and cultural heritage, and create new rural opportunities. We will restore the richness of Scotland's natural environment, protect and enhance our historic environment, and safeguard our shared heritage for future generations. We will work together to ensure that development onshore aligns with national and regional marine plans so that we can protect and enhance the marine environment and unlock the potential of our coastal assets.

**Q4: Do you agree that this approach will deliver our future places which will be distinctive, safe and pleasant, easy to move around, welcoming, nature-positive and resource efficient?**

**Q5: Do you agree that the spatial strategy will deliver future places that overall are sustainable, liveable, productive and distinctive?**

## Spatial principles for Scotland 2045

As a nation, we will need to make the right choices about where development should be located. No single policy or development on its own will deliver sustainable, liveable, productive and distinctive places. To build a climate-conscious and nature-positive future, our strategy and the policies that support its delivery are based on six overarching principles:

- a) **Compact growth.** We will limit urban expansion where brownfield, vacant and derelict land and buildings can be used more efficiently. This will safeguard land to provide the services and resources we will need in the future, including carbon storage, flood risk management, green infrastructure and biodiversity. By increasing the density of settlements we will reduce the need to travel unsustainably and strengthen local living.
- b) **Local living.** We will create networks of 20 minute neighbourhoods to support local liveability, reduce the need to travel unsustainably, promote and facilitate walking and cycling, improve access to services, decentralise energy networks and build local circular economies. As an integral part of this, cleaner, safer and greener places and improved open spaces will build resilience and provide wider benefits for people, health and biodiversity, in a balanced way. Virtual connectivity and active travel links will also be important.
- c) **Balanced development.** We want to support development across Scotland so people have more choice about where they live, learn and work. This will create opportunities for communities in areas of decline, and manage development more sustainably in areas of high demand. In particular, we wish to enable more people to live and remain in rural and island areas, and to actively transform areas of past decline so that we can make best use of our assets.
- d) **Conserving and recycling assets.** Scotland has many strengths and each place should be planned in a way that works with its distinctive character and identity. We will protect and enhance the assets of each of our places, leaving a positive legacy for future generations. Our focus is on making productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in embedded carbon and minimising waste, and supporting Scotland's transition to a circular economy. This includes nationally significant sites for investment which are well served by existing infrastructure and sustainable travel modes, and excellent propositions for redevelopment across urban and rural Scotland and the islands.
- e) **Urban and rural synergy.** Scotland's urban and rural and island areas, and all of the places in between, can work together and share learning and innovation to achieve better places. Our strategy is for Scotland as a whole, bringing together the contributions of our cities, towns, villages and countryside areas to achieve shared objectives. As part of this, we will improve green infrastructure to bring nature into our towns and cities, connecting people with nature, building resilience and helping our biodiversity to recover and flourish.
- f) **Just transition.** Meeting our climate ambition will require a rapid transformation across all sectors of our economy and society. We must ensure that, as we reduce our emissions and respond to a changing climate, that [journey is fair and creates a better future for everyone](#) – regardless of where they live, what they do, and who they are. The pandemic has demonstrated the capacity of our communities to work together and find their own local solutions to shared challenges. Our strategy builds on this, to ensure local people are more able to shape their places and transition to net zero and environmentally sustainable ways of living.

**Q6: Do you agree that these spatial principles will enable the right choices to be made about where development should be located?**

## Action areas for Scotland 2045

Each part of Scotland can make a unique contribution to building a better future. Our shared spatial strategy will be taken forward in five action areas. Each area can support all spatial principles, and the following section sets out priorities for each of the action areas.

### North and west coastal innovation

Making sustainable use of our coasts and islands to sustain communities and pioneer investment in the blue economy

### Northern revitalisation

Growing low-carbon rural communities, capitalising on digital innovation and making the most of exceptional natural and cultural heritage

### North east transition

Actively planning a just transition from oil and gas to a net zero future

### Central urban transformation

Transforming and pioneering a new era of low carbon urban living

### Southern sustainability

Creating connected, liveable places which benefit from further investment and innovation

**Q7: Do you agree that these spatial strategy action areas provide a strong basis to take forward regional priority actions?**



## North and west coastal innovation

**Innovate** Revitalise Transition Transform Sustain

*This area broadly comprises the island communities of Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles, and parts of Highland and Argyll and Bute including the north and west mainland coastline.*

Scotland's north and west coast and islands will be at the forefront of our efforts to reach net zero emissions by 2045. This is a diverse area, from Shetland and Orkney in the north, to the Outer and Inner Hebrides and the coastal areas of Highland and Argyll and Bute. Coastal innovation is not unique to this area, but as one of the most renewable energy rich localities in Europe with significant natural resources, there is a real opportunity for this part of Scotland to support our shared national outcomes.

The area benefits from an exceptional environment with coastal and island landscapes that are an important part of Scotland's national identity. It is rich in biodiversity, sustaining many internationally significant ecological sites and species including some of the best remaining temperate rainforest sites in Europe. The islands vary in character. Each has a rich history and distinctive cultural heritage including the St Kilda and the Heart of Neolithic Orkney UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These assets require careful and sustainable management. The relatively high levels of community land ownership and strong ties with the land and sea reflect this area's strong sense of place and local resilience. Scotland's National Islands Plan<sup>1</sup> aims to grow the population and economy, improve transport and housing, and ensure island communities are served by the facilities, jobs, education and services they need to flourish. Environmental wellbeing, clean and affordable energy, strong communities, culture and identity are also priorities.

Key centres where lifeline links provide access to the islands include Lerwick, Kirkwall, Stromness, Stornoway, Wick and Thurso, Ullapool, Mallaig and Oban, whilst Tarbert, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown are important hubs towards the south of the area. These centres provide important services to their wider hinterlands. Local projects are ongoing, including the

regeneration of Stromness, the Stornoway Deep Water Port development, the linked Islands Growth Deal Outer Hebrides Energy Hub project in Stornoway, and the Islands Growth Deal Knab Redevelopment project in Shetland.

There will be significant climate challenges for this part of Scotland. Island and coastal ecosystems, and the communities they support, are naturally more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, sea level rise and extreme events. Of particular concern are the impacts on vulnerable low-lying coastal zones and infrastructure, with potentially wide-ranging effects from biodiversity loss to sea level rise, coastal erosion, flooding and landslips. If we do not take action to plan and build their resilience, including investment in nature-based solutions, island and coastal communities could suffer disproportionately from the impacts of climate change.

A climate and nature conscious approach to development of this area can help to tackle wider challenges. Around 94 of our 900 islands are permanently inhabited, and the size and composition of each population has changed over the years. An ageing population will mean that we need to do more to reverse past patterns of population decline and sustain local facilities and services that support rural and dispersed communities.



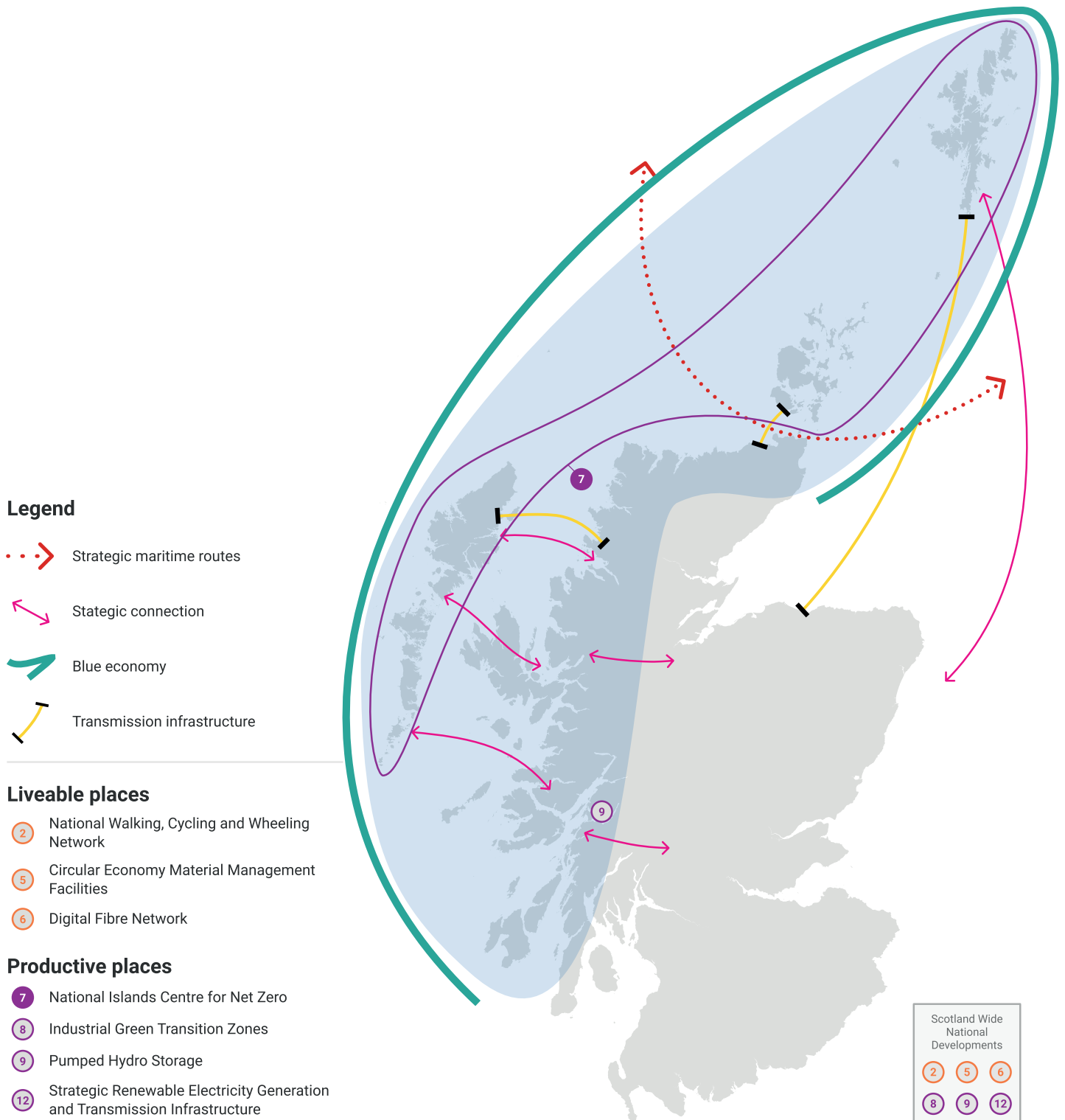
<sup>1</sup> Introduced as a result of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018

Housing and public service provision, transport, energy consumption and fuel poverty will continue to be significant challenges. Employment varies across the area, and can tend to rely on the public sector, tourism and lower wage sectors, limiting the scope and choice of skilled jobs in some locations. Where skilled jobs exist it can be difficult to attract and retain a local workforce, underlining the importance of building skills to support future investment. There are challenges arising from the end of free movement and changing markets, and the agriculture and fishing industries will need support to ensure the long term sustainability of communities.

Alongside Scotland's marine planning authorities, we can work with the area's exceptional assets and natural resources to build a more resilient future for Scotland's island and coastal communities. In this area we will:

- create carbon-neutral coastal and island communities;
- support the blue and wellbeing economies;
- protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure; and
- strengthen resilience and decarbonise connectivity.

# North and west coastal innovation



# Actions

## 1. Create carbon neutral coastal and island communities

Future-proofing local liveability will benefit people as well as the planet. Island and coastal communities will need a bespoke and flexible approach to the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods, for example by identifying service hubs in key locations with good public transport links. This can build long-term resilience and self-reliance whilst sustaining dispersed communities and rural patterns of development.

Increased coastal flooding and erosion arising from future climate change will need to be considered along with impacts on associated infrastructure such as bridges and transport networks. The majority of island populations live in coastal locations and there is a need for a proactive and innovative approach that works with local communities to address this issue.

Regionally and locally driven plans and strategies will identify areas for future development that reflect these principles – for example, planned population growth on the Western Seaboard of Argyll and in a growth corridor from Tobermory to Oban and on to Dalmally. Community hubs, where people can easily access a variety of services, will need to evolve and grow to support communities and sustain a range of functions. Ports and harbours can be a focal point for electric vehicle charging as well as employment. Sustainable and fair access to affordable healthier food will support future resilience and broader objectives including reduced child poverty and improved health outcomes. Innovative and equitable service provision, including digital solutions, will be needed to support dispersed communities in a low carbon way.

Communities will need greater choice and more flexible and affordable homes to support varying needs. This can be achieved to an extent by refurbishing the existing building stock to reduce the release of embedded carbon, as well as by delivering more affordable, energy efficient new homes. The additional costs of island homebuilding and development generally is a challenge that needs to be factored into a planned approach.

There is a clear need for affordable housing provision across the region to improve choice and access to homes, and in some areas to help offset the impact of second home ownership and short term lets on the market. Local solutions may include key worker housing, temporary homes for workers in remote areas, self-provided homes, including self-build and custom build. Continued innovation of holistic place based solutions, such as the Rural Housing Initiative, will be required to create homes that meet diverse community needs, including homes for an ageing population and to help young people to stay in or return to their communities. Greater efforts to ensure young people have more influence in decisions that affect their future places could support this, as well as helping more people access land and crofts and the reuse of abandoned sites where appropriate.

To reverse past depopulation, planning can help to sustain communities in more peripheral and fragile areas in a way that is compatible with our low carbon agenda and resilient to climate change impacts. Further action should be taken where appropriate to reintroduce people to previously inhabited areas where it can be achieved in line with our climate commitments and wider aspirations to create sustainable places that incorporate principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods and active travel networks. Our coasts will continue to evolve, and development will be needed to sustain and grow communities in a sustainable way. Collaboration and strong alignment of terrestrial and marine planning, at all levels, will also be needed.

## 2. Support the Blue and Wellbeing Economies

This area has significant opportunities for investment that capitalise on its natural assets and further strengthen the synergies between people, land and sea. This will require strong collaboration and alignment of terrestrial and marine planning, especially as further development of related blue economy activities in the terrestrial environment may increase competition for marine space and resources offshore. To significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions more renewable energy generation will be needed, bringing unprecedented opportunities to strengthen local economies, build community wealth and secure long-term sustainability. The island authorities have set targets for creating green jobs and for rolling out clean and efficient energy systems to build local resilience. We expect to see continued innovation to unlock the infrastructure and business opportunities arising from a blue and green prosperity agenda.

As a result of its natural advantages, the area is growing its research excellence, and innovation centres are emerging on Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides, as part of the Islands Growth Deal, that will form a planned joint Islands Hub for Net Zero. Oban is developing as a university town, and the European Marine Science Park is a key opportunity to build the local economy and provide education locally. The Outer Hebrides Energy Hub will build on the region's formidable renewable energy resource by establishing the initial infrastructure necessary to support the production of low carbon hydrogen from renewable energy. The lessons we have learned from the pandemic about remote working could also help to grow communities by extending the range of high quality jobs available locally.

Sea ports are a focus for investment in the blue economy and further diversification of activities could generate additional employment across the area. Potential for business development ranges from long-distance freight to supporting the cruise and marine leisure sectors and decommissioning opportunities. New infrastructure and repurposing of land will

help to shift industrial activity towards supporting the offshore renewables sector. Key strategic sites for industrial investment and associated port infrastructure and facilities include plans for: Dales Voe and Scapa Flow as part of the Islands Growth Deal; Cullivoe; Arnish in Stornoway; Wick; Scrabster; Gills Bay; Kishorn; Oban and Hatston, Kirkwall. Other key nodes on the ferries network, including Ullapool, Uig and Mallaig, will continue to act as important hubs to support communities, investors and visitors.

Proposed space ports, which make use of the area's relatively remote location and free airspace, could support our national ambitions to grow this sector. This includes plans for a Shetland Space Innovation Campus and Outer Hebrides Spaceport 1 in Scolpaig, North Uist as part of the Islands Growth Deal, and space ports at Machrihanish and Benbecula.

Food and drink is a key sector, with aquaculture, distilleries, commercial fishing, and seaweed farming providing a crucial and growing source of employment for many local communities. This sector is of national significance, with whisky generating an estimated £5 billion to the UK economy and salmon accounting for more than 40% of total food exports. By improving the resilience of existing infrastructure we will ensure continued access to international markets. There are significant opportunities to build on experience and expertise through associated research and development. A development hub at Machrihanish to support aquaculture research in association with Stirling University could open up wider opportunities to expand onshore aquaculture at sites across Scotland.

Targeted investment in tourism infrastructure will ensure the coast and islands can capitalise on their rich natural assets, heritage and culture to support better quality and more stable jobs in the sector whilst providing a positive experience for visitors and residents. This sector has been significantly impacted by the pandemic and a short-term focus on recovery can be underpinned by efforts to secure longer-term sustainability. Planning can help to ensure that the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund is targeted



to places where the pressure is most significant. Priorities include visitor management of the area's World Heritage Sites. Plans are in place for the Orkney World Heritage Site Gateway that will manage and disperse visitors to the Heart of Neolithic Orkney UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Outer Hebrides Destination Development Project will support the strategic development of tourism infrastructure, bringing together key assets including St Kilda World Heritage Site, the Iolaire Centre, the Hebridean Way, Food and Drinks trail and the Callanish standing stones. Other ongoing projects, including long-distance routes such as the Kintyre Way and the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail and Crinan Canal can help to expand a high-quality offer of exceptional marine tourism across the area as a whole.

Regionally and locally there is a need for smaller scale investment across the area to put in place low maintenance, carefully designed facilities which better support and manage the impact of informal tourism including camping, campervans and day trips. This should reflect the scale and nature of operators including community trusts. Efforts to provide access to education and build skills locally will also support this, with key projects including plans for the redevelopment of the Shetland Campus.

### **3. Protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure**

The coast and islands' natural and cultural assets will require careful planning and management so that their special qualities can continue to form a strong foundation for future development and investment. There are opportunities for local projects across this area to come together and create an enhanced nature network which benefits quality of life and contributes to biodiversity recovery and restoration as well as carbon sequestration.

Significant peatland restoration and woodland creation and restoration, along with blue carbon opportunities will secure wider biodiversity benefits and be a focus for investment to offset carbon and secure existing natural carbon stores. The Lewis Peatlands are internationally recognised as accounting for a significant

proportion of the world's blanket bog habitat and there are opportunities to protect and expand Scotland's temperate rainforest, including some of the best remaining rainforest sites in Europe. Access to the outdoors, as well as active travel, can benefit from continued investment in long-distance walking and cycling routes with a range of projects emerging at a regional scale.

### **4. Strengthen resilience and decarbonise connectivity**

Communities will need resilient transport connectivity to maintain accessibility and lifeline links and further innovation will be required to help modernise connections and decarbonise transport systems. A net zero islands air network and decarbonisation of ferry services will help to secure the viability and service stability of island and remote coastal communities. Communities are keen to explore long term ambitions for fixed links for example across the Sound of Harris and Sound of Barra, and potentially to connect the Outer Hebrides to mainland Scotland. An Islands Connectivity Plan will consider the role of ferries, fixed links and low carbon aviation in securing lifeline links and marine access for both leisure and freight. In addition to the investment potential of the area's ports and harbours, the strategic location of the Northern Isles as a hub for future shipping using long-distance trade routes has significant potential for investment and growth over the longer term. There is also potential to consider decarbonisation of fishing fleets and the aquaculture industry in the future.

Electric vehicle ownership is already high in some parts of the area and continued expansion of charging networks will support further decarbonisation. Key routes and hubs are emerging – examples include the aspiration for an electric spinal route that extends across the Outer Hebrides. This should be viewed as one part of a wider system response to net zero that also strengthens active travel across the area.

Improved digital connectivity is a priority to sustain current businesses and create 'smart' communities. We are committed to investment in ultrafast broadband to ensure every property is connected and to improve mobile coverage.

This will unlock opportunities for rural businesses and remote working, and make future community growth more feasible. Full benefits will be realised by actively tackling the digital divide by building skills, literacy and learning and addressing the financial barriers to internet access. Key projects include the Outer Hebrides Giga Fibre Network and the North Isles Fibre Project.

Resilience and a growing green economy will depend on delivery of improved grid connections, including high voltage grid cables connecting the three island groups to the mainland. This will be complemented by the innovation in low- and zero-carbon fuels and the roll out of locally distributed energy systems to reduce emissions from heating buildings, address significant fuel poverty and secure longer-term resilience.

**Q8: Do you agree with this summary of challenges and opportunities for this action area?**

**Q9: What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?**



## Northern revitalisation

Innovate **Revitalise** Transition Transform Sustain

*This area broadly includes Highland with parts of Argyll and Bute, Moray and much of the national parks. There are links west and north to the island communities.*

The Highlands of Scotland, together with Moray and parts of mainland Argyll, are world renowned for their stunning landscapes, rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. In some places settlements are dispersed or take the form of low density crofting townships, whilst in others communities come together in key centres. Cairngorms National Park is a national asset with internationally significant habitats and landscapes and there is currently a proposal to make the Flow Country a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Emissions here are partly offset by the climate sequestration arising from land use and forestry so that the area acts as a net carbon sink overall, and there are few sources of significant industrial emissions. Climate change risks include changing levels of rainfall, increased storm events, temperature rise, flood risk, rising sea levels and associated erosion. Tailored measures will be required to assist communities in adapting to climate change and transitioning to net zero.

This rural heartland is much more than a place of beauty and isolation. Many thriving communities live here, and they depend on local jobs and learning to support their quality of life. Some communities have experienced outmigration, particularly the loss of younger people, especially outwith Inverness. Further population decline is a future risk, particularly for the west and north. Many communities depend on the car and more limited access to services creates disadvantage, despite the quality of life and good health that many people living here enjoy. An ageing population will put pressures on some services.

Parts of the area have recently experienced acceleration of the increase in house prices. Emerging evidence suggests this is a result of the pandemic and a more mobile remote workforce, with some attracted to the area from elsewhere to take up such a work-life style. Without intervention, access to affordable homes,

jobs and services that enable local people to stay in their communities could become more challenging. Fuel and transport poverty is a particular challenge towards the north and west and there are significant areas which do not currently benefit from good-quality digital connectivity.

The area's environmental quality, landscape and wildlife sustain key economic sectors including tourism, food and drink, distilling and clean energy. Extensive areas of woodland and peatland act as a carbon sink, contributing significantly to our national sustainability. The area has a strong economy with growing income and low unemployment overall, but there remain pockets of deprivation both in urban areas and in more remote areas where there is a need for low skilled and low paid jobs.

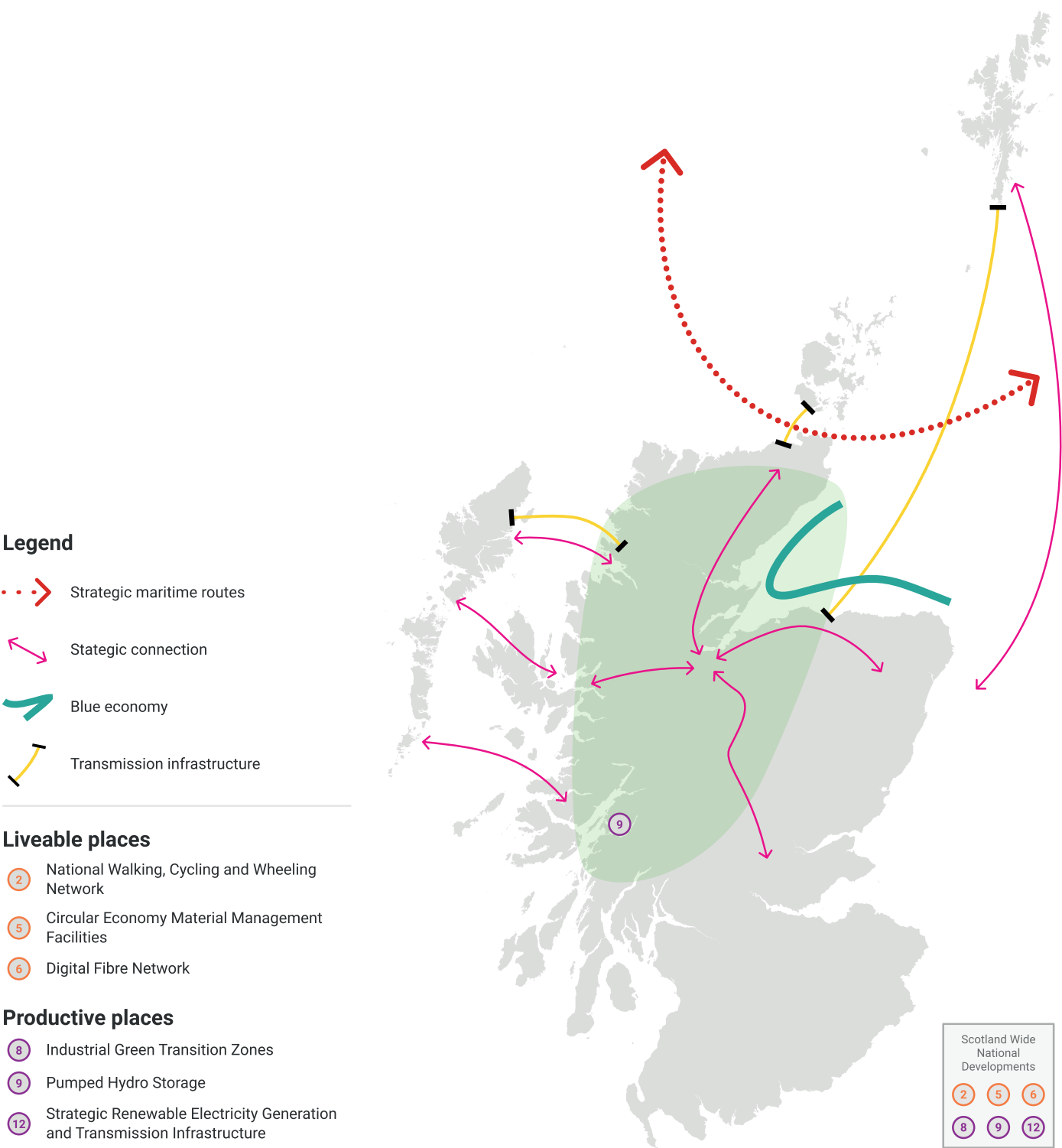
This part of Scotland can make a strong contribution towards meeting our ambition for a net zero and nature positive country by demonstrating how natural assets can be managed and used to secure a more sustainable future.

In this area we will:

- strengthen networks of resilient communities;
- stimulate green prosperity;
- nurture nature-based solutions; and
- strengthen resilience and decarbonise connectivity.



# Northern revitalisation



# Actions

## 5. Strengthen networks of resilient communities

We will do all we can to help reverse depopulation across rural Scotland. Here, as with other more rural areas of Scotland, 20 minute neighbourhoods can be tailored to work with both larger towns and more dispersed settlement patterns.

Inverness plays a vital role as a regional centre for services, health, justice, employment, education, culture and tourism and has seen significant expansion in recent years. Key sites for its growth are located primarily to the east along the Moray coast. A sustainable and adaptive growth strategy will continue to be supported by planned investment in education and health and social care services as well as employment uses. The new railway station serving Inverness Airport will help connect local communities with growing employment opportunities in the wider area. Inverness Castle, as part of the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal, will be redeveloped and opened up to the public, attracting national and international tourists and encouraging visits to the wider Highlands and Islands.

Fort William, Grantown-on-Spey and Aviemore are key settlements, and the area has strong relationships with adjacent more coastal settlements such as Mallaig, Oban, Wick and Thurso. The area also has a strong network of towns including Forres, Elgin and Nairn. In more remote communities there is a need to reverse population decline. Innovation will be required to achieve this in a sustainable way. A place based approach (as demonstrated by Fort William 2040), including work to improve town centres and reuse redundant buildings, will support recovery in a way which responds to the strong character and identity of each of the area's towns and villages. Such an approach is evident in Growth Deal projects such as Moray's Cultural Quarter proposal. A positive approach to rural development should work within a network of hubs, and future service provision will require imaginative solutions so that places can

be resilient and self-supporting. Investment in strategic health, justice and education facilities is already planned. In the longer term digital solutions, including mobile and remote health services and virtual education, will play an increasingly important role.

As with the coastal and island areas, homes will be needed to retain local people and attract new residents of all ages. Many communities have taken ownership of their land and this could form the foundations for future development by unlocking further development sites. Refurbishment of existing rural buildings and halting the loss of crofts could help to repopulate the area, and new homes should align with infrastructure and service provision. They should also be located and designed to minimise emissions and to complement the distinctive character of existing settlements and wider landscapes. As climate change continues to impact, water supplies and drainage will need to be secured and maintained. Flood risk management and changing ecosystems will need to be factored into future plans to ensure nature-based adaptation solutions complement local living. Fuel poverty will require greater energy efficiency and affordable, low-carbon, distributed heat and electricity networks, with a model for increased local generation, bringing particular benefits. Maintaining connectivity will be essential, particularly through public transport that includes rail access and other active travel networks.

## 6. Stimulate green prosperity

Natural assets and environmental quality underpin the area's main economic sectors and must therefore be protected, restored and used sustainably. A flexible approach to planning will help to attract investment, grow and diversify businesses and enable local entrepreneurship, micro enterprises, self-employment and social enterprises to flourish. Remote working can be capitalised on to build economically active local communities. This will require the continued roll out of high quality digital infrastructure and maintenance and decarbonisation of transport routes to wider markets. Food miles can be reduced over time with the help of

local community-led food growing networks, by supporting locally driven public procurement and, from a land use perspective, protecting higher quality agricultural land.

Ideas are emerging for the area to secure a low carbon future for tourism. Assets such as the North Coast 500 and more recently the Kintyre 66 in the adjacent coastal area, as well as the area's high quality environment and associated food and drink products, attract visitors. However, they also require improvements to infrastructure to support local communities and visitors. This will maintain the quality of the experience and the environment, facilitate lower carbon transport, promote 'leave no footprint' and encourage longer stays. This could involve extending the availability of transport services. There are also many regionally significant opportunities to create jobs by growing support services for outdoor activities such as mountain biking, climbing, walking and angling and in support of the country's winter sport and recreation sector that is primarily focussed in this area.

This area also makes an important contribution to our climate change targets by supporting renewable energy generation. Repowering and extending existing wind farms will optimise their productivity and capitalise on the area's significant natural energy resources, and there is potential to increase offshore wind energy capacity. A carefully planned approach can reduce environmental or other impacts and retain more benefits locally. Community ownership of renewable energy projects at all scales could play a key role in improving resilience, empowering local people to take control of their own assets and helping tackle fuel poverty. Pumped hydroelectric storage at Cruachan and other sites such as Coire Glas can support the energy network, as well as providing tourism and recreation opportunities, and we expect to see a growth in solar power. As technologies continue to develop, storage and other forms of generation will grow. The electricity distribution and transmission network will require upgrading to support the large increase in on and offshore electricity

generation as well as new demand from heat and transport required to achieve net zero. There will also be a need for more community-scale energy generation to serve the needs of local communities directly and build resilience.

Investment in research and development, business opportunities and local centres of expertise will help to retain benefits locally and broaden the range of skilled jobs. There will also be opportunities to build on and repurpose existing assets to create greener jobs, such as the former nuclear installation at Dounreay and development at Fort William associated with the Lochaber Smelter.

The area's coastline contributes to the beauty and experience of the area and is also a hub for economic activity including fishing, the cruise and marine leisure sectors and the offshore renewable energy sector. Key ports include the Cromarty Firth (including Port of Cromarty, Nigg and Highland Deephaven), Corpach, Ardersier, Gills Bay, Inverness, Kishorn and Buckie. Through Opportunity Cromarty Firth and other projects, new facilities and infrastructure will help ports to adapt, unlocking their potential to support the transition from fossil fuels through oil and gas decommissioning, renewable energy and low carbon hydrogen production and storage, and the expansion of supply chain and services. This will in turn benefit communities by providing employment and income for local businesses.

## **7. Nurture nature-based solutions**

The area's natural capital will play a vital role in locking in carbon and building our resilience by providing valuable ecosystem services. This includes sustainable flood risk management, biodiversity, access and education.

Land and sea assets will play an internationally significant role in renewable energy generation and carbon sequestration. The area can act as a strategic carbon and ecological 'mitigation bank' that can make a major contribution to our national climate change commitments. A programme of investment in forestry, woodland creation, native woodlands and peatland restoration will play a key role in reducing our national emissions, providing investment

opportunities, supporting ecosystems and biodiversity and benefiting current and future generations. There are also opportunities to explore the decarbonisation of the forestry sector and the transport of timber, and to build community wealth through new businesses, such as a nationally important tree nursery in Moray.

Wider but closely related priorities include continuing conservation at a landscape-scale, to develop resilient nature networks, deer and moorland management, visitor management and recreation, rural housing, community empowerment and economic development. This will provide good quality local employment, strengthen and diversify local economies and help to secure a sustainable future for local people. The area's rivers are also strategic assets that will continue to benefit from aligned land use, climate adaptation and biodiversity enhancement.

Cairngorms National Park is bringing together conservation, the visitor experience and rural development to provide benefits that extend well beyond the park boundary. Landscape-scale solutions to build resilience to climate change, to manage sustainable tourism and outdoor access, and a commitment to reversing biodiversity decline and increasing woodland expansion and peatland restoration, are all key priorities. Demand for development, including in pressured areas, will require a planned response to minimise the impact of second homes on local communities and ensure new housing is affordable and meets local needs.

## **8. Strengthen resilience and decarbonise connectivity**

We will continue to support further investment in digital connectivity but will need to go further to adapt to climate change and make use of emerging technologies. Priorities include satellite and mobile solutions to address 'not spots', and to support local living by reducing the need to travel unsustainably. To complement existing physical connections, smart solutions, local hubs, demand responsive transport and active travel networks will help people to access services and employment and make low-carbon local living a more viable option.

The transport system as a whole will need to be planned to support a shift to more sustainable transport whilst maintaining access to markets and facilities. In line with the transport sustainable investment hierarchy, development should first be focused on locations which make the best use of existing infrastructure and services before building new infrastructure or providing new services. Improvements to the Highland Main Line through electrification and delivery of new stations including at Inverness Airport, will create a sustainable commuter network for Inverness and open up more rural areas to lower carbon development. Our rolling programme of efficient electrification is also a key enabler for growth in rail freight, creating improved connectivity and providing additional capacity with faster journey times, better use of track capacity and lower unit costs. A continued modal shift to rail for both passengers and freight will bring significant environmental benefits over time.

Roads will continue to be arteries upon which local communities and businesses depend. There will be a need to adapt key routes due to the impacts of climate change alongside creating a strong network of charging points, including improvements to the A96 to improve safety and to the A9 to maintain a resilient road link from Thurso and Inverness to the central belt. Remote and rural areas including islands are dependent on reliable accessibility by road including connecting to ferries and ports, facilitating reliable public transport by road, access to essential services and transporting of goods. There is an urgent need for improvements to the A83 to ensure the resilience of the economy and communities of wider Argyll. Continued investment in the national long-distance walking and cycling network provides an opportunity to assist in decarbonising tourism and recreation across the area, whilst also providing, and acting as a spine for, sustainable active travel connections for everyday travel in the vicinity of towns and villages.

Inverness airport is a hub for air connections to dispersed communities and Wick John O'Groats and Broadford Airstrip on Skye are key connections. Oban Airport is also an opportunity



for investment in compliance operations and future drone technology. The Highlands and Islands are aiming to become the world's first net zero aviation region by 2040 by pioneering new approaches including electric aircraft. Investment in technology and facilities will be required to achieve this. The Moray Aerospace Advanced Technology and Innovation Campus (MAATIC) at Lossiemouth is an opportunity to develop skilled work in the aviation sector, in collaboration with the Royal Air Force and Boeing.

Planning permission has been granted for a spaceport at Melness in Sutherland, making use of its location away from populated areas to provide a vertical launch facility that could link with wider opportunities for manufacturing, research and development across Scotland.

**Q10: Do you agree with this summary of challenges and opportunities for this action area?**

**Q11: What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?**

## North east transition

Innovate Revitalise **Transition** Transform Sustain

*This area broadly includes Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire with links through Moray towards Inverness, and south towards the Tay estuary.*

The north east is a centre for the skills and expertise we will need to meet our climate change commitments. This area will evolve, through a just transition, to move industry and business away from the oil and gas sector towards a cleaner, greener future. We can build on the area's experience to find innovative solutions to climate change.

Emissions generated from this area arise mainly from transport, industrial and commercial activity and domestic properties, with land use and forestry providing carbon sequestration. Car ownership is particularly high in Aberdeenshire. Significant parts of the coast will be vulnerable to future climate impacts.

This area is amongst the most prosperous parts of Scotland, but has experienced significant economic challenges in recent years and has pockets of deprivation. The area comprises a mix of rural and urban communities, with the city of Aberdeen and a surrounding network of towns including Elgin, Huntly, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Ellon, Inverurie and Stonehaven, and significant rural areas including more accessible countryside around Aberdeen city. Whilst parts of the area have experienced population decline, several settlements around Aberdeen have grown.

Affordability and choice of homes remains a challenge, contributing to a housing driven disadvantage within Aberdeen. Projections show that the population of retired people living in Aberdeenshire could grow by around 43% by 2043. There are lower levels of educational attainment and limited access to services for communities along the Aberdeenshire and Moray coast. Many of these places will benefit from further regeneration that builds on their identity and natural assets.

The excellent quality of the built environment, natural assets and cultural heritage already contribute to health and wellbeing in the area and can form the basis of a transition to net zero. Some of our highest quality agricultural land is concentrated here, and the economy benefits from a strong fishing industry, alongside its globally significant energy sector. The dominance of these sectors, together with wider changes including from the pandemic, EU Exit and global markets, means that economic diversification and repurposing of buildings and infrastructure are likely to be key priorities.

In this area we will:





- transition to net zero;
- improve local liveability;
- regenerate coastal communities; and
- decarbonise connectivity.









# North east transition




## Legend

-  Strategic maritime routes
-  Strategic connection
-  Blue economy
-  Transmission infrastructure


## Liveable places

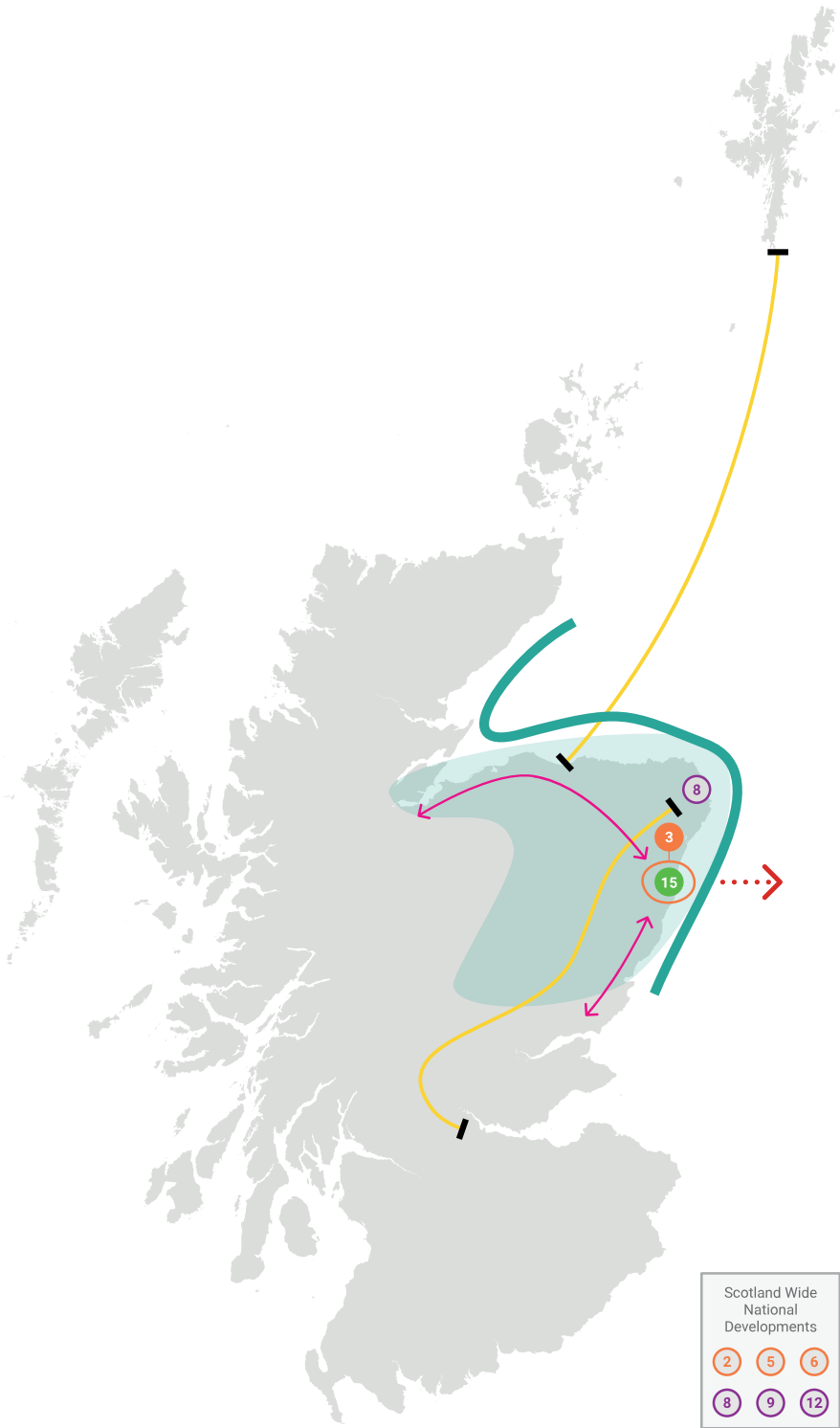
-  National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network
-  Urban Mass / Rapid Transit Networks  
Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow
-  Circular Economy Material Management Facilities
-  Digital Fibre Network

## Productive places

-  Industrial Green Transition Zones
-  Pumped Hydro Storage
-  Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure

## Distinctive places

-  Aberdeen Harbour



## Actions

### 9. Transition to net zero

Action is required to tackle industrial emissions and transition towards a greener future that benefits existing communities and attracts further investment. Rich in natural assets, this area, along with the wider Moray and Cromarty Firths, has built on its oil and gas experience to pioneer new technologies. This makes it a uniquely investable proposition that could benefit Scotland as a whole.

Greener energy choices, including hydrogen and offshore renewables, have a natural home here and will be at the heart of the area's future wellbeing economy. Investment opportunities focus on the green and blue economy and energy innovation. Significant infrastructure will be required to deliver a hydrogen network for Scotland, including repurposing of existing facilities and the creation of new capacity. £62 million in the Energy Transition Fund is supporting four projects to protect existing jobs and create new jobs in the North East, and across Scotland, by opening up opportunities through energy transition and harnessing private sector funding. This funding aligns with the Aberdeen City Region Deal and continuing support for retraining and skills development. Ports and harbours throughout the area are key assets in the blue economy. As offshore renewables are an important part of Scotland's energy transition, there will be a need to align terrestrial and marine development so as to maximise the potential of this sector.

The relocation of some activity at Aberdeen Harbour to the south harbour has been an important element in planning for the future. Further investment will help to realise its full potential as a low-carbon hub and gateway. This is also a significant opportunity to improve urban liveability by unlocking waterfront sites for mixed use development close to the city centre. Local people will need to be involved in deciding how potentially significant industrial and business activity can be accommodated alongside regenerating a vibrant, redesigned city centre in the coming years.

It is essential that environmental impacts arising from relocation of the harbour and new construction are carefully managed in a way that recognises the location's natural assets and sensitivities. We expect the local development plan and development management decisions, informed by the required impact assessments, to play a crucial role in guiding future development and mitigating any environmental effects to an acceptable level.

### 10. Improve local liveability

A new focus on local living could help to address the high levels of car ownership and respond to the area's dispersed settlement pattern. Growth corridors extending from the city to Peterhead, Huntly and Laurencekirk will be a focus for future development, and strategic sites include new communities at Chapelton, Grandhome and Countesswells. There is significant potential to promote more compact growth by making better use of brownfield sites and increasing density.

There will be benefits for people of all ages arising from an increase in local living and a shift towards 20 minute neighbourhoods. The area's towns contribute to its sense of place and further town centre regeneration will help communities to adapt to current challenges and future change. Service provision also needs to reflect the area's character. Several new or extended primary and secondary schools and community facilities are planned and the area will support wider rural communities by hosting a new centre of excellence for rural and remote medicine and social care. Access to good-quality open space and opportunities for local food growing, including allotments and community orchards, can benefit health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities as an integral part of placemaking.

The area's growth strategy includes a commitment to building with nature by creating multifunctional blue and green networks and improving green spaces in and around settlements, connecting with the national long-distance cycling and walking network and facilitating active travel. Community-led climate action projects will help to provide locally-driven solutions. A new water supply and waste-water systems will play an important role in building long-term resilience.

## 11. Regenerate coastal communities

The area benefits from a productive coastline that will be a focus for future economic activity and investment associated with offshore renewable energy and the blue economy. The coast is home to communities who will benefit from continued regeneration and a move towards 20 minute neighbourhoods that reduces the need to travel. Key regional priorities include the regeneration of Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. Future coastal vulnerability to erosion, sea level rise and flood risk will need to be factored into development strategies. The fishing industry will continue to contribute to the area's strong sense of place and shared heritage, communities and economy, with some ports and harbours also having opportunities in the cruise and marine leisure sectors.

## 12. Decarbonise connectivity

Aberdeen is a key transport hub providing vital connections internationally, as well as lifeline services to Orkney and Shetland. Congestion will be reduced as a result of the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, and the A92/A96 Haudagain Improvement project. In the city work is ongoing to lock in the benefits and prioritise sustainable transport, including Aberdeen Rapid Transit. More widely the Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Improvements will bring benefits to both passengers and freight.

The area can lead the way in promoting low emissions vehicles, active travel and public transport connectivity as part of its contribution to net zero. Links south to the central belt and west towards Inverness remain vital. Work is progressing on the £200m investment being made to improve journey times and capacity between Aberdeen and the Central Belt for passengers and freight. Continuing improvements to digital connectivity and active travel will reduce the need to travel by unsustainable modes and facilitate further remote, home or hub-based working.

**Q12: Do you agree with this summary of challenges and opportunities for this action area?**

**Q13: What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?**

# Central urban transformation

Innovate Revitalise Transition **Transform** Sustain

*This area broadly covers central Scotland from the Glasgow city region and the Ayrshires in the west to Edinburgh city region in the east, including the Tay cities, the Forth Valley and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.*

We will only meet our climate change commitments if we make significant changes to the densely populated central belt of Scotland. Our most urban communities hold the key to reducing emissions from the way we live our lives. We need to work together to decarbonise buildings and transport and tackle congestion, make more efficient use of existing land and buildings, connect to renewable electricity and heat networks and create more inclusive, greener and sustainable places that will stand the test of time.

Many of our largest emitters of greenhouse gas emissions are located in this area, including Grangemouth where industrial activity is concentrated, providing high value manufacturing, maintaining our resilience and providing employment. Other key sources include industrial, manufacturing and waste management sites and facilities. Overall emissions from domestic properties and transport are high as a result of the area's population density and the scale of daily movement within and between city regions. The growing risk of flooding could in the future have significant impacts, as many key settlements and economic assets are located on the Clyde, Forth and Tay estuaries.

Glasgow is Scotland's largest metropolitan area and Edinburgh is a world renowned historic capital city. There are differences between and within these city regions – at a broad scale there are relatively high concentrations of poor health, economic disadvantage and population decline in parts of the Glasgow city region contrasting with strong demand and expected population growth in parts of the Edinburgh city region. The area has a similar pattern of children living in poverty, with strong contrasts between the Glasgow and Edinburgh city regions. Household projections show there will be a continuing demand for more homes. There has been a strong market, high levels of housebuilding and pressure on infrastructure in some 'hot spots'

including the Edinburgh city region, Stirling and Falkirk, and Perth. In contrast, despite good connections and infrastructure capacity, it can be more challenging to encourage the market to deliver new homes towards the west of the central belt where unemployment is also higher.

There are also inequalities within each of the city regions, with local concentrations of economic deprivation. Overall, economic performance is higher in the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and lower in surrounding areas including Inverclyde, Ayrshire, along parts of the Clyde Coast and Lanarkshire. The diverse business base reflects nationally important sectors including financial services, business administration, life sciences, distribution and transport, retail and commercial, and manufacturing and production. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth and Stirling city centres are experiencing significant challenges, caused or accelerated by the pandemic, but each retain a strong character and distinctive identity, offering opportunities for new business, homes, and services. Similar issues apply to the towns across this area.

Beyond the cities and towns there are many high quality environments, from historic burghs and conservation areas to protected biodiversity sites, ancient woodlands and areas of high landscape quality, including the coastline, country and national parks, and canals. This



brings opportunities for outdoor recreation within a short distance of the majority of Scotland's population. We have made progress in restoring and reusing areas which were historically a focus for heavy industry and mining, and which left a legacy of disused sites and areas blighted by dereliction. The coast is an integral part of the area's identity, combining natural and cultural heritage and acting as a focus for investment and regeneration.

A coherent strategy that focuses on climate change and responds to the challenges of the pandemic will drive forward change to tackle inequalities and build a new, greener, future for this part of the country.

In this area we will:

- pioneer low-carbon, resilient urban living;
- reinvent and future-proof city centres;
- accelerate urban greening;
- rediscover urban coasts and waterfronts;
- reuse land and buildings;
- invest in net zero housing solutions;
- grow a wellbeing economy;
- reimagine development on the urban fringe; and
- improve urban accessibility.

# Central urban transformation

## Legend

...> Strategic maritime routes

↔ Strategic connection

➤ Blue economy

## Liveable places

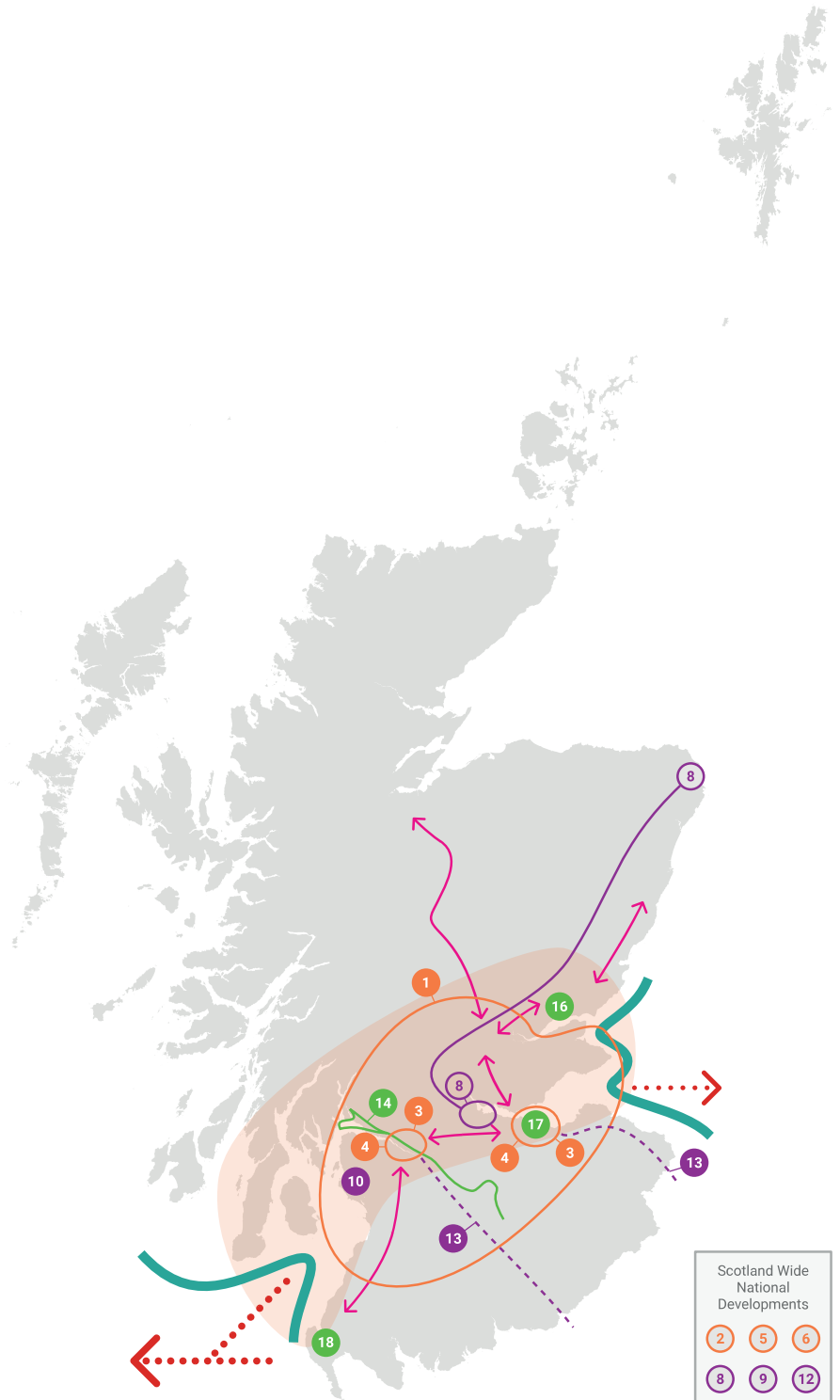
- 1 Central Scotland Green Network
- 2 National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network
- 3 Urban Mass / Rapid Transit Networks  
Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow
- 4 Urban Sustainable, Blue and Green Drainage Solutions  
Edinburgh and Glasgow
- 5 Circular Economy Material Management Facilities
- 6 Digital Fibre Network

## Productive places

- 8 Industrial Green Transition Zones
- 9 Pumped Hydro Storage
- 10 Hunterston Strategic Asset
- 12 Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure
- 13 High Speed Rail

## Distinctive places

- 14 Clyde Mission
- 16 Dundee Waterfront
- 17 Edinburgh Waterfront
- 18 Stranraer Gateway





## Actions

### 13. Pioneer low-carbon, resilient urban living

This area will require concerted effort to develop a network of 20 minute neighbourhoods, and clusters of communities with fair access to a range of services that support sustainable living. Planning should focus on revitalising cities and towns at scale, supporting a finer grained approach to placemaking, and a more intricate mix of land uses and density. This should incorporate networks of natural spaces and blue and green infrastructure, to create health and wellbeing benefits, increase resilience to climate change and support the growth of green job opportunities.

The car-based design of some of our places, including many suburban areas and new towns, mean that a significant shift to a more people centred approach will be required. Planning can help retrofit facilities and services into areas where they are scarce, such as predominantly residential areas, to enable better integrated mixed use areas. City, town and neighbourhood centres can be at the heart of this if they are planned to strengthen self-sufficiency and bring services and jobs closer to homes. The recommendations of the recent town centre review can be delivered by supporting a wider range of uses and making the most of their assets.

Accessibility will be a key part of the transition and will involve investment in infrastructure and services in line with the sustainable travel and investment hierarchies, to improve fair access and reduce carbon emissions. Active travel networks will need to expand to make walking, wheeling and cycling an attractive, convenient, safe, and sustainable choice for everyday travel. There are significant opportunities for investment in heat networks, energy storage and the circular economy to create more sustainable neighbourhoods.

As a nation we have a particular obligation to do more to tackle the concentration of poor health outcomes in west central Scotland. Action is needed to reduce inequality and improve health and wellbeing so that everyone

is able to thrive. Better places can do more to support lifelong health and wellbeing by providing more affordable, warmer homes that are connected to services. Access to quality greenspace and nature-based solutions can help to mitigate health inequalities and improve physical and mental health, by providing opportunities for play, socialising, relaxation and physical activity. We also need to reduce urban car use to help tackle emissions and air pollution. Local and affordable access to health and social care facilities will need to be built into our future places and can benefit from continuing investment in digital infrastructure and innovation.

### 14. Reinvent and future proof city centres

Scotland's city centres are socially and culturally important, supporting our productivity and stimulating innovation and investment. The pandemic has generated severe impacts and longer-term challenges for our city centres. The City Centre Recovery Taskforce is developing a shared vision for their future and the City Centre Recovery Fund will support their recovery and repurposing. This is a nationally significant opportunity to contribute to Scotland's economic recovery and to achieve a wellbeing economy.

The Glasgow city region is reimagining its future to build in climate resilience, develop a wellbeing economy, improve health and wellbeing and support environmental regeneration. The city centre, an exceptional asset and a primary location and cultural destination, has been significantly impacted by unprecedented changes in working patterns, service provision and the retail sector. Whilst these changes may not be sustained in the long term, now is the time to accelerate work to diversify the city centre and invest in maintaining and re-using existing buildings so that it can evolve to be a more carbon conscious place. Existing connections mean the centre could sustain many more homes, revitalising places and creating a 24 hour city that is safe and open to everyone. Significant investment in schools, community services and greenspace will be needed to achieve this and more creative use of the public realm and a low emission zone will help to make this a safer and healthier environment for



people of all ages. Innovative solutions, such as retrofitting energy efficiency measures to social housing across the city, could be extended to help improve the built fabric of the city centre's commercial properties.

Edinburgh has similar challenges and opportunities for positive change. High interest in investment and associated demand for new homes means that planning will need to help deliver sustainable development that supports the quality of life of existing and future residents. As a capital city with a World Heritage Site at its core, it will be crucial that future development takes into account the capacity of the city itself and its surrounding communities and makes the most of its exceptional heritage assets, places and cultural wealth. The City Centre Transformation Plan supports a move away from a car-based city centre to create a more liveable and attractive place to live, work and visit. The Forth Bridge is also an inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site, and our rich industrial and cultural heritage remains apparent across the area.

Dundee is well on the way towards reinventing itself through regeneration of the waterfront, unlocking strategic sites for new homes and new opportunities for innovation and economic development arising such as the Eden Project, the Michelin Scotland Innovation Park and at the port. Continued regeneration in this area, building on the city's rich culture, sense of place and appetite to innovate will also contribute to the overall aims for this part of Scotland. The V&A will continue to be a focal point for this, evolving to become a National Centre for Design within this UNESCO City of Design. Perth is managing housing development in strategic development areas and transport infrastructure investment and the creation of a bus and rail interchange to support modal shift and establish a new gateway to the city. Stirling is bringing forward new opportunities for innovation and investment, building on the city's strong heritage and supported by the area's educational institutions.

## 15. Accelerate urban greening

The greening of the built environment, including former industrial areas, is a long-held ambition that we now need to expedite to significantly reduce emissions, adapt to the future impacts of climate change and tackle biodiversity loss. Investment in green infrastructure will support urban sustainability, help to restore biodiversity, contribute to our overall targets for reducing emissions and improve health and wellbeing. By weaving blue and green infrastructure across our urban fabric we can ensure that nature and the outdoors are accessible to everyone, supporting lifelong health and wellbeing and creating places that are more resilient to flooding.

There is much that we have already learned from past work, for example initiatives to naturalise former mining features, reclaiming canals as a cultural heritage and natural asset, and extensive woodland creation. Wider woodland expansion across more urban areas could make a significant contribution to improving air quality and quality of life by reducing pollution, managing water and cooling urban environments. Blue and green networks can help to deliver compact and liveable cities.

Many initiatives will come together to achieve urban greening:

- The Central Scotland Green Network will continue to bring together environmental enhancement projects. Initiatives such as the John Muir Pollinator Way demonstrate how nature networks can help restore and better connect biodiversity and enhance green infrastructure at a landscape scale.
- The Glasgow City Region Green Network, a long-term transformational programme of environmental action, can achieve a step change in the quality and benefits of green places across west central Scotland and bring enhanced biodiversity closer to communities. As part of this, the Clyde Climate Forest is proposing natural solutions at scale across the Glasgow city region.
- The Inner Forth Futures Partnership is tackling the effects of climate change and providing recreation benefits through projects such as peatland restoration and woodland expansion.

- The River Leven Project in Fife is a holistic place based approach to development. Blue and green infrastructure will support investment and provide environmental, health and wellbeing benefits for communities.
- The Tayside strategic green and active travel network also aims to create regionally significant assets that contribute to the quality of the area.
- There is a particular opportunity to build on the successful regeneration of our canals to provide an invaluable strategic greenspace that connects communities across the area as a whole, contributes to its strong post-industrial heritage and provides wider functions such as water management to support future resilience to climate change. The potential of a canal asset should be recognised as a shared priority.

## 16. Rediscover urban coasts and waterfronts

The region's coasts and firths define the area's history and shapes its sense of place. There is potential to unlock the strategic importance of coasts, estuary and river corridors for climate mitigation, resilience and positive environmental change. Coastal change will need to be managed to build long term resilience and future-proof our waterfronts. Progress has been made to create long-distance walking and cycling routes and to open up access to waterfront spaces and reclaim them as a resource for people as well as industry. There will be a need to tackle coastal erosion, flood risk and storm surges, and to build in natural solutions which work with the unique biodiversity and landscape character of these important places.

These coasts are rich in cultural and natural heritage. Along the Inner Forth various projects provide multiple benefits, including flood management, cultural landscape enhancement, habitat creation, access and tourism. Edinburgh's waterfront regeneration is ongoing with Granton benefiting from an ambitious masterplan, the tram extension to Leith progressing and potential development at Seafield helping to redefine the city's relationship with its coastline, reusing existing assets and helping Edinburgh to become a more liveable

city. A masterplanned approach to regenerating the Edinburgh Waterfront can take into account opportunities for the Port of Leith to service the offshore energy sector.

The successful regeneration of Dundee Waterfront has demonstrated the potential to make sustainable use of our urban coasts, and ongoing proposals include the creation of a marina at Victoria Dock and further development of central waterfront sites.

A national collaboration to support the Clyde Mission also has significant potential to accelerate change, attract investment and achieve wider benefits for communities. This ambitious project will reuse extensive areas of vacant and derelict land in accessible locations. The wider Clyde Coast, an iconic area rich in cultural heritage and natural assets, can be reimagined through collective efforts on regeneration in coastal communities such as Dunoon and Rothesay. The area's accessibility by train and water means that it is an ideal location for low-carbon tourism and leisure.

Key ports in this area can play a central role in supporting the expansion of renewable energy, in particular offshore wind energy. It will also be important to make use of the infrastructure to reduce road haulage and secure a more sustainable freight sector which directly links to international markets. There are opportunities for enhanced cruise facilities for the Forth as well as the Clyde where Greenock Ocean Terminal, supported by the Glasgow City Region Deal, can act as a key gateway. There may be opportunities to make use of harbour facilities to support the marine leisure industry.

As the highest single source of industrial emissions in Scotland, and a key part of our future resilience and manufacturing base, continued investment at Grangemouth, and the strategic sites it includes, will be required. Plans are emerging for innovative industry in the Falkirk/Grangemouth Investment Zone, building on the area's strengths in chemicals and making the most of strategic assets including the port and rail connection. There is great potential, not only to reduce emissions at the Grangemouth complex, but also to grow the cluster into a hub

of low-carbon manufacturing that can help unlock wider decarbonisation across the country, with its strategic location, infrastructure, assets and skills base. Opportunities include renewable energy innovation, bioenergy hydrogen production with carbon capture and storage, and repurposing of existing strategic and critical infrastructure such as pipelines. The skills, knowledge and experience that is currently situated there for the petrochemicals sector is a prime resource for the transition to net zero. This can form a focal point in a wider masterplan for Forth Valley that brings together opportunities for energy with the circular economy to support wider investment in green economic opportunities.

Hunterston is a strategic asset with deepwater access, where there are plans for new economic development and employment uses. Coastal sites formerly used for baseload power generation – specifically Longannet and Cockenzie – benefit from existing assets and infrastructure that can be repurposed to form the basis of new proposals. At Cockenzie work is ongoing to develop an opportunity for a Climate Evolution Zone to generate employment and provide essential infrastructure for net zero, linked with a new sustainable settlement at Greater Blindwells. There is scope to build on the strategic location and rail connectivity of Longannet to benefit local communities around this part of the Forth. There are further opportunities for a range of economic activities and investment in ports associated with a green economy at Montrose, Dundee, Rosyth, Burntisland, and Methil. The Levenmouth rail link will reconnect Leven to the mainline rail network with new stations at Leven and Cameron Bridge by 2024 subject to consenting processes. This will enhance the communities it serves and contribute positively to the lives of people who live there by unlocking access to social, cultural, employment and educational opportunity.

Development of ports on the east coast will also need to take account of the potential for a substantial increase in freight and passenger traffic between Scotland and continental Europe linked to the Scottish Government's objective that Scotland should accede to the European Union as an independent Member State at the earliest possible opportunity.

## **17. Reuse land and buildings**

A more liveable Central Belt means that we will need to do more to reuse empty buildings and vacant and derelict land, particularly spaces which have not been used for decades and can be accessed by sustainable modes. This will reduce further urban sprawl and improve local environments. Around 40% of Scotland's vacant and derelict land is concentrated in the Glasgow city region and its redevelopment is a key priority. Edinburgh has committed to building a significant share of future housing development on brownfield sites and progress is being made in Dundee to repurpose disused sites including the creation of a new innovation park on the former Michelin site.

A combination of incentives, investment and policy support for productively reusing brownfield land and buildings at risk will be required to steer development away from greenfield locations. Public sector-led development can shape future markets and deliver development in places where change is needed the most and can deliver multiple benefits. Redevelopment should include, but not be limited to, housing development. By de-risking sites and taking an infrastructure-first approach, this land can help to achieve a better distribution of new homes to meet our future needs. This will also reduce pressure in places where growth is no longer sustainable. Key projects include the Dundee Eden Project and redevelopment of Ravenscraig, a longstanding post-industrial site where new development can bring new models of low-carbon living at scale.

## **18. Invest in net zero housing solutions**

As well as building new homes to net zero standards, more will need to be done to upgrade the existing housing stock to reduce emissions and adapt to future climate impacts. Energy efficiency, sustainable accessibility, zero emissions heating solutions and water management will be key challenges. Areas which are largely residential and car-based could be diversified by supporting local businesses to provide services including leisure, active living, hospitality and retail.

There is a particular pressure for affordable housing solutions in the south east of Scotland and there is also an opportunity for future housing development to help reduce emissions. Edinburgh has committed to building affordable homes at scale, and will need to work with the region to accommodate wider need and demand in a strategic way. Seven strategic sites, supported through the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, could accommodate up to 45,000 homes and associated economic and employment benefits including: Blindwells, Calderwood, Dunfermline, Edinburgh Waterfront, Shawfair, Tweedbank and Winchburgh. The need for proposals to be supported by low carbon transport solutions, in line with the Infrastructure Investment Plan and National Transport Strategy investment hierarchies and infrastructure first approach, will be critical to their success. The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal identifies infrastructure investment and includes a commitment from partners to put in place a regional developer contributions framework building on work undertaken to look at cross boundary transport challenges. These interventions and commitments, taken with the additional transport investment made through the Deal, will ensure the city region continues to grow and flourish. Regionally significant services including healthcare and social care facilities and investment in the learning estate is also planned to support future growth and sustain the wellbeing of existing, new and expanding communities.

Emissions from our homes need to be very substantially reduced – by 2030, they must fall by 68% from 2020 levels. There are opportunities to address the impact of climate change on communities whilst also generating renewable heat and facilitating urban cooling from our rivers. Mine water, solar and onshore support for offshore renewables, including development that makes use of existing infrastructure at strategic hubs, all provide opportunities for decarbonisation.

There is a continuing need to invest in renewing and improving the capacity of flooding, water and drainage infrastructure to build the resilience of communities. A catchment-scale approach, using nature-based solutions, can also provide benefits for the health and quality of life of Scotland's urban communities particularly where solutions seek to deliver multiple benefits, including biodiversity gain and active travel routes. This approach can also be more cost-effective than hard engineering solutions and create lasting jobs. For example, the Glasgow city region recognises the challenges for future adaptation and is identifying sustainable solutions to sea level rise, urban overheating, and water management.

Engineered solutions to adapt our water and drainage infrastructure will be required in some circumstances, but should support more natural benefits as far as possible. There is scope to continue, and extend, the lessons from the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Plan to future proof infrastructure in support of the long term growth and development of Edinburgh. The Lothian Drainage Partnership is taking this forward with projects emerging within Edinburgh and at the ClimatEvolution Zone in East Lothian. At a local scale there is significant potential to expand raingardens and sustainable urban drainage systems to help manage surface water as part of blue and green infrastructure for our future cities and towns.

## **19. Grow a wellbeing economy**

This area has a diverse business base and is a key engine of growth for Scotland as a whole. There are many clusters of sites and businesses which form the basis of regional propositions for investment. In line with our aspirations to build a wellbeing economy, opportunities for investment and development should be designed to maximise economic, social and environmental wellbeing, rather than focusing on growth alone. A planned approach can help to target future development in areas of significant economic disadvantage so that new and better jobs are more fairly distributed to help address national, regional and more localised inequality.



The pandemic has brought obvious challenges but has also unlocked opportunities to take forward new models of working that could better support our wellbeing and improve our places in the longer term. The continued growth of remote and local working and the creation of hubs within groups of settlements could significantly reduce the need to travel, whilst also helping to grow local businesses and communities. Existing offices have the potential to be repurposed to achieve higher density mixed use neighbourhoods with a lower carbon footprint and require careful planning to ensure future communities are properly supported by appropriate services.

Many business and investment sites are located along key transport corridors and new approaches may be required as investment transitions away from locations that can only be reached by car towards more accessible areas that are connected by low-carbon and active travel options.

A number of clear investment propositions are supported:

- The Clyde Mission will stimulate investment in sites along the Clyde to build a wellbeing economy and achieve a step-change in the quality of the environment for communities. Key sites extend from Greenock Ocean Terminal to Queens Quay, Tradeston, the Broomielaw and Glasgow City Centre, to Clyde Gateway – a longstanding regeneration project which has made exceptional progress in transforming communities and overcoming inequality.
- Aligning with the Clyde Mission, the Ayrshire Councils are working together through their Ayrshire Growth Deal and Community Wealth Building programme to build economic resilience and address unemployment, poverty and inequality across their area, with town centres at the heart of communities. This includes proposals for advanced manufacturing and aerospace engineering which will make use of the existing infrastructure and investment opportunities available at Glasgow and Prestwick airports. Glasgow is already a centre of expertise for

manufacturing satellites and will benefit from the associated development of a network of spaceports across the country, whilst supporting wider industry and employment. The Ardeer peninsula is also a significant site for redevelopment of the wider Ayrshire area.

- The Edinburgh City region supports investment in significant clusters including the Bioquarter, Mid Fife, Dunfermline, Guardbridge St. Andrews, Galashiels, Cockenzie, Midlothian and the M8 corridor. A strategy for West Edinburgh is emerging which guides a wide range of uses to create a sustainable extension to the city, with added benefit from associated improvements to the quality of place of existing communities. Proposals focus on locating development on and around existing transport corridors and work is ongoing to improve accessibility including the Edinburgh tram extension. Further investment should take into account the impact of new development on potentially compounding existing capacity constraints and congestion, and prioritise sustainable choices.
- The Tay Cities Region has a strong regional proposal for developing clusters of investment in research and innovation supporting a range of sectors in both urban and rural areas including life sciences, energy, digital, and food production.

A wellbeing economy goes beyond strategic investment sites to link more closely with the wellbeing of communities and their local environments. It will be critical to recognise the importance of anchor institutions who can support local investment in our places and natural and historic assets, provide education, employment and other services, and act as community hubs. Communities can drive forward community-led housing initiatives to help meet the needs of local people. Significant investment in our health and social care, justice and learning estates will continue to provide important sources of employment and income for smaller scale local businesses. Town centres throughout this area will also play a critical role in driving a new economic future. The recent town centre review highlights opportunities to

expand the range of services and facilities they offer, reuse redundant buildings and provide new homes for a wide range of people. This in turn will ensure their crucial role in defining our sense of place is protected and enhanced, future-proofing a key asset for Scotland as a whole.

## **20. Reimagine development on the urban fringe**

Whilst predominantly urban, this part of Scotland benefits from a rich and diverse rural area and there are many areas where town meets countryside. These green areas and natural spaces are key assets, sustaining communities that could become better places to live if we can achieve this in a way that is compatible with our wider aims for climate change, nature restoration and 20 minute neighbourhoods. The pandemic has demonstrated that many people are looking for more space at home and in their communities. It will be important to plan positively and imaginatively to make sustainable use of the countryside around our cities and towns.

These areas have important functions – providing vital ecosystem services and spaces for local food growing, outdoor access and recreation. They support carbon sequestration, including through peatland restoration, woodland creation and conserving natural habitats and there is scope for innovation in key sectors including sustainable food production. Digital connectivity is key to realising the potential for smaller-scale rural development more widely, for example in Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire. We can make use of the area's assets to grow tourism and leisure close to where people live. Within Forth Valley a National Tartan Centre, the Canal corridor, the Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Antonine Wall World Heritage Site, Ochil Hills and Whisky Trail create a unique heritage offering which will support local employment and strengthen the area's sense of place. Tourism is a key theme in the emerging regional economic strategy for the Forth Valley and both the Falkirk Growth Deal and Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal.

There are landscape-scale opportunities within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park to restore and enhance nature and respond to climate change, including through woodland creation and peatland restoration, as well as natural flood risk management. The National Park will continue to support the quality of life and health of the urban population and its future priorities include new infrastructure provision to provide a quality visitor experience and support people to connect with nature, as well as a greener tourism sector supported by innovative low carbon transport solutions. Long-distance active travel and rail routes have untapped potential to provide sustainable tourism solutions. The area's communities can adapt to support more localised living and working opportunities, with improved digital connectivity and affordable housing. More integrated planning and land management offers opportunities to support land use change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The approach also links with and relates to the action area to the north.

## **21. Improve urban accessibility**

A focus on community wealth building, together with growing opportunities for longer term remote working, could address the high levels of transport movement by private car and challenges of congestion and air pollution across the area. Local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods, will help to minimise future commuting and ensure jobs and income can be spread more evenly across the area. Accessibility and transport affordability can support more resilience which benefits communities who are less connected.

By putting in place mass transit systems for Edinburgh through plans to extend the tram network, and for Glasgow including the Glasgow Metro and multi-modal connectivity, we have an opportunity to substantially reduce levels of car-based commuting, congestion and emissions from transport at scale.

Connections to the rest of the UK will be strengthened in the longer term through high speed rail connectivity, with stations expected in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Decarbonisation of freight will require the construction of new hubs and associated facilities to support logistics. This will also support growing interest in express logistics from rail operators that would see passenger Electrical Multiple Units converted to carry small freight, targeting the UK parcel market. Ports on the Clyde, Forth and Tay coasts will also play a key role in this transition.

Digital connectivity will facilitate remote working, supporting the growth of towns and villages outwith the larger cities and potentially leading to a renaissance in more rural living. It will be crucial to address digital inequality, whether through cost, infrastructure or skills development, as virtual service provision continues to grow.

**Q14: Do you agree with this summary of challenges and opportunities for this action area?**

**Q15: What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?**



## Southern sustainability

Innovate Revitalise Transition Transform **Sustain**

*This area broadly includes Dumfries and Galloway and The Scottish Borders, with links to the Ayrshires and Glasgow city region in the west and to the Edinburgh city region in the east.*

The South of Scotland is strategically important with a strong sense of identity centred on networks of towns and villages, supported by distinctive landscapes and coasts. This is a place with a rich cultural heritage and exceptional environmental assets and natural resources. This area is ambitious for positive change in the coming years, and the immediate work to recover from the pandemic will form the basis of a longer term plan to respond to the challenges of climate change and support nature restoration and recovery.

Emissions in this area are moderate, with transport and industry emissions being partly offset by land use. The area has significant areas of woodland and peatland which act as a carbon sink and form the basis for future investment opportunities. The few sites that are significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions include industrial and commercial activities, including some food and drink processing facilities. Coastal erosion and flood risk is expected to be a significant challenge in the future, particularly where there is a risk of impacting on key transport corridors or settlements.

Finding a new way of rural living that is consistent with climate change will be a challenge for this part of Scotland, given the relatively high levels of dependence on the car and the dispersed population. It is predominantly rural in character with small settlements and many rural homes, farms and smallholdings. Despite having high levels of wellbeing and quality of life, population decline is projected to continue in the west of the area, with fewer younger people and more retired people living there in the area in the future. The area's economy depends on low wage and public sector employment and this presents challenges for building a wellbeing economy.

Our strategy aims to ensure that this part of Scotland is recognised as a good place to live and work, and features more strongly as a destination in its own right.




In this area we will:

- create a low carbon network of towns;
- support sustainable development;
- innovate to sustain and enhance natural capital; and
- strengthen resilience and decarbonise connectivity.






# Southern sustainability






## Legend

-  Strategic maritime routes
-  Strategic connection
-  Blue economy



## Liveable places

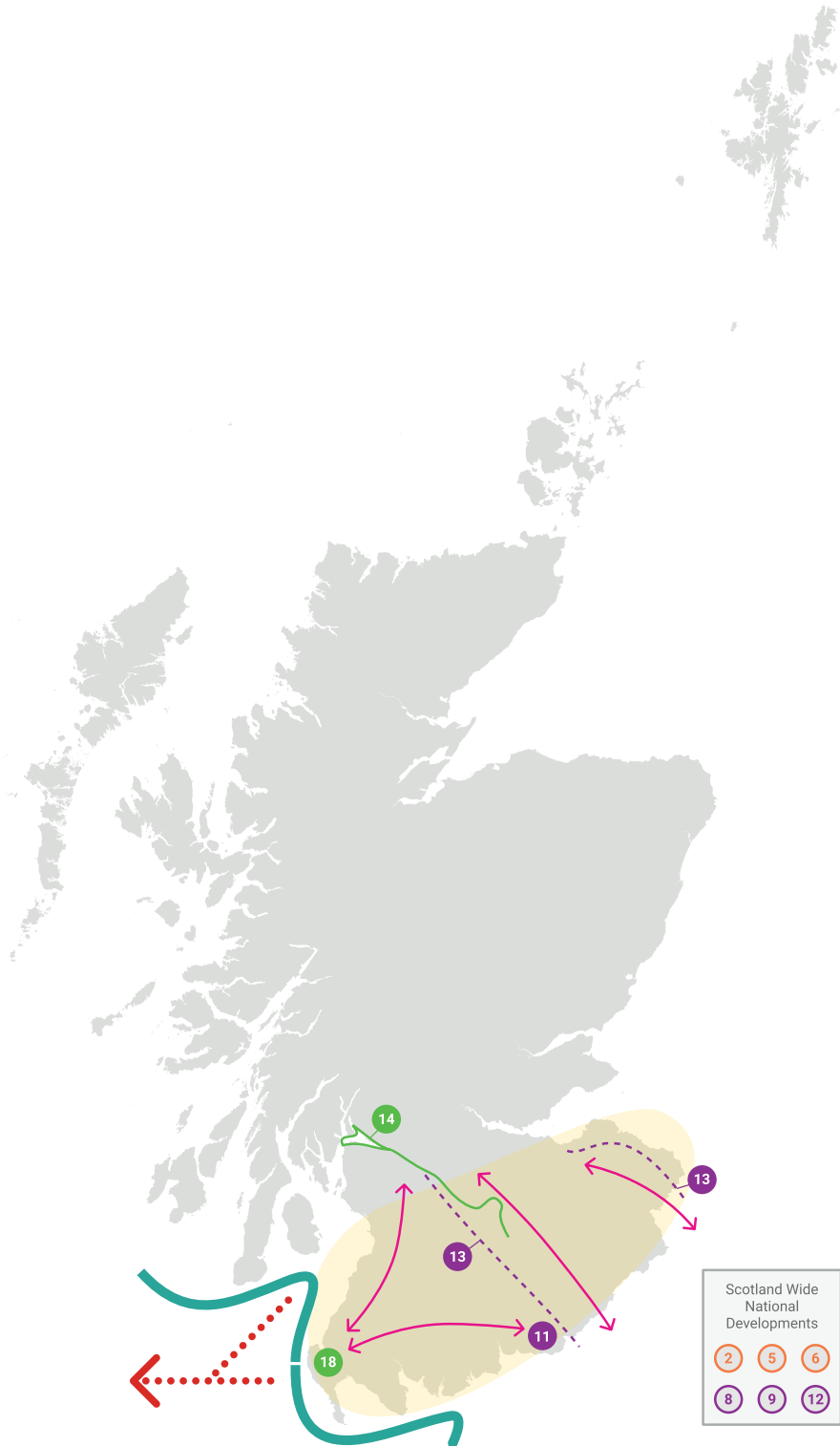
-  National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network
-  Circular Economy Material Management Facilities
-  Digital Fibre Network

## Productive places

-  Industrial Green Transition Zones
-  Pumped Hydro Storage
-  Chapelcross Power Station Redevelopment
-  High Speed Rail
-  Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure

## Distinctive places

-  Clyde Mission
-  Stranraer Gateway



## Actions

### 22. Create a low-carbon network of towns

Settlements across this area provide services to the surrounding rural communities. The towns are well placed to be models of sustainable living with many undergoing regeneration including Stranraer, Jedburgh, Galashiels, Hawick and Eyemouth. Quality of life for people living in the area will depend on this network in the future and it should form the basis of a tailored response to the 20 minute neighbourhood concept. Town centres can be strengthened as they recover from the pandemic. New measures to build resilience to climate change will be required including flood risk management in key settlements.

The area is already investing in regenerating and future-proofing its towns and wider communities. The Stranraer Gateway Project is an opportunity to consolidate and bring new impetus to regenerate this strategically located settlement. Plans include expansion of the marina, supported by the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, and low carbon heating can be incorporated as part of the transformation of the wider town. Nearby Cairnryan is a crucial gateway to Scotland, with a need to make best use of existing connections.

The future growth of the area aims to consolidate existing settlements, capitalise on the strong sense of place of its towns and ensure accessibility by locating new development close to the Borders Rail Line. The Borderlands Place Programme, future Regional Land Use Partnerships and other strategic initiatives can support an integrated approach to protecting and restoring the area's natural assets, enhancing the built environment and achieving a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy across the area.

### 23. Support sustainable development.

The future sustainability of the area will depend on the creation of high-quality and green jobs for local people. The local economy will need to diversify to sustain a wider range of businesses and jobs. An emphasis on community wealth building will help to reduce dependence on public sector employment and a relatively

low-wage economy associated with rural and primary sectors. The current approach to investment focuses on strategic growth corridors linking economic hubs with transport routes. Whilst the strategic road network is an asset and contributes to the area's connections north and south, a long term strategy will require innovation and fresh thinking to ensure that future growth reflects our commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing inequality.

Employment opportunities can support population growth, help to retain more young people and transition the area away from its current dependence on low wage sectors. New ways of working including remote working could attract more people to live here, supporting the economy and sustaining local services and facilities. This will also benefit from continued support for local skills development and centres of further and higher education including the Galashiels campus of Heriot Watt University and Glasgow University at the Crichton Campus, Dumfries.

Significant investment sites include the former nuclear power station at Chapelcross which benefits from existing grid connections and is an opportunity to repurpose the land by establishing a green energy park which contributes to national ambitions and innovation. Low carbon accessibility will be a key challenge, as the site is remote from Annan and not served by public transport. Providing access to wider markets, the port at Cairnryan could create further strategic growth opportunities. The expansion of Tweedbank and an inclusive approach to economic development in the Central Borders and Tweeddale are also strategic opportunities.

The area has aspirations to become a prime outdoor recreation and green tourism destination. Key projects include the South West Coastal Path, and projects supported by the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal; the Mountain Biking Innovation Centre at Innerleithen, updating the cycling experience and facilities at some of the 7stanes sites and Destination Tweed which will deliver a multi-user path and cycle route from Moffat to Eyemouth. More could be made of the area's border location and attractions to ensure visitors make better use of local services and support the economy and communities.

## 24. Innovate to sustain and enhance natural capital

This area's forests and woodland are a nationally significant asset and its extensive peatland will need to support carbon storage and sequestration. The Borderlands Natural Capital Programme will develop trials and sector strategies to restore biodiversity, build resilience and make the most of the area's natural assets to support climate change mitigation and adaptation. This will build on the successes of a range of nature restoration projects in the area, such as the Carrifran Wildwoods project.

The South of Scotland Regional Land Use Pilot is providing significant opportunity to work with landowners, landed interests and others to look at the multi-benefits from land use and to maximise natural capital opportunities.

The South of Scotland is also an important centre for renewable energy generation. Proposals for consolidating and extending existing wind farms and associated grid improvements and supply chain opportunities will require a carefully planned approach. The Solway Firth has significant potential for renewable energy generation in the future, but development will require careful planning given the sensitivity of the environment and its international importance for nature conservation. Decarbonisation of existing homes will be required, as well as a strategic approach to rolling out electric vehicle charging.

## 25. Strengthen resilience and decarbonise connectivity

The west of the area has a close relationship, and strategic connection to, Northern Ireland and Ireland via Cairnryan, as well as across

the English border to Carlisle and onwards to European markets. The connection to Northern Ireland and Ireland is already a focus for freight movements as a result of EU Exit.

In the east, the Scottish Borders has a role to play as part of the Edinburgh City Region, with the Borders Railway opening up new sites for sustainable development towards the north, and the south sustaining rural industries and connections to Northumberland.

The area's low-carbon future will depend on supporting modal shift and reducing car use, given current dependence on the car and need to improve access to services, education and employment. Low emissions vehicles will only go some of the way towards addressing future challenges. Further work is required to build the case for improvements to public transport routes. Public transport, including the bus network, will play an important role in decarbonisation and developing innovative solutions and linkages to the rail system. Active travel should be supported with wheeling, walking and cycling within and between towns and other communities linked to strategic routes for residents and visitors. This is important not only for local sustainability but also as a strategic attraction to take advantage of major outdoor recreation opportunities.

There is also a need to secure better digital connectivity to unlock the potential of rural living and home or hub working. The Borderlands Digital Infrastructure Programme will play a key role in supporting connectivity and responding to future technology and innovation.

**Q16: Do you agree with this summary of challenges and opportunities for this action area?**

**Q17: What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?**

**Q18: What are your overall views on this proposed national spatial strategy?**

# Part 2 – National Developments

## **National developments are significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver our spatial strategy.**

Eighteen national developments are proposed to support the delivery of our spatial strategy. These national developments range from single large scale projects or collections and networks of several smaller scale proposals. They are also intended to act as exemplars of the place principle and placemaking approaches.

In taking forward national developments we expect delivery partners to:

- design and progress their developments in a way which supports community wealth building;
- manage known and predicted climate risks arising from the development and its location;
- improve biodiversity and restore habitats as far as possible;
- consider how the development interacts with the provision of heat for the surrounding area, potentially in connection with a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and emerging plans for the heat sector in the longer term;
- ensure alignment with Scotland's National Marine Plan, as well as any relevant sectoral and regional marine plans; and
- ensure that associated transport interventions to facilitate access to or from the locations are in line with sustainable transport and sustainable investment hierarchies. Strategic

transport interventions for Government will be identified in the second Strategic Transport Projects Review and Islands Connectivity Plan, and some recommendations may require working with partners for their delivery.

Where more than one national development applies to a development proposal, this simply serves to confirm that national development handling procedures should be applied.

This designation means that the principle of the development does not need to be agreed in later consenting processes, providing more certainty for communities, business and investors. Appropriate consents and associated impact assessments will still be undertaken in line with statutory obligations. Further information about national developments can be found at [www.transformingplanning.scot](https://www.transformingplanning.scot).

An assessment of the likely impact of each proposed national development's lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets<sup>2</sup> (with the meaning given in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009) has been included. This is a strategic level assessment and it follows that there is considerable uncertainty as to the detailed scale and location of development that may occur and around the implementation of new technologies. The assessment is based on the detail provided at the time of the assessment, and the conclusion may alter depending on the nature and detail of the projects taken forward.

<sup>2</sup> Research project: Lifecycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions of NPF4 Proposed National Developments Assessment Findings (LUC 2021) available online at <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/national-planning-framework/>

# National Developments

## Liveable places

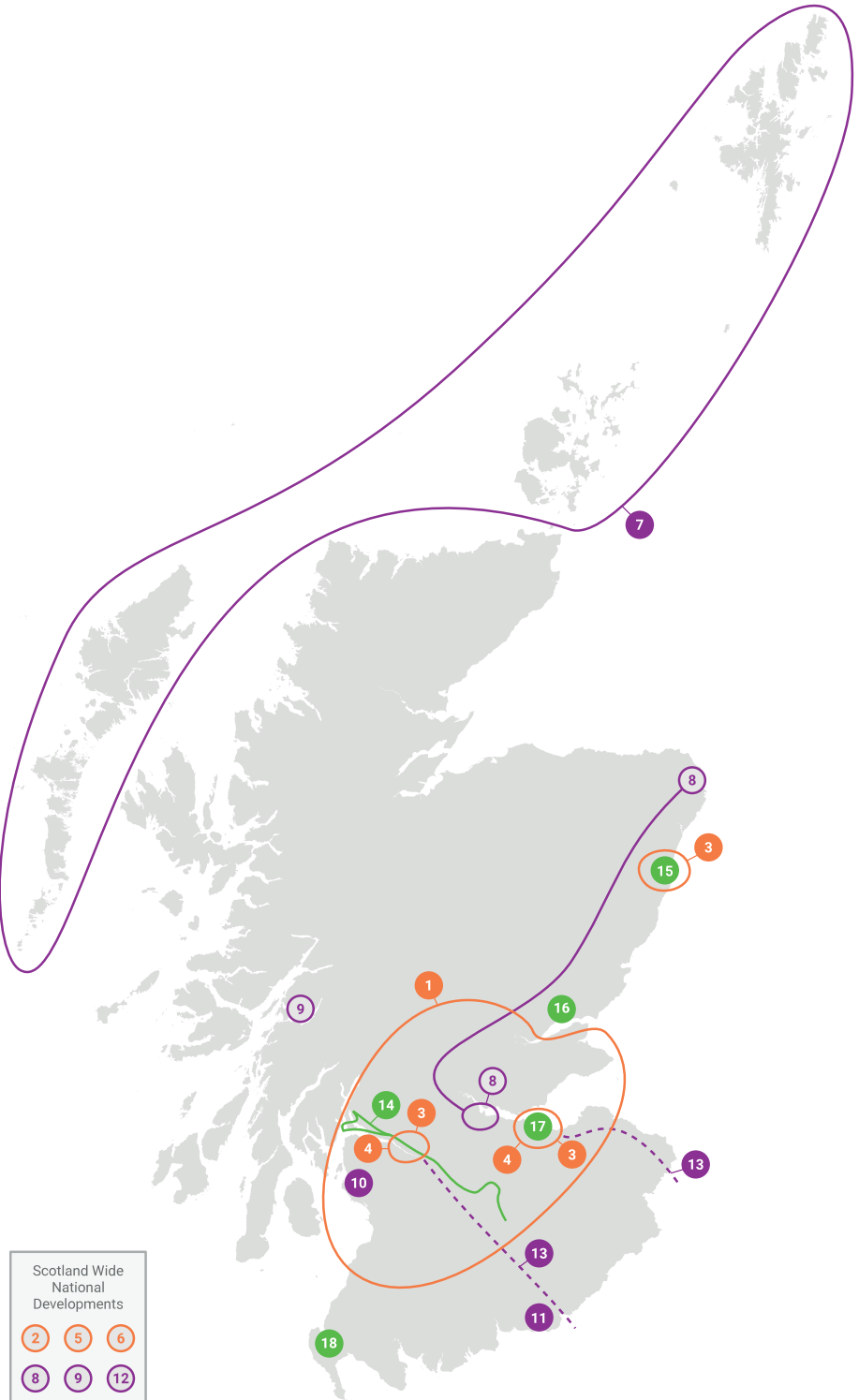
- 1 Central Scotland Green Network
- 2 National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network
- 3 Urban Mass / Rapid Transit Networks  
Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow
- 4 Urban Sustainable, Blue and Green Drainage Solutions  
Edinburgh and Glasgow
- 5 Circular Economy Material Management Facilities
- 6 Digital Fibre Network

## Productive places

- 7 Islands Hub for Net Zero
- 8 Industrial Green Transition Zones
- 9 Pumped Hydro Storage
- 10 Hunterston Strategic Asset
- 11 Chapelcross Power Station Redevelopment
- 12 Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure
- 13 High Speed Rail

## Distinctive places

- 14 Clyde Mission
- 15 Aberdeen Harbour
- 16 Dundee Waterfront
- 17 Edinburgh Waterfront
- 18 Stranraer Gateway





# National developments to deliver sustainable, liveable places

## 1. Central Scotland Green Network

This national development is one of Europe's largest and most ambitious green infrastructure projects. It will play a key role in tackling the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss including by building and strengthening nature networks. A greener approach to development will improve placemaking, can contribute to the roll-out of 20 minute neighbourhoods and will benefit biodiversity connectivity. This has particular relevance in the more urban parts of Scotland where there is pressure for development as well as significant areas requiring regeneration to address past decline and disadvantage. Regeneration, repurposing and reuse of vacant and derelict land should be a priority.

Priorities include enhancement to provide multifunctional green infrastructure that provides greatest environmental, lifelong physical and mental health, social wellbeing and economic benefits. It focuses on those areas where greening and development can be mutually supportive, helping to improve equity of access to quality green space, and supporting communities where improving wellbeing and resilience is most needed, including to help people adapt to future climate risks.

Nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation may include woodland expansion and peatland restoration as a priority. The connectivity of biodiversity rich areas may be enhanced through nature networks, including corridors and stepping stones to provide enhanced natural capital and improved ecosystem services.

### Location

Central Scotland local authorities within a boundary identified by the Green Action Trust.

### Need

This national development is needed to improve quality of place and create new opportunities for investment. This will support delivery of our spatial strategy which highlights the importance of accelerating urban greening in this most densely populated part of Scotland.

### Designation and classes of development

A development within the Central Scotland Green Network area and within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by ['The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009'](#), is designated a national development:

- a) Land for new and/or extensions to areas for multi-functional green infrastructure including for: emissions sequestration; adaptation to climate change; biodiversity enhancement;
- b) Reuse of vacant and derelict land and buildings for greening and nature-based solutions;
- c) New and/or upgraded sustainable surface water management and drainage systems and the creation of blue space;
- d) Use of land for allotments or community food growing; and
- e) Routes for active travel and or recreation.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



## 2. National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network

This national development facilitates the shift from vehicles to walking, cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport and is highly beneficial for health and wellbeing.

The upgrading and provision of additional active travel infrastructure will be fundamental to the development of a sustainable travel network providing access to settlements, key services and amenities, employment and multi-modal hubs. Infrastructure investment should be prioritised for locations where it will achieve our National Transport Strategy 2 priorities and outcomes, to reduce inequalities, take climate action, help deliver a wellbeing economy and to improve health and wellbeing. This will help to deliver great places to live and work.

### Location

All Scotland.

### Need

Reducing the need to travel unsustainably is the highest priority in the sustainable transport investment hierarchy. This national development will significantly support modal shift and deliver multiple outcomes including our commitment to a 20% reduction in car kilometres, associated emissions reduction, health and air quality improvement. This will support the delivery of our spatial strategy by creating a more sustainable distribution of access across Scotland as a whole.

### Designation and classes of development

A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#) is designated a national development:

- a) New/and or upgraded routes suitable for a range of users for walking, cycling and wheeling that help create a national network that facilitates short and longer distance journeys and linkages to multi-modal hubs.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

### 3. Urban Mass/Rapid Transit Networks

This national development supports low-carbon mass/rapid transit projects for Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

To reduce transport emissions at scale, we will require low-carbon transport solutions for these three major cities that can support transformational reduction in private car use.

Phase 1 of the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) recommended the development of the Glasgow ‘Metro’ and Edinburgh Mass Transit in these cities and their associated regions. In Aberdeen, the North East Bus Alliance has been awarded funding through Transport Scotland’s Bus Partnership to develop the Aberdeen Rapid Transit system identified in the Regional Transport Strategy and being considered in the STPR2.

This will support placemaking and deliver improved transport equity across the most densely populated parts of Scotland, improving access to employment and supporting sustainable investment in the longer term.

The type of interventions will be determined through the ongoing development of business cases and studies but could include the provision of new systems or extensions to existing sustainable and public transport networks.



#### Location

Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh city regions.

#### Need

This national development will help reduce transport related emissions overall, improve air quality, reduce the demand for private vehicle use, support the roll out of 20 minute neighbourhoods and improve transport equity.

#### Designation and classes of development

A development within one or more of the Classes of Development below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as ‘major’ by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#) is designated a national development. This relates to development supported by the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 consisting of new or upgraded:

- a) Track or road infrastructure;
- b) Fuelling or power infrastructure;
- c) Passenger facilities; and
- d) Depots servicing the networks.

#### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

## 4. Urban Sustainable, Blue and Green Drainage Solutions

This national development aims to build on the benefits of the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership, to continue investment and extend the approach to the Edinburgh city region.

Our biggest cities and their regions will require improved infrastructure to ensure they are more resilient to climate change. A strategic, catchment scale approach to adaptation through surface water and drainage infrastructure investment will reduce impacts and risks for our urban population and is an example of an infrastructure-first approach. Nature-based solutions which may include blue and green infrastructure should be prioritised, with use of built engineered structures minimised and optimised as far as possible. Delivery of multiple climate, wellbeing and economic benefits should form the basis of the approach. Whilst this national development focuses on Edinburgh and Glasgow other cities and towns may benefit from similar approaches.



### Location

City and wider catchment areas of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

### Need

A large proportion of our population lives in our largest cities. The management of surface water drainage at scale across these city regions will help us to adapt to extreme weather events that will become more frequent as a result of climate change. Whilst focused on drainage, a nature-based approach to surface water management has the potential to deliver multiple health, wellbeing, economic and climate adaptation and emissions reduction benefits. It will also free up sewer capacity for connections to new development.

### Designation and classes of development

A development in the Glasgow and Edinburgh city regions within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by ['The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009'](#) is designated a national development:

- a) Spaces, infrastructure, works, structures, buildings, pipelines and nature-based approaches for surface water management and drainage systems.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

## 5. Circular Economy Materials Management Facilities

This national development supports the development of facilities required to achieve a circular economy. This sector will provide a range of business, skills and employment opportunities as part of a just transition to a net zero economy.

The range and scale of facilities required to manage secondary materials and their reprocessing back out into the economy is not yet clear. However, it is clear that sites and facilities will be needed to retain the resource value of materials so that we can maximise the use of materials in the economy and minimise the use of virgin materials in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is particularly significant for the construction and demolition industries and decommissioning industry.

Careful assessment of specific proposals will be required to ensure they provide sustainable low carbon solutions, include appropriate controls, manage any emissions and mitigate localised impacts including on neighbouring communities and the wider environment.

### Location

All Scotland.

### Need

This national development helps maximise Scotland's potential to retain the energy and emissions values within materials already in the economy.

### Designation and classes of development

A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#) is designated a national development:

- a) Facilities for managing secondary materials;
- b) Repurposing facilities;
- c) Reprocessing facilities; and
- d) Recycling facilities.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

## 6. Digital Fibre Network

This national development supports the continued roll-out of world class broadband across Scotland.

Our strategy requires enhanced digital connectivity to provide high speed broadband or equivalent mobile services, prioritising those areas with weaker networks as part of the R100 programme and Project Gigabit, including urban, island specific and rural enhancements. This is a significant utility including 4G and 5G mobile infrastructure facilitating home based working, renewable energy development, rural repopulation and access to services. The data transmission network can also support the availability and use of 'big data'. Digital capability is a feature of a number of City Region and Growth Deals.

Opportunities should be taken to deliver the infrastructure as part of other infrastructure upgrades or installation works such as energy transmission, transportation, and travel networks where appropriate.

### Location

All Scotland.

### Need

This is a fundamentally important utility, required to support development, community wellbeing, equal access to goods and services, and emissions reduction from reduced demand for travel. This will help to deliver our spatial strategy by complementing a new emphasis of living locally, and by helping to sustain and grow rural and island communities.

## Designation and classes of development

A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by ['The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009'](#), is designated a national development:

- a) Installation of new and/or upgraded broadband cabling on land and sub-sea for fixed line and mobile networks; and
- b) Green data centres.

## Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall negligible impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



# National developments to deliver sustainable, productive places

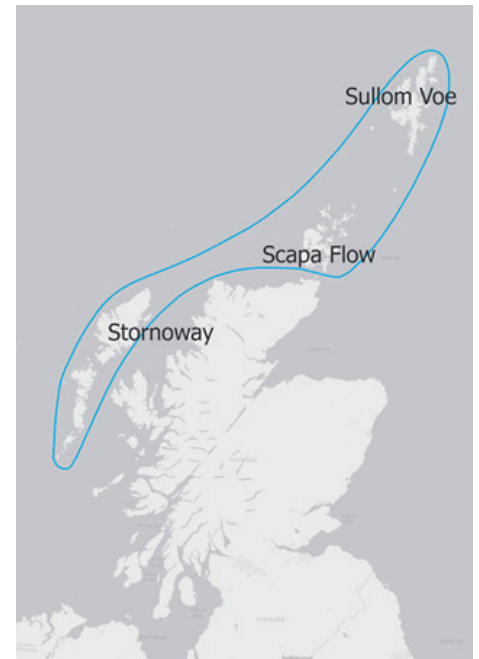
## 7. Islands Hub for Net Zero

### Description

This national development supports proposed developments in the Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney island groups, for renewable energy generation, renewable hydrogen production, infrastructure and shipping, and associated opportunities in the supply chain for fabrication, research and development, in particular at the proposed Orkney Research and Innovation Campus. Any strategy for deployment of these technologies must enable decarbonisation at pace and cannot be used to justify unsustainable levels of fossil fuel extraction or impede Scotland's just transition to net zero.

This is aligned with low carbon energy projects within the Islands Growth Deal and encompasses other projects that can facilitate net zero aims.

The use of low and zero emission fuels will play a crucial role in decarbonising island and mainland energy use, shipping, strengthening energy security overall and creating a low carbon energy economy for the islands and the islanders. The developments will add value where they link into national and international energy, learning and research and development networks. There may also be opportunity for ports in the islands to establish themselves as near-Arctic marine transport and logistics hubs, including for transshipment operations.



### Location

Western Isles, Shetland, Orkney and surrounding waters.

### Need

These classes of development support the potential of the three island authorities to exemplify a transition to a net zero society. This will support delivery of our spatial strategy by helping to sustain communities in rural and island areas by stimulating employment and innovation.

### Designation and classes of development

A development in the location within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#), is designated a national development:

- a) Buildings, land and structures for development providing employment related to delivering the Islands Hub for net-zero;
- b) New or updated on and/or offshore infrastructure for energy generation from renewables of or exceeding 50 megawatts capacity;
- c) Electricity transmission cables and converter stations on and offshore of or exceeding 132kv;
- d) Infrastructure for the production, storage and transportation of low and zero-carbon fuels (that are not electricity or heat) including renewable hydrogen; and hydrogen production related chemicals including ammonia with appropriate carbon capture linked to transport and storage infrastructure;

- e) Improved oil storage infrastructure for Stornoway, with appropriate emissions abatement;
- f) Quay to service marine energy, energy transportation, energy decommissioning, fabrication or freight handling, including new or enhanced associated laydown or operational area at Arnish, Scapa Flow, and Kirkwall;
- g) Quay and handling facilities for ultra large container ships in Scapa Flow; and
- h) Oil terminal modifications at Scapa Flow and Shetland to maintain asset use moving towards net zero emissions.

### **Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment**

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



## 8. Industrial Green Transition Zones

To secure a just transition to a net zero economy, the decarbonisation of nationally important industrial sites in a way that ensures continued jobs, investment and prosperity for these areas and the communities that depend on them is essential. Industrial Green Transition Zones (IGTZ) will support the generation of significant economic opportunities while minimising carbon emissions. Technologies that will help Scotland transition to net zero will be supported at these locations, with a particular focus on low carbon and zero emissions technologies including renewables and the generation, storage and distribution of low carbon hydrogen.

The deployment of hydrogen and Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage at these locations must demonstrate decarbonisation at pace and cannot be used to justify unsustainable levels of fossil fuel extraction or impede Scotland's just transition to Net Zero. Hydrogen and CCUS are emerging industries, both government and industry in Scotland wish to accelerate and maximise the deployment of green hydrogen. For projects that utilise carbon capture and storage, we want to ensure the highest possible capture rates in the deployment of these technologies. While there are examples internationally where CCS projects have been associated with offshore Enhanced Oil Recovery, we understand there to be no plans for offshore Enhanced Oil Recovery as part of the Scottish Cluster. However, if any IGTZ is found to be incompatible with Scotland's transition to net zero, Scottish Government policy will change accordingly. Further detail will be set out in the forthcoming Energy Strategy.

The role of upstream emissions as part of the consideration of the acceptability of development proposals and the role of thermal generation will therefore be considered and this will inform the finalised version of the National Planning Framework 4.

Industrial Green Transition Zones are:

- **The Scottish Cluster** encompasses a Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) projects network and is a key strategic vehicle for industrial decarbonisation, energy generation, and the transportation and storage of captured carbon. The designation relates to projects that form a Scottish Cluster in the first instance specifically Peterhead, St Fergus and Grangemouth, as well as further industrial transition sites that are expected to emerge in the longer term. This national development will support the generation of significant economic opportunities for low-carbon industry as well as minimising carbon emissions at scale, and will play a vital part in maintaining the security and operability of Scotland's electricity supply and network. The creation of hydrogen and deployment of negative emissions technologies, utilising CCS, at commercial scale will establish the opportunities to decarbonise industry, transport and heat, as well as other sectors, and pave the way for the transportation and storage infrastructure to support the growing hydrogen economy in Scotland.
- **Grangemouth Investment Zone** currently hosts strategic and critical infrastructure, high value employment and manufacturing of materials that are currently vital for everyday life. This role will continue in the long term but must seek to decarbonise given the significant contribution of the industrial activities to Scotland's emissions. It is a key location in the Scottish Cluster for carbon capture and storage, and hydrogen deployment. The Grangemouth Investment Zone will be a focus for transitioning the petrochemicals industry and associated activities into a leading exemplar of industrial decarbonisation, significantly helped through the coordination activities of the Scottish Government's Grangemouth Future Industry Board. Decarbonisation could include opportunities for: renewable energy innovation; bioenergy; hydrogen production with carbon capture and storage; and repurposing of existing strategic and critical infrastructure such as pipelines.

## Location

St Fergus, Peterhead, and Grangemouth.

## Need

This national development is required to meet our targets for emissions reduction. It also supports a just transition by creating new jobs in emerging technologies and significant economic opportunities for lower carbon industry. It will help to decarbonise other sectors, sites and regions, paving the way for increasing demand to be complemented by the production of further hydrogen in the future. This will also help to deliver our spatial strategy by supporting investment in the North East and the Central Belt where there has been a relatively high level of output from fossil fuel industries.

## Designation and classes of development

A development in the location within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that would otherwise have been of a scale or type that is classified as ‘major’ by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#) is designated a national development.

Hydrogen and CCUS are emerging industries, both government and industry in Scotland wish to attain the highest technologically possible capture rates in the deployment of these technologies. While there are examples internationally where CCS projects have been associated with offshore Enhanced Oil Recovery, we understand there to be no plans for offshore Enhanced Oil Recovery as part of the Scottish Cluster.

- a) Carbon capture with high capture rates and negative emission technologies, transportation and storage of captured carbon forming part of or helping to create an expandable national network;
- b) Pipeline for transportation and storage of captured carbon;
- c) Onshore infrastructure including compression equipment, supporting pipeline transportation and shipping transportation of captured carbon and/or hydrogen;
- d) Offshore storage of captured carbon;

- e) New and/or upgraded buildings and facilities for the utilisation of captured carbon;
- f) Infrastructure for the production of hydrogen;
- g) On or near-shore geological storage of hydrogen;
- h) Port facilities for the transport and handling of hydrogen and carbon dioxide;
- i) The application of Carbon Capture and Storage technology to existing or replacement thermal power generation;
- j) Production, storage and transportation with appropriate emissions abatement of: bioenergy; hydrogen production related chemicals including ammonia;
- k) New and/or upgraded buildings for industrial, manufacturing, business, and educational or research uses related to the industrial transition;
- l) Town centre regeneration at Grangemouth;
- m) Grangemouth flood protection scheme;
- n) New and/or upgraded green and blue infrastructure;
- o) New and/or upgraded utilities and/or local energy network; and
- p) New and or upgraded facilities at the port for inter-modal freight handling and passenger facilities at Grangemouth.

## Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

## 9. Pumped Hydro Storage

This national development will play a significant role in balancing and optimising electricity generation and maintaining the operability of the electricity system as part of our transition to net zero. This is necessary as we continue to move towards a decarbonised system with much more renewable generation, the output from which is defined by weather conditions.

This national development supports additional capacity at existing sites as well as new sites. Cruachan in Argyll is a nationally important example of a pumped storage facility with significant potential for enhanced capacity that could create significant jobs in a rural location.

### Location

All Scotland, with an initial focus on Cruachan.

### Need

This national development supports pumped hydro storage capacity within the electricity network through significant new or expanded sites. This supports the transition to a net zero economy through the ability of pumped hydro storage schemes to optimise electricity generated from renewables by storing and releasing it when it is required.

### Designation and classes of development

A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by '[The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009](#)', is designated a national development:

- a) New and/or expanded and/or upgraded water holding reservoir and dam;
- b) New and/or upgraded electricity generating plant structures or buildings;
- c) New and/or upgraded pump plant structures or buildings;
- d) New and/or expanded and/or upgraded water inlet and outlet pipework;



- e) New and/or upgraded substations and/or transformers directly required for the pumped hydro scheme; and
- f) New and/or replacement transmission cables directly linked to the pumped hydro scheme.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

## 10. Hunterston Strategic Asset

This national development supports the repurposing of Hunterston port as well as the adjacent former nuclear power station site. Hunterston has long been recognised as a strategic location for the port and energy sectors given its deepwater access and existing infrastructure.

The location and infrastructure offers potential for electricity generation from renewables, and a variety of commercial uses including port, research and development, aquaculture, the circular economy.

New development will need to work with the capacity of the transport network, include active travel links and be compatible with a location adjacent to sites with nuclear power uses. Designated biodiversity sites will require protection and enhancement where possible, and sustainable flood risk management solutions will be required. Aligned with the Ayrshire Growth Deal, investment in this location will support a wellbeing economy by opening up opportunities for employment and training for local people. A community wealth building approach is expected to form a part of future development proposals to ensure the benefits are retained locally as far as possible.

### Location

Hunterston Port and Hunterston A power station site.

### Need

These classes of development support the redevelopment and reuse of existing strategic assets and land contributing to a net zero economy. It also supports delivery of our spatial strategy by stimulating investment in the west of Scotland, potentially contributing to the wider aim of tackling inequalities.

### Designation and classes of development

A development in the location within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that would otherwise have been of a scale or type that is classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#), is designated a national development:

- a) Infrastructure to support a multi-modal deep water harbour;
- b) Land and buildings for bulk handling, storage, processing and distribution.
- c) Facilities for marine energy generation technology fabrication and decommissioning;



- d) Facilities for marine energy servicing;
- e) Land and buildings for industrial, commercial, research and development, and training uses;
- f) Infrastructure for the capture, transportation and long term storage of greenhouse gas emissions, where transportation may be by pipe or vehicular means;
- g) Infrastructure for the production, storage and transportation of low carbon and renewable hydrogen; and hydrogen production related chemicals including ammonia; and
- h) Infrastructure for the generation and storage of electricity from renewables of or exceeding 50 megawatts.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



## 11. Chapelcross Power Station Redevelopment

This national development supports the redevelopment of Chapelcross, a former nuclear power station site of significant scale regionally and nationally, and our strategy supports the reuse of the site to help deliver on net zero and provide opportunities for communities in the South of Scotland.

Final uses for the site remain to be agreed, but the site has locational advantage to act as an energy hub with opportunities including: business development with a particular focus on energy and energy supply chain; energy generation from solar; electricity storage; generation of heat; production and storage of low carbon and renewable hydrogen. This could link to ambitions for low-carbon heat and vehicle fuel at Stranraer.

The proposal aims to create new job opportunities, including high value employment. A community wealth building approach will ensure that benefits are retained locally as far as possible, and this in turn will help to sustain and grow the local population. We also support opportunities to reduce the fuel costs for local communities to tackle fuel poverty. Sustainable access to the site for workers and commercial vehicles will be required.

### Location

Site of the former Chapelcross power station.

### Need

This national development supports the reuse of a significant area of brownfield land in a rural area with economically fragile communities. It will also support the just transition to net zero.

### Designation and classes of development

A development within the former Chapelcross power station site within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that would otherwise have been of a scale or type that is classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#), is designated a national development:

- a) Commercial, industrial, manufacturing, and office related development occurring on the Chapelcross development site.



- b) Generation of electricity from renewables of exceeding 50 megawatts capacity;
- c) Production of low carbon and renewable hydrogen and related chemicals (including ammonia), its transmission, transportation and storage, with carbon capture as necessary; and
- d) Active and sustainable travel connection to the site.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

## 12. Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure

This national development supports renewable electricity generation, repowering, and expansion of the electricity grid.

A large increase in electricity generation from renewable sources will be essential for Scotland to meet its net zero emissions targets. Certain types of renewable electricity generation will also be required, alongside developments and increases in storage technology and capacity, to provide the vital services, including flexible response, that a zero carbon network will require. Generation is for consumption domestically as well as for export to the UK and beyond, with new capacity helping to decarbonise heat, transport and industrial energy demand. This has the potential to support jobs and business investment, with wider economic benefits.

The electricity transmission grid will need substantial reinforcement including the addition of new infrastructure to connect and transmit the output from new on and offshore capacity to consumers in Scotland, the rest of the UK and beyond. Delivery of this national development will be informed by market, policy and regulatory developments and decisions.

### Location

All Scotland.

### Need

Additional electricity generation from renewables and electricity transmission capacity of scale is fundamental to achieving a net zero economy and supports improved network resilience in rural and island areas. Island transmission connections in particular can facilitate capturing the significant renewable energy potential in those areas as well as delivering significant social and economic benefits.

## Designation and classes of development

A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#), is designated a national development:

- a) Electricity generation, including electricity storage, from renewables of or exceeding 50 megawatts capacity;
- b) New and/or replacement high voltage electricity lines and interconnectors of 132kv or more; and
- c) New and/or upgraded infrastructure directly supporting high voltage electricity lines and interconnectors including converter stations, switching stations and substations.

## Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

### 13. High Speed Rail

This national development supports the implementation of increased infrastructure to improve rail capacity and connectivity on the main cross-border routes, the east and west coast mainlines.

Rail connectivity that can effectively compete with air and road based transport between the major towns and cities in Scotland, England and onward to Europe is an essential part of reducing transport emissions, making best use of the rail network and providing greater connectivity opportunities. There can be significant emissions savings of approximately 75% to be made when freight is transported by rail instead of road.

Enhancement would be in addition to and in conjunction with High Speed 2 (HS2) and other enhancements identified by the UK Government.

Scottish Ministers have an agreement with the UK Government to develop infrastructure enhancements 'North of HS2' and Scottish Ministers continue to press the UK Government on the imperative that all nations and regions of Britain benefit from the prosperity that HS2 will deliver both in its construction and its implementation. The Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 is appraising and will provide the strategic case for investment in the rail network in Scotland, over and above the commitments within HS2.

#### Location

Central and southern Scotland to the Border with England.

#### Need

This national development aims to ensure a low emissions air-competitive journey time to cities in the UK as well as connectivity with European cities and benefits to freight. This will support Scotland's ability to attract and compete for investment.

### Designation and classes of development

A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that is of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by ['The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009'](#), is designated a national development:

- a) New and/or upgraded railway track and electrification solution (overhead cabling and pylons or on track);
- b) New and/or upgraded multi-modal railway stations to service high-speed lines; and
- c) Depot facilities for high speed trains and/or related to the construction and onward maintenance of the UK high-speed rail infrastructure.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



# National developments to deliver sustainable, distinctive places

## 14. Clyde Mission

This national development is a national, place-based Mission to make the Clyde an engine of economic success for Glasgow, the city region and Scotland.

The Clyde Mission is focused on the River Clyde and the riverside from South Lanarkshire in the east to Inverclyde and Argyll and Bute in the west and focusing on an area up to around 500 metres from the river edge. This footprint includes the parts of the Clyde Gateway, River Clyde Waterfront, North Clyde River Bank and River Clyde Corridor frameworks.



Across this area significant land assets are under-utilised, and longstanding inequality, in relation to poor environment and health outcomes require to be tackled as a national priority. An ambitious redevelopment programme is being taken forward under [Five Missions](#). It is a collective, cross-sector effort and partnership working will help bring forward assets and sites that are ready for redevelopment to sustain a range of uses. This will repurpose and reinvigorate vacant and derelict land and supporting local living as well as adapting the area to the impacts of climate change, where nature-based solutions would be particularly supported.

### Location

The river and land immediately next to it (up to around 500 metres from the river) along its length.

### Need

These classes of development revitalise a major waterfront asset which is currently under-utilised. This will support the delivery of our spatial strategy by attracting investment and reuse of vacant and derelict land in west central Scotland where there is a particular need to improve quality of place, generate employment and support disadvantaged communities. It will also support adaptation to climate risks.

### Designation and classes of development

A development within the Clyde Mission area and within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that would otherwise have been of a scale or type that is classified as 'major' by ['The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009'](#), is designated a national development:

- a) Mixed use, including residential, redevelopment of vacant and derelict land;

- b) New, reused and/or upgraded buildings and facilities for residential, commercial, business and industrial uses;
- c) Upgrade of existing port and harbour assets for servicing marine functions including freight and cruise uses and associated landside commercial and/or industrial land for supporting services;
- d) New and/or upgraded active and sustainable travel and recreation routes and infrastructure; and
- e) New and/or upgraded infrastructure for climate adaptation, including nature-based, green and blue solutions.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net negative impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

## 15. Aberdeen Harbour

This national development supports the continued and repurposing of Aberdeen Harbour. The harbour is a strategically important asset supporting the economy of the north east of Scotland.

The south harbour can act as a cluster of port accessible offshore renewable energy research, manufacturing and support services. The facilities are also important for international connections.

At the south harbour the focus should be on regenerating existing industrial land and reorganising land use around the harbour in line with the spatial strategy of the local development plan. By focusing future port activity here, parts of the existing harbour in the city centre will become available for mixed use development, opening up development land to help reinvigorate in Aberdeen city centre.

This can help provide significant economic opportunities, in line with the objectives of the Aberdeen City Region Deal. Environmental benefits, for example to enhance access and improve the quality of green space and active travel options should be designed in to help offset any potential impacts on the amenity of local communities with relevant projects addressing environmental sensitivities through careful planning, assessment and implementation. As part of the consenting process, consideration through all relevant statutory assessment regimes such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) will be required, where applicable at project level.

The extent to which this should include additional business and industrial development outwith the existing north and south harbours is a matter to be determined in the relevant local development plan, and is outwith the scope of this national development.

### Location

Aberdeen Harbour, Aberdeen South Harbour.

### Need

This national development supports the optimisation of Aberdeen Harbour to support net zero and stimulate economic investment. It is also a significant opportunity to support better placemaking including city centre transformation, and regeneration of existing land by optimising the use of new and existing assets. This will deliver our spatial strategy by helping the north east of Scotland to achieve a just transition from a high-carbon economy whilst improving quality of place.



### Designation and classes of development

A development in the location within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that would otherwise have been of a scale or type that is classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#) is designated a national development:

- a) Mixed use development reusing land at the existing (north) Aberdeen Harbour;
- b) Upgraded port facilities at Aberdeen Harbour and completion of South Harbour;
- c) New and/or upgraded green infrastructure;

- d) Buildings and facilities for commercial, manufacturing and industrial uses;
- e) Infrastructure for renewable hydrogen production and hydrogen production related chemicals including ammonia; and
- f) Transport infrastructure, including for sustainable and active travel, for the South Harbour as supported by the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

### **Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment**

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

## 16. Dundee Waterfront

This national development supports the redevelopment of the Dundee Waterfront zones including: the Central Waterfront, Seabraes, City Quay, Dundee Port, Riverside Business Area and Nature Park, and the Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc.

Continued delivery of the waterfront transformation is crucial to securing the role of the city as a location for investment in the net zero economy. Supporting population growth alongside economic opportunities, and skills and career development, is important in continuing to demonstrate the sustainability of urban living in Scotland and a just transition to the net zero economy.

Further projects associated with this include: the Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc which will become an innovation hub for net zero emission mobility; the Eden Project; and an expansion to Dundee Port. This national development includes reusing land on and around the Dundee Waterfront to support the lifelong health and wellbeing of communities, deliver innovation and attract investment. As the development progresses it will be important to support sustainable and active transport options and to build in adaptation to future climate risks.

### Location

Dundee Waterfront zones: Central Waterfront, Seabraes, City Quay, Dundee Port, Riverside Business Area and Riverside Park; Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc.

### Need

This national development supports the continued revitalisation of Dundee waterfront, expanded to include Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc in support of the Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy and its continued use for economic purposes. Waterfront locations may be particularly vulnerable to climate change and so development requires to be carefully designed to manage likely risks.

### Designation and classes of development

A development in the location within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that would otherwise have been of a scale or type that is classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#) is designated a national development:

a) New and/or upgraded buildings for mixed use and/or residential development;

- b) New and/or upgraded buildings for commercial, industrial, business, storage, distribution, research, educational, tourism use;
- c) New and/or upgraded utilities;
- d) New and/or upgraded active and sustainable travel routes;
- e) Land reclamation for port expansion;
- f) New and/or upgraded port facilities for vessel berthing and related landside activities including for lay-down, freight handling and marine sector services; and
- g) New and/or upgraded green and blue infrastructure.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



## 17. Edinburgh Waterfront

This national development supports the regeneration of strategic sites along the Forth Waterfront in Edinburgh.

The waterfront is a strategic asset that contributes to the city's character and sense of place and includes significant opportunities for a wide range of future developments.

Development will include high quality mixed-use proposals that optimise the use of the strategic asset for residential, community, commercial and industrial purposes, including support for off-shore energy relating to port uses. Further cruise activity should take into account the need to manage impacts on transport infrastructure.

This will help maintain and grow Edinburgh's position as a capital city and commercial centre with a high quality and accessible living environment. Development locations and design will need to address future resilience to the risks from climate change, impact on health inequalities, and the potential to incorporate green and blue infrastructure.

### Location

Edinburgh, initial focus on Leith to Granton.

### Need

Waterfronts in our largest urban areas are frequently under-utilised and contain significant areas of vacant and derelict land as well as existing infrastructure assets. Their location may be particularly vulnerable to climate change and likely risks will require careful management. This will support delivery of our spatial strategy, which recognises the importance of our urban coastline in supporting our sense of place, economy and wellbeing.

### Designation and classes of development

A development in the location within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that would otherwise have been of a scale or type that is classified as 'major' by [‘The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009’](#), is designated a national development:

- a) New and/or upgraded buildings for mixed use and/or residential development;
- b) New and/or upgraded buildings for commercial, industrial, business use;
- c) New and/or upgraded utilities;



- d) New and/or upgraded green and blue infrastructure;
- e) New and/or upgraded active and sustainable travel routes;
- f) New and/or upgraded port facilities for vessel berthing and related landside activities including for lay-down, and marine sector services.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



## 18. Stranraer Gateway

This national development supports the regeneration of Stranraer.

Stranraer is a gateway town. It is located close to Cairnryan, a key port connecting Scotland to Northern Ireland, Ireland and beyond to wider markets.

High quality place-based regeneration will help address socio-economic inequalities in Stranraer and to support the wider population of south west Scotland by acting as a hub and providing a platform for future investment. This will be supported by any strategic transport interventions that emerge from the second Strategic Transport Projects Review which embeds the National Transport Strategy's sustainable travel and investment hierarchies.

### Location

Stranraer and associated transport routes.



### Need

Loch Ryan and Stranraer act as a gateway to Scotland. Reusing the assets in this location will support the wellbeing, economy and community in line with the regional growth deal. It will help to deliver our spatial strategy by driving forward regeneration of a key hub.

### Designation and classes of development

A development in the location within one or more of the Classes of Development described below and that would otherwise have been of a scale or type that is classified as 'major' by ['The Town and Country Planning \(Hierarchy of Developments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009'](#), is designated a national development:

- a) Development contributing to Stranraer Waterfront regeneration;
- b) Marina expansion;
- c) Redevelopment of Stranraer harbour east pier;
- d) Sustainable road, rail and freight infrastructure for access to Stranraer and/or Cairnryan;
- e) New and/or upgraded infrastructure for transportation and use of low carbon fuels; and
- f) Reuse of vacant and derelict land and buildings, including regeneration of Blackparks industrial estate.

### Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

Depending on the nature of the projects taken forward and considering both direct and indirect effects, the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



**Q19: Do you think that any of the classes of development described in the Statements of Need should be changed or additional classes added in order to deliver the national development described?**

**Q20: Is the level of information in the Statements of Need enough for communities, applicants and planning authorities to clearly decide when a proposal should be handled as a national development?**

**Q21: Do you think there are other developments, not already considered in supporting documents, that should be considered for national development status?**

# Part 3 – National Planning Policy



## Sustainable Places (Universal Policies)

To achieve a net zero, nature-positive Scotland, we must rebalance our planning system so that climate change and nature recovery are the primary guiding principles for all our plans and all our decisions. That includes emissions reduction and the adaptations we need to make in order to be resilient to the risks created by a warmer climate. It also means ensuring that our approach to planning is designed to help Scotland's biodiversity and better connect our biodiversity rich areas, and to invest in nature-based solutions, benefiting people and nature.

A place based approach is at the heart of creating a more sustainable and fair Scotland. The planning system should apply the [Place Principle](#) which commits us to take a collaborative place-based approach to future development. This must involve working with stakeholders and local communities to create liveable, healthier and sustainable places that improve lives, builds economic prosperity and contribute to net zero and environmental ambitions.

The following Universal Policies should apply to all planning decisions.

**We want our places to help us tackle the climate and nature crises and ensure Scotland adapts to thrive within the planet's sustainable limits.**

**Q22: Do you agree that addressing climate change and nature recovery should be the primary guiding principles for all our plans and planning decisions?**

### **Policy 1: Plan-led approach to sustainable development**

**All local development plans should manage the use and development of land in the long term public interest.** This means that new local development plans should seek to achieve Scotland's national outcomes (within the meaning of Part 1 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Policy 1: Plan-led approach to sustainable development**

**Q23: Do you agree with this policy approach?**

## Policy 2: Climate emergency

- a) When considering all development proposals **significant weight should be given to the Global Climate Emergency**.
- b) All development should be **designed to minimise emissions** over its lifecycle in line with the decarbonisation pathways set out nationally.
- c) **Development proposals that will generate significant emissions**, on their own or when combined with other proposals or when considered in combination with other proposals, allocations or consented development, should not be supported unless the applicant provides evidence that this level of emissions is the minimum that can be achieved for the development to be viable and it is also demonstrated that the proposed development is in the long-term public interest.

Development proposals for national, major or EIA development should be accompanied by a whole-life assessment of greenhouse gas emissions from the development. In decision making the scale of the contribution of development proposals to emissions in relation to **emissions reduction targets** should be taken into account. Where significant emissions are likely (even as minimised) in relation to national decarbonisation pathways but the planning authority is minded to grant consent, emissions off-setting measures may be considered including nature-based solutions. Such measures should take place on-site as an integral part of the overall development, or off-site where on-site provision is not possible or insufficient.

- d) Development proposals for **new, or alterations to, buildings, infrastructure and spaces** should be designed to be **adaptable to the future impacts of climate change**. Proposals to sensitively incorporate climate adaptation and mitigation measures for existing buildings, infrastructure and spaces, should generally be supported.

## Policy 2: Climate emergency

**Q24: Do you agree that this policy will ensure the planning system takes account of the need to address the climate emergency?**

## Policy 3: Nature crisis

- a) Development plans should **facilitate biodiversity enhancement**, nature recovery and nature restoration across the development plan area, including by: facilitating the creation of nature networks and strengthening connections between them to support improved ecological connectivity; through the creation of new or restoration of degraded habitats; and, through measures to increase populations of priority species. Nature networks, which connect biodiversity rich areas, may include international, national and locally protected sites, and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation measures (OECMs).
- b) Development proposals should **contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity**, including restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks and the connections between them.
- c) Any potential adverse **impacts of development proposals on biodiversity, nature networks and the natural environment should be minimised** through careful planning and design. Design should take into account the need to reverse biodiversity loss, safeguard the services that the natural environment provides and build the resilience of nature by enhancing nature networks and maximising the potential for restoration.
- d) Development proposals for national, major and of EIA development or development for which an Appropriate Assessment is required should only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will **conserve and enhance biodiversity**, including nature networks within and adjacent to the site, so that they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention, including

through future management. Applications for farmed fish or shellfish development are excluded from this requirement. To inform this, proposals should:

- be based on an understanding of the existing characteristics of the site and its local, regional and national ecological context prior to development, including the presence of any irreplaceable habitats;
  - wherever feasible, integrate and make best use of nature-based solutions, demonstrating how this has been achieved;
  - be supported by an assessment of potential negative effects which should be fully mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy prior to identifying enhancements;
  - provide significant biodiversity enhancements, in addition to any proposed mitigation. Biodiversity enhancements should include supporting nature networks, linking to and strengthening habitat connectivity within and beyond the development. Biodiversity enhancements should be secured within a reasonable timescale and with reasonable certainty. They should include management arrangements for their long term retention and monitoring, wherever appropriate.
- e) Proposals for local development should only be supported if they include appropriate measures to **enhance biodiversity**, in proportion to the nature and scale of development. Applications for individual householder development, farmed fish or shellfish development, or which fall within scope of the policy above, are excluded from this requirement. Development proposals which integrate nature-based solutions and deliver positive effects for biodiversity should be supported.

### Policy 3: Nature crisis

**Q25: Do you agree that this policy will ensure that the planning system takes account of the need to address the nature crisis?**

### Policy 4: Human rights and equality

- a) Planning should **respect, protect and fulfil human rights, seek to eliminate discrimination and promote equality**.
- b) Planning authorities, applicants, key agencies and communities have a responsibility to **consult and engage others collaboratively, meaningfully and proportionately**. Throughout the planning system, opportunities are available for everyone to engage in local development planning and the development decisions which affect them. Such engagement, undertaken in line with statutory requirements, should be early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate. Support or concern expressed on matters material to planning should be given careful consideration in developing and in considering development proposals.

### Policy 4: Human rights and equality

**Q26: Do you agree that this policy effectively addresses the need for planning to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, seek to eliminate discrimination and promote equality?**

### Policy 5: Community wealth building

- a) Development plans should address **community wealth building** priorities by reflecting a people-centred approach to local economic development. Spatial strategies should support community wealth building; address economic disadvantage and inequality; and provide added social value.
- b) Proposals for development within the categories of national developments and major developments should **contribute to community wealth building objectives**.

#### Policy 5: Community wealth building

**Q27: Do you agree that planning policy should support community wealth building, and does this policy deliver this?**

### Policy 6: Design, quality and place

- a) Development proposals should be **designed to a high quality** so that the scale and nature of the development contributes positively to the character and sense of place of the area in which they are to be located.
- b) Development proposals should **incorporate the key principles of Designing Streets, Creating Places, New Design in Historic Settings and any design guidance adopted by planning authorities and statutory consultees**. Where relevant and appropriate, development proposals should also demonstrate through design tools, such as a Design Framework, Place Standard Tools, Development Brief, Masterplan, Design Guide, Design Code, Design Statement or Design and Access Statement, that an inclusive and design-led approach has been taken to development.
- c) Development proposals should be able to **demonstrate how the six qualities of successful places have been incorporated** into the design of the development so that it contributes positively to the character and quality of the area and the way it functions.
- d) Development proposals that are **poorly designed**, including those that are not consistent with the six qualities of successful places, should not be supported.
- e) Proposals that are **detrimental to the character or appearance of the surrounding area** taking into account effects on daylight, sunlight, noise, air quality and privacy should not be supported, in order to protect amenity.

#### Policy 6: Design, quality and place

**Q28: Do you agree that this policy will enable the planning system to promote design, quality and place?**

## The Six Qualities of Successful Places

**1. Designed for lifelong health and wellbeing:** supporting safety and improving mental and physical health.

By encouraging active lifestyles, through walkable neighbourhoods, as well as ensuring equitable access for everyone (regardless of gender, age, ability and culture) to well-designed buildings and a nature-rich local environment, including quality blue/green spaces that are cared for and well maintained.

**2. Safe and pleasant:** supporting safe, pleasant and welcoming natural and built spaces.

By designing, or retrofitting, spaces of all sizes and purposes to bring a sense of 'joy' and allowing people (whether individuals, families and groups) to meet safely, feel at ease, be included and feel positive towards being playful. Including climatic adaptation, shading, shelter – good use of blue and green infrastructure and wellbeing-promoting natural spaces, tackling vacant and derelict land, air quality and known environmental hazards.

**3. Well connected and easy to move around:** supporting networks of all scales.

Maximising connectivity (including digital), easy to move around and reducing car dependency – by designing places for everyone for walking and wheeling, providing for active travel, step free transitions between public and private spaces, simple transitions from one form of transport to another and good public transport routes.

**4. Distinctive:** supporting attention to local architectural styles and natural landscapes.

To be interpreted, literally or creatively, into designs to reinforce identity – by drawing on historic environment assets, cultural heritage, stories and communities for inspiration as well as examining building types, colours, materials, skylines and landscapes, and acknowledging the sense of place and identity that people feel for their heritage and history.

**5 Sustainable:** supporting net zero, nature-positive, and climate-resilient places.

With resource-efficient, regenerative design and a sustainable environmental footprint, including through: energy efficiency; integration of nature-based solutions; and resilient, confident, future-proof planning of resources, to create healthier, attractive, sustainable places to live, invest, work and play.

Supporting the just transition to a net zero, nature-positive Scotland which makes best use of natural assets for communities and supports their right to a healthy environment.

**6 Adaptable:** supporting commitment to investing in the long-term value of buildings, streets and spaces.

By building in flexibility in line with circular economy principles, so that they can quickly be changed to accommodate different uses as well as maintained over time. By recognising the need to change and cope with social, economic and environmental pressures as well as accepting the critical role of ongoing maintenance to ensure resilience and community wellbeing over time. Reusing and repurposing existing buildings and assets can also support our net zero ambitions and the circular economy.





## Liveable Places

### 20 minute neighbourhoods

#### We want our places to support local living.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods are a method of achieving connected and compact neighbourhoods designed in such a way that all people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle (within approx. 800m) of their home. The principle can be adjusted to include varying geographical scales from cities and urban environments, to rural and island communities. Housing would be planned together with local infrastructure including schools, community centres, local shops, greenspaces and health and social care to significantly reduce the need to use unsustainable modes of travel, to prioritise quality of life, reduce inequalities, increase levels of health and wellbeing and respond to the climate emergency. This can also include providing digital services where appropriate.

We urgently need to reduce the need to travel unsustainably and to encourage people to live more locally. This can be achieved by building on the Place Principle in the creation of 20 minute neighbourhoods where the accessibility credentials and the quality of our places support our health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities and respond to the requirements for the creation of resilient places to cope with and tackle climate change. The planning system should support development that will contribute to the creation of walkable, liveable and thriving places that provide and encourage sustainable travel options, provide communities with local access to the wide range of facilities, services, work and opportunities for socialising, leisure and play activities that they need to support a healthier and flourishing community.

This concept will apply differently in urban and rural areas and should be guided by the Place Principle and place-based working that informs

the local development plan. Communities will be well-placed to inform the approach to their own areas. Dense urban areas will more easily be able to benefit from a network of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the focus should be on maintaining mixed uses and improving the quality and diversity of local areas, particularly for communities who face more disadvantage. Retrofitting facilities in areas which are predominantly residential should also help to reduce the need to travel.

The application of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood will vary across the country and will need to be adjusted to suit local circumstances particularly in rural areas where the delivery of services and extent of local infrastructure may not necessarily be supported by the surrounding density of population. 20 Minute Neighbourhoods are however an opportunity to rethink how housing, service provision, city, town or village centres could be re-configured to support new ways of working, homeworking and community hubs in line with localism objectives and reducing demand for motorised travel.

#### Policy 7: Local living

Decision makers can determine what facilities can reasonably be expected to be accessible from homes, taking into account local circumstances, as well as the role of digital connectivity in providing some services remotely.

- a) Local development plans should **support the principle of 20 minute neighbourhoods**, including through the spatial strategy, development proposals, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context for the plan and reflect the particular characteristics of the area. It should set out proposals to support the development and network of 20 minute neighbourhood by bringing together relevant policies in this NPF to promote development

that will contribute to the creation of safe, walkable, liveable and thriving places that provide and encourage sustainable travel options, provide communities with local access to the wide range of facilities, services, work, natural spaces and opportunities for socialising, leisure and play activities that they need to support a healthier and flourishing and climate resilient community.

b) Development proposals that are **consistent with the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods should be supported**. To inform this, relevant development proposals, including those for homes, should be safe, take into account the infrastructure of a place and be accessed easily by walking, wheeling and cycling from homes. Consideration should be given to:

- local public transport and safe walking, wheeling and cycling networks;
- local employment opportunities, good connections to public transport, jobs and services within the region;
- local shopping areas;

- local health and social care facilities and services;
- local childcare, schools and lifelong learning opportunities;
- local playgrounds and informal play opportunities, parks, green streets and spaces, community gardens, sport and recreation facilities;
- safe streets and spaces;
- affordable housing options, ability to age in place, housing diversity;
- the level of interconnectivity with the surrounding neighbourhood. Proposals should demonstrate how the development will relate to, and enhance, the local area.

### Policy 7: Local living

**Q29: Do you agree that this policy sufficiently addresses the need to support local living?**

## Infrastructure first

### We want an infrastructure-first approach to be embedded in Scotland's planning system.

An infrastructure-first approach to planning means putting infrastructure considerations at the heart of place making. It is based on:

- early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders to better inform land use and investment decisions;
- having an evidence based understanding of potential impacts on infrastructure and infrastructure needs from early in the development planning process;
- providing clarity over infrastructure requirements and their planned delivery to meet the needs of communities; and
- ensuring infrastructure considerations are integral to planning decision making.

Taking an infrastructure first approach will support the provision of the infrastructure, services and facilities that are necessary to create liveable and sustainable places. It can also support our drive towards a more sustainable use of infrastructure, making better use of existing assets and prioritising low-carbon infrastructure, supporting Scotland's transition to net zero.

### Policy 8: Infrastructure First

- a) Local Development Plans and delivery programmes should be based on an **infrastructure-first approach**. They should:
- align with relevant infrastructure plans and policies; including the Infrastructure Investment Plan (investment hierarchy) and National Transport Strategy (sustainable travel and investment hierarchies), the Strategic Transport Projects Review, and the National Marine Plan;
  - be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability;
  - set out the infrastructure requirements of the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, and how and by whom this will be delivered; and

- indicate the type, level and location of the contributions (financial or in kind) that development will be required to make.
- b) Where a development proposal **creates an infrastructure need**, it should demonstrate how account has been taken of the Scottish Government Investment Hierarchy, including the utilisation of existing infrastructure.
- c) Development proposals which **provide (or contribute to) infrastructure that is identified as necessary in Local Development Plans and their delivery programmes** should be supported.
- d) Development proposals should **mitigate their impacts on infrastructure**. Development proposals should not be supported unless provision is made to mitigate those impacts. Where planning conditions, planning obligations or other legal agreements are to be used, the relevant tests should be met.

#### Policy 8: Infrastructure First

**Q30: Do you agree that this policy ensures that we make best use of existing infrastructure and take an infrastructure-first approach to planning?**

## Quality homes

**We want to support the delivery of high quality, sustainable homes that meet the needs of people throughout their lives.**

Good quality homes should be at the heart of great places and contribute to strengthening the health and wellbeing of Scotland's communities. To help tackle climate change, we will need more energy efficient, net zero emissions homes. This can also support a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy and has the potential to help build community wealth. The planning system should support the delivery of more and better homes, in the right locations, providing choice across tenures that meet the diverse housing needs of people and communities across Scotland.

### Policy 9: Quality homes

- a) Local development plans should **identify a housing target for the area it covers, in the form of a Housing Land Requirement**. Representing how much land is required, it should at least meet the 10 year Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) set out in Annex B.
- b) **A deliverable housing land pipeline should be established for the Housing Land Requirement**. Representing when land will be brought forward, it should set out short, medium- and long-term sites which can be supported by the infrastructure requirements of the spatial strategy. Locations that may be suitable for new homes beyond the plan period can also be identified. Where sites in the deliverable housing land pipeline do not progress to delivery as programmed and alternative delivery mechanisms are not possible, longer term deliverable sites should be brought forward. Site de-allocation should be considered where they are no longer deliverable. The Delivery Programme and Housing Land Audit should be used to manage the development pipeline.
- c) **Land should be allocated to meet the Housing Land Requirement** in sustainable locations that create quality places for people to live. The location of where new homes are allocated should be consistent with the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods and an infrastructure-first approach. In rural and island areas, authorities are encouraged to set out tailored approaches to housing which reflect locally specific market circumstances and delivery approaches. Diverse needs and delivery models should be taken into account across all areas, as well as allocating land to ensure provision of accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- d) Development proposals for **homes should be of a high quality and contribute to making great places**. Their design should reflect the six qualities of successful places. Homes should be adaptable to changing and diverse needs and lifestyles.
- e) Development proposals for more than 50 dwellings should be accompanied by a **statement of community benefit**. Planning authorities may wish to extend this to smaller proposals, for example in rural areas. Planning authorities should take this information into account when assessing proposals. The statement should explain the contribution of the proposal to:
  - meeting local housing requirements, including affordable homes;
  - providing or enhancing local infrastructure, facilities and services; and
  - improving the residential amenity of the surrounding area.
- f) Proposals for new **homes that improve affordability and choice** should be supported. An equalities led approach to addressing identified gaps in provision should be taken, informed by the Evidence Report or Local Housing Strategy, whichever is latest. This could include: self-provided homes; accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accessible homes; build to rent; affordable homes; a range of size of homes such as those for larger families; homes for older people; people undertaking further and higher education; and other specialist groups.

- g) Proposals for public or private, permanent or temporary, **Gypsy/Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites** on land not identified for this use in the development plan should be supported where a need is identified unless:
- the proposed site relates to protected land or features and that the design of the proposal does not mitigate against any unacceptable impacts; or
  - the proposed site cannot be adequately accessed and serviced; or
  - there would be an unacceptable impact on the character, appearance or amenity of the area. Judgements should focus on the acceptability of the development being proposed.
- h) Development proposals that make provision for **affordable homes in areas where there is an identified requirement** should be supported. Proposals for market homes should generally only be supported where a contribution to the provision of affordable homes on a site is at least 25% of the total number of homes. A higher contribution than this benchmark may be sought where justified by evidence of need. The contribution should generally be for serviced land within a site to be made available for affordable housing. Local authorities can also determine in local development plans the locations or circumstances where a lower contribution may be appropriate. This could include, for example, where there is evidence of impact on viability, small-scale developments or where a planning authority wishes to incentivise particular types of homes to diversify the supply, for example self-build, accessible or build-to-rent homes.
- i) New homes on **land not identified for housebuilding** in the local development plan should not be supported. Exceptions should be limited to circumstances where the planning authority determines that:
- overall progress in the build-out of sites included in the housing land pipeline is exceeding delivery timelines set out in the most up-to-date delivery programme for the plan; and
  - the proposal is supported by an agreed timescale for build-out; and
  - the proposal is otherwise consistent with the plan spatial strategy and other relevant policies including on 20 minute neighbourhoods, rural places and infrastructure;
- or
- the proposal is consistent with policy on rural places;
- or
- the proposal is for a new home or homes on a small site within an existing residential area;
- or
- the proposal is for the delivery of affordable homes of less than 50 units as part of a local authority supported affordable housing plan.
- j) **Householder development** proposals should be supported where they:
- do not have a detrimental impact on the character or environmental quality of the house and the surrounding area by virtue of size, design and materials; and
  - do not have a detrimental effect on the neighbouring properties in terms of physical impact, overshadowing or overlooking; and
  - are to provide adaptations relating to people with health conditions that lead to particular accommodation needs that will allow them to live in a home or be cared for there; and
  - are to provide adaptations in response to risks from a changing climate.

### Policy 9: Quality homes

**Q31: Do you agree that this policy meets the aims of supporting the delivery of high quality, sustainable homes that meet the needs of people throughout their lives?**



## Sustainable travel and transport

**We want to reduce the need to travel unsustainably, decarbonise our transport system and promote active travel choices.**

Scotland's transport system should contribute to the creation of great places through prioritising the need to reduce inequalities; taking climate action; helping to deliver a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy. The planning system should support development that minimises the need to travel unsustainably and prioritises walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people. The planning system should ensure that the [National Transport Strategy 2](#) Sustainable Travel and Investment Hierarchies are integrated into the appraisal and assessment of development proposals and decisions in order to make best use of existing infrastructure, and reduce unsustainable travel and transport of goods.

### Policy 10: Sustainable transport

- a) **Local development plans should aim to reduce the need to travel unsustainably by prioritising locations for future development** that can be accessed by sustainable modes. A Plan's spatial strategy should be informed by evidence of the area's existing and committed transport infrastructure capacity.
- b) **Local development plans should be informed by an appropriate and effective transport appraisal undertaken in line with [Development Planning Transport Appraisal Guidance](#) (DPTAG).** Plans should be informed by evidence of the area's transport infrastructure capacity, and by an appraisal of the plan's spatial strategy, and reasonable alternatives to it, on the transport network. This should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and mitigation proposed to inform the infrastructure-first approach. The spatial strategy should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and transport investment hierarchy by making best use of existing infrastructure and services and also help to deliver 20 minute neighbourhoods. Where there is likely to be an impact on the trunk road or rail network, early engagement with Transport Scotland is required.
- c) Where a new development or a change of use is likely to **generate a significant increase in the number of person trips**, a transport assessment should be carried out. This should identify any potential cumulative effects which need to be addressed. It should set out measures required to address the transport impact of the development, and improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel (in line with the Sustainable Travel and Investment Hierarchies).
- d) Development proposals for **significant travel generating uses**, or smaller-scale developments where it is considered important to monitor travel patterns resulting from development, will only be supported if they are accompanied by a Travel Plan with supporting planning conditions/obligations. Travel Plans should set out clear arrangements for delivering mode share targets, monitoring and evaluation.
- e) Development proposals that have the potential to affect the **operation and safety of the strategic transport network** need to be fully assessed to determine their impact. Where it has been demonstrated that existing infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate a development without adverse impacts on safety or unacceptable impacts on operational performance, further investment in the network is not likely to be required. Where such investment is required in line with the sustainable investment hierarchy, the cost of the mitigation measures required to ensure the continued safe and effective operation of the network should be met by the developer.
- f) While **new junctions on trunk roads** are not normally acceptable, the case for a new junction will only be considered where significant prosperity or regeneration benefits can be demonstrated. New junctions will only be considered if they are designed in accordance with [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges](#) and where there would be no adverse impact on road safety or operational performance.



- g) Development proposals should put people and place before **unsustainable travel** where appropriate, and respond to characteristics of the location of the proposal. Effective design can reduce the number and speed of vehicles and provide safe crossings on local roads. Design of new transport infrastructure can be a valuable opportunity to incorporate blue and green infrastructure and nature rich habitats (such as natural planting or water systems) where possible.
- h) Planning applications for significant travel generating uses should not be supported at locations which would **increase reliance on the private car**, and where:
- direct, easy, segregated and safe links to local facilities via walking, wheeling and cycling networks are not available or cannot be made available before occupation;
  - access to local facilities via public transport networks would involve walking or wheeling more than 400m;
  - the Transport Assessment does not identify satisfactory ways of meeting sustainable transport requirements in line with the NTS2 hierarchies.
- i) Development proposals should demonstrate:
- how the development will provide for and prioritise transport in line with the **sustainable travel and investment hierarchies**;
  - consideration of the need to **integrate transport modes**;
  - the need to as far as possible facilitate **access by reliable public transport**, ideally supporting the use of existing services or new services that do not require on-going public sector funding.
  - the provision of **electric, hydrogen, and other low or zero-emission vehicle and cycle charging points** that are provided in safe and convenient locations.
- j) Proposals to improve, enhance or provide **active travel infrastructure or public transport and multimodal hubs** should be supported where they can be demonstrated to be deliverable and will be effective in relation to delivering mode share targets.
- k) Proposals for new and upgraded transport infrastructure must consider the **needs of users of all ages and abilities**, including in line with relevant equalities legislation.
- l) Development proposals should consider the need to supply safe and convenient cycle parking to serve the development, sheltered where possible, unless it can be demonstrated that existing nearby provision is sufficient. **Cycle parking** should, be more conveniently located than car parking serving the development. Flatted residential development should give consideration to the need to provide secure and convenient storage for range of cycle types and sizes, depending on the type, location and accessibility of the development and the likely needs of the users.
- m) Development proposals which are ambitious in terms of **low/no car parking** have a role to play in very accessible urban locations, well-served by sustainable transport modes. In such circumstances, consideration should be given to the type, mix and use of development, car ownership levels, the surrounding uses, and the accessibility of the development by sustainable modes.

### Policy 10: Sustainable transport

**Q32: Do you agree that this policy will reduce the need to travel unsustainably, decarbonise our transport system and promote active travel choices?**

## Heat and cooling

**We want our places to help us achieve zero emissions from heating and cooling our buildings and adapt to changing temperatures.**

Heat networks can help contribute to Scotland's net zero ambitions by using and storing heat from low or zero emissions sources, such as surplus or waste heat, heat from large scale heat pumps, particularly in conjunction with geothermal systems or bodies of water or hydrogen to provide zero emissions heat to homes. Examples of potential sources of waste heat include data centres, hydrogen production, the waste water system and industrial processes.

### Policy 11: Heat and cooling

- a) **Local development plans should take into account the area's Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and areas of heat network potential and any designated heat network zones (HNZ) when allocating land.**
- b) Development proposals, including retrofit where appropriate, should be supported where they **connect to existing heat networks**. In particular, development proposals within or adjacent to a Heat Network Zone should be designed and constructed to connect to the existing heat network.
- c) Development proposals in locations **where a heat network is planned** but not yet in place should only be supported where they are designed to allow for the cost-effective connection at a later date. This may include, for example, allocating space in plant rooms for heat exchangers and thermal stores, safeguarding suitable routes for pipework from the site boundary and making provision for connections to the future network at the site boundary.
- d) Development proposals with **no demonstrable effective solution to connecting to a heat network** should provide an alternative low or zero emissions heating system.
- e) National and major development with **waste or surplus heat** should be co-located in areas of heat demand and are expected to be supported by a heat and power plan which clearly demonstrates how energy recovered from the development would be used to produce electricity and heat. Pipe runs should be safeguarded to enable later development of heat networks, including connection and pipework to the curtilage of development.
- f) Development proposals for **energy infrastructure** should take into account heat maps and zoning for heat and energy efficiency. They should be supported where they repurpose former fossil fuel infrastructure for the production of low carbon energy, are either within or adjacent to a Heat Network Zone and can be cost-effectively linked to an existing or planned heat network.
- g) **Domestic biomass energy systems** should not be supported where networked systems are available. Where no alternatives are available, applications for flues can be supported provided that the impact on local air quality and of smoke on neighbouring properties has been considered; and the associated biomass burner is a type formally approved for use in smoke control areas.
- h) Applications should be supported where they seek to **repurpose former fossil fuel infrastructure** for the production and handling of low carbon energy. Where the repurposed infrastructure will generate surplus heat, planning applications should be supported where they are either within or adjacent to a Heat Network Zone and can be cost-effectively linked to an existing or planned heat network.
- i) To reduce overheating and reliance on **air conditioning systems** as far as possible, development proposals for buildings that will be occupied by people should be designed to promote sustainable temperature management, where possible prioritising natural or passive solutions.

### Policy 11: Heat and cooling

**Q33: Do you agree that this policy will help us achieve zero emissions from heating and cooling our buildings and adapt to changing temperatures?**

## Blue and green infrastructure, play and sport

**We want our places to be greener, healthier, and more resilient to climate change by supporting and enhancing blue and green infrastructure and providing good quality local opportunities for play and sport.**

Networks of blue and green infrastructure are an integral part of successful places. Blue and green infrastructure (such as green spaces, sustainable urban drainage systems, urban trees and green roofs and walls) can offer a wide range of benefits. They can support lifelong health and wellbeing, climate resilience, flood risk management, temperature regulation in urban areas, reduction of air and noise pollution, biodiversity and nature networks, while also supporting good, green jobs. Accessible, high quality natural and civic spaces can be used by communities for many activities: exercise and recreation, play, sport and connecting with nature. The planning system should support development that expands and strengthens networks of blue and green infrastructure, to help us respond to our climate change and biodiversity goals, and support our placemaking ambitions.

Outdoor spaces for play, sport and recreation can make a significant contribution towards creating more liveable and healthier places. Children experience a range of health, wellbeing and educational benefits from outdoor play, and learning in, and connecting with nature. Providing quality opportunities for children of all ages to play will benefit their physical and cognitive development, and uphold their right to engage in play and recreational activities. The planning system should support development that expands opportunities for play in the public realm and in a range of different types of open and green spaces, and which addresses unequal access to play spaces and facilities.

## Policy 12: Blue and green infrastructure, play and sport

- a) **Local development plans should identify and protect blue and green infrastructure**, safeguarding existing assets. Plans should also identify opportunities to enhance and expand provision and access to blue and green infrastructure (at strategic and local scales). Development allocations should be chosen taking account of the areas that can best contribute to enhancing and delivering key green networks and priorities.
- b) Local development plans should **identify new, enhanced provision or improved access to play opportunities for children** as part of enhancing and expanding blue and green infrastructure. Blue and green infrastructure should provide opportunities for play and recognise the need for, and provide publicly accessible, outdoor opportunities for formal, informal and incidental play. These facilities should be good quality, accessible and suitable for different ages and abilities, to satisfy current and likely future needs and demand in the community.
- c) Development proposals that result in **fragmentation or net loss of existing blue and green infrastructure** should not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the overall integrity of the network of blue and green infrastructure will be maintained.
- d) Development proposals in **regional and country parks** should only be supported where they are compatible with the uses, natural habitats and character of the park.
- e) Development proposals should not be supported where they result in the loss of **outdoor sports facilities**, unless the proposal:
  - is ancillary to the principal use of the site as an outdoor sports facility; or
  - involves only a minor part of the facility and would not affect its use; or
  - meets a requirement to replace the facility which would be lost, either by a new facility or by upgrading an existing facility to provide a better quality facility. The location should be convenient for users and the overall playing capacity of the area should be maintained; or

- can demonstrate, in consultation with sportscotland where appropriate, that there is a clear excess of provision to meet current and anticipated demand in the area, and that the site would be developed without detriment to the overall quality of provision.
- f) Development proposals that result in the quantitative and/or qualitative **loss of children's outdoor play provision** should not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no ongoing or future demand or it is replaced by a newly created, better-quality or more appropriate provision within the development proposal.
- g) Development proposals for **temporary or permanent open space, green space or play space on unused or under-used land** should be supported.
- h) Development proposals should **incorporate and enhance blue and green infrastructure** wherever possible. They should be designed to be multifunctional and consistent with the six qualities of successful places. This means paying particular attention to, for example: ensuring that the needs of all potential users are met; connections with wider green networks for people and wildlife; responding to local character and distinctiveness; building in resilience; and maximising use throughout the year. Designs should take account of existing provision and identified requirements, to ensure the proposed blue green infrastructure is of an appropriate type(s), quantity, quality and accessibility.
- i) Major development proposals for new homes, and other major development likely to be used by children and young people should incorporate well-designed, **good-quality provision for play, recreation and relaxation**.
- j) Development proposals that include **new streets and public realm** should incorporate the principles of Designing Streets and inclusive design to enable children and young people to play and move around safely and independently; maximising the opportunities for informal and incidental play in the neighbourhood.
- k) **New, replacement or improved play provision** should, as far as possible and as appropriate:
- provide stimulating environments;
  - be inclusive;
  - be suitable for different ages of children and young people;
  - be easily and safely accessible by children and young people independently; including those with a disability;
  - incorporate trees and/or other forms of greenery;
  - form an integral part of the surrounding neighbourhood;
  - be well overlooked for passive surveillance;
  - be linked directly to other open spaces and play areas.
- l) The long-term stewardship of blue and green infrastructure should be addressed to maintain its quality and integrity. Development proposals should provide **effective management and maintenance plans** wherever this is necessary. Developers must provide details of the functions of the blue and green infrastructure, the maintenance requirements, together with the party responsible for these, and demonstrate funding arrangements for their long-term delivery to the satisfaction of the local authority before construction starts.

### Policy 12: Blue and green infrastructure, play and sport

**Q34: Do you agree that this policy will help to make our places greener, healthier, and more resilient to climate change by supporting and enhancing blue and green infrastructure and providing good quality local opportunities for play and sport?**



## Sustainable flood risk and water management

**We want our places to be resilient to future flood risk and to make efficient and sustainable use of water resources.**

The frequency, pattern and severity of flooding is expected to increase as a result of climate change leaving some places in Scotland more vulnerable to the impacts of flooding. The planning system should strengthen future resilience to flood risk by reducing the vulnerability of existing and future development to flooding. It should also encourage the use of natural flood risk management to provide wider benefits for people and nature.

### Policy 13: Flooding

- a) Local development plans should strengthen **community resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change**, including identifying opportunities to implement natural flood risk management and blue green infrastructure. Plans should take into account the probability of flooding from all sources. New development proposals in flood risk areas, or which can impact on flood risk areas, should be avoided. A cautious approach should be taken, regarding the calculated probability of flooding as a best estimate, not a precise forecast.
- b) Development proposals should not be supported within the **Future Functional Floodplain** unless they are for:
  - **essential infrastructure** where the location is required for operational reasons;
  - **water compatible uses**;
  - redevelopment of an **existing building or site** within a built-up area for an equal or less vulnerable use;
  - the site is within a built up area and has protection from an existing or committed **flood protection scheme**.

Any of the above exceptions must meet the following criteria:

  - all risks have been fully assessed and understood;
- any first occupied /utilised floor of a development is above the future flood level, plus an allowance for freeboard;
- there is no reduction in floodplain capacity, increased risk for others, or a need for future flood protection schemes;
- safe operation and access/egress can be achieved during the design flood event; and
- flood-resistant and resilient materials and construction methods are used; and
- the ability to make future adaptations to accommodate the effects of climate change can be demonstrated.
- c) **Small scale extensions and alterations to existing buildings** are outwith the scope of this policy, provided that they would not have a significant effect on the storage capacity of the functional floodplain or local flooding problems.
- d) Development proposals for Most Vulnerable and Civil Infrastructure uses in **areas outwith the functional floodplain** should incorporate additional measures to ensure that they remain safe and operational during more extreme events up to and including the 0.1% design flood.
- e) Development proposals should not be supported:
  - within areas at **risk of surface water flooding** unless the risk can be successfully mitigated;
  - where the design for surface water drainage and ground water drainage increases **discharge to the public sewer network**;
  - where the proposed drainage solution has a negative impact on the **overall catchment**; unless adequate land is set aside for blue and green infrastructure and the design and construction permits safe operation and function of the proposal in a storm event and that managed water flow is not impeded.

- f) To **avoid increased surface water flooding** development proposals should only be supported if they:
- minimise the area of impermeable surface; and
  - provide adequate drainage of surface water wherever practicable by blue and green infrastructure (such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) including raingardens).
- g) Development proposals should only be supported if they can be connected to the **public water mains**. If connection is not feasible, connection to a wholesome supply of drinking water that is resilient to periods of water scarcity can be supported in exceptional circumstances.
- h) Development proposals which create, expand or enhance opportunities for **natural flood risk management and blue-green infrastructure** should be supported.

### **Policy 13: Sustainable flood risk and water management**

**Q35: Do you agree that this policy will help to ensure places are resilient to future flood risk and make efficient and sustainable use of water resources?**



## Lifelong health, wellbeing and safety

**We want places to support health, wellbeing and safety for all, and to strengthen the resilience of communities.**

Places are important for physical and mental health and overall wellbeing. The places where children and young people grow up shape the opportunities that they have and influence the course of their life. The planning system should support development that reduces health inequalities and creates an environment that promotes active and healthier lifestyles.

### Policy 14: Health and wellbeing

- a) Local development plans should aim to create **vibrant, healthier and safe places** and should seek to **tackle health inequalities** particularly in places which are experiencing the most disadvantage. The provision of health and social care facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of the community should be a key consideration.
- b) Development proposals should not be supported where **significant adverse health effects** are likely to occur. A health impact assessment will be required for all proposed development that is considered likely to generate significant health effects or is within the categories of national developments, or major developments or is EIA development.
- c) Development proposals that would have a significant adverse effect **on air quality** should not be supported.
- d) Development proposals that would result in unacceptable levels of **noise** will not be supported. A noise impact assessment will be required where significant exposure to noise is likely to arise from the proposed development.
- e) Development proposals for, or including, space or facilities for local community food growing and allotments should be supported.

### Policy 15: Safety

Development proposals in the vicinity of major-accident hazard sites should take into account the potential impacts on the proposal and the major-accident hazard site of being located in proximity to one another. Applications regarding the presence of hazardous substances should take account of the potential impacts on surrounding populations and the environment. Decisions should be informed by, amongst other things, the Health and Safety Executive's planning applications advice (including on hazardous substances consent), and, in relevant cases, that of the Office of Nuclear Regulation. Similar considerations apply in respect of development proposals either for or near licensed explosive sites (including military explosive storage sites).

### Policies 14 and 15: Health, wellbeing and safety

**Q36: Do you agree that this policy will ensure places support health, wellbeing and safety, and strengthen the resilience of communities?**



## Productive Places

### Land and premises for business and employment

**We want our places to support new and expanded businesses and investment, stimulate entrepreneurship and promote alternative ways of working in order to achieve a green recovery and build a wellbeing economy.**

Scotland's recovery from COVID-19 provides an opportunity to consider the sort of economy we want to have and to focus efforts on supporting good, green jobs, businesses and industries for the future. Our green economic recovery will support our ambitions to build a wellbeing economy that maximises economic, social and environmental wellbeing for everyone. Planning has a central role to play in achieving these ambitions, and in supporting business, industry and innovation. Economic success will be sustainable and inclusive and support the health and wellbeing of our communities and environment. We want to enable investment that supports the just transition to a net zero, nature-positive economy. As part of this, community wealth building initiatives will help us to strengthen the social and environmental value of future business investment.

#### Policy 16: Business and Employment

- a) Local development plans should set out proposals to meet requirements for **employment land, infrastructure and investment in a way which supports a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.**
- b) Development proposals for **business and employment uses in sites allocated for those uses in the local development plan** should be supported, provided that environmental impacts have been assessed and considered acceptable. Net economic benefit should be taken into account, in the context of Scotland's ambitions for a wellbeing economy.
- c) Development proposals for **home-working, live-work units and micro-businesses** should be supported where it can be demonstrated that the scale and nature of the proposed business will be compatible with the surrounding area and there will be no unacceptable impacts on neighbouring uses.
- d) Development proposals for **business, general industrial and storage and distribution uses** should be compatible with the primary business function of the area. Other employment uses should be supported where they will not prejudice the primary business function of the area, are compatible with the business/industrial character of the area, and comply with other plan policies.
- e) Conditions for **site restoration** at the end of the period of commercial use should be considered in appropriate instances.
- f) Development proposals for **business, general industrial and storage and distribution uses outwith areas identified for those uses in the local development plan** should be supported where the nature and scale of the activity will be compatible with the surrounding area and there will be no unacceptable impacts on neighbouring uses and the natural environment.

- g) Development proposals for business and industrial uses must take into account:
- surrounding **residential amenity** and sensitive uses;
  - population **health and wellbeing**, including **inequalities**;
  - **environmental quality and historic environment assets**;
  - **access, parking and traffic generation and air quality**.

**Policy 16: Land and premises for business and employment**

**Q37: Do you agree that this policy ensures places support new and expanded businesses and investment, stimulate entrepreneurship and promote alternative ways of working in order to achieve a green recovery and build a wellbeing economy?**

## Sustainable tourism

**We want our places to inspire people to visit Scotland, and to support sustainable tourism which benefits local people and is consistent with our net zero and nature commitments.**

Tourism can bring a wealth of economic, social and cultural benefits to our communities, cities and regions, supporting resilience and stimulating job creation but it is facing a number of challenges including the recovery from COVID-19. The planning system should support the recovery of the tourism sector, ensuring that communities have a share in tourism benefits and that tourism uses are sustainable and safeguard our environmental, cultural and community assets.

### Policy 17: Tourism

- a) Local development plans should support the **resilience of the tourism sector**, including by identifying proposals for tourism development which reflect sector driven tourism strategies.
- b) Development proposals for **new or extended tourist facilities or accommodation**, including caravan and camping sites, should be supported in locations that can contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of the local economy.
- c) Development proposals **in areas where existing tourism provision is having adverse impacts on the environment or the quality of life and health and wellbeing of local communities** should only be supported if satisfactory measures are proposed to alleviate existing pressures and prevent further adverse impacts.
- d) Proposals for **huts** will be supported where the nature and scale of the activity will be compatible with the surrounding area and the proposal complies with relevant good practice guidance.<sup>3</sup>

- e) Development proposals for the reuse of existing buildings for **short term holiday letting** should not be supported if it would result in:
  - an unacceptable impact on the local amenity or character of a neighbourhood or area; or
  - the loss of residential accommodation where such loss is not outweighed by local economic benefits.
- f) Development proposals that involve the **change of use of a tourism-related facility** should only be supported if it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable and that there is no requirement for alternative tourist facilities in the area.
- g) Development proposals for tourist facilities should take into account:
  - the contribution made by the development to **economic prosperity, local employment and community wealth building**;
  - **compatibility with the surrounding area** in terms of the nature and scale of the activity and impacts of increased visitors;
  - **impacts on communities**, for example by hindering the provision of homes and services for local people;
  - **access, parking and traffic generation**.

### Policy 17: Sustainable tourism

**Q38: Do you agree that this policy will help to inspire people to visit Scotland, and support sustainable tourism which benefits local people and is consistent with our net-zero and nature commitments?**

<sup>3</sup> New hutting developments: good practice guidance on the planning, development and management of huts and hut sites.

## Culture and creativity

**We want our places to reflect and facilitate enjoyment of, and investment in, our collective culture and creativity.**

Culture and the creative industries are central to Scotland's health and wellbeing and cultural, social, economic and environmental prosperity and can also be an important catalyst for regeneration and town centre vibrancy that strengthens the sense of place. The planning system should support the expansion of Scotland's creative industries and ensure that there are equitable opportunities available for local communities to participate in artistic and cultural activities.

### Policy 18: Culture and creativity

- a) Local development plans should recognise and support **opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage and the arts.**
- b) Development proposals should seek to make provision **for public art** where they involve a significant change to, or the creation of new, public open spaces.
- c) Development proposals for **creative workspaces or other cultural uses that** will utilise the temporary use of vacant spaces or property should be supported.
- d) Development proposals should not be supported where they would result in the **loss of an arts or cultural venue** unless:
  - there is no longer a sustainable demand for the venue and after marketing the site through relevant local and national agents and online platforms at a reasonable rate for at least 12 months there has been no viable interest from potential operators; or
  - the venue, as evidenced by consultation, no longer meets the needs of users and cannot be adapted; or

- alternative provision of equal or greater standard is made available at a suitable location within the local area; and
- the loss of the venue doesn't result in loss or damage to assets or objects of significant cultural value.

Development proposals within the vicinity of existing arts venues should fully reflect the **agent of change principle**. They should only be supported where they can demonstrate that measures can be put in place to ensure that existing noise and disturbance impacts on the proposed development would be acceptable and that existing venues and facilities can continue without additional restrictions being placed on them as a result of the proposed new development.

### Policy 18: Culture and creativity

**Q39: Do you agree that this policy supports our places to reflect and facilitate enjoyment of, and investment in, our collective culture and creativity?**



## Green energy

**We want our places to support continued expansion of low-carbon and net zero energy technologies as a key contributor to net zero emissions by 2045.**

Scotland's energy sector has a significant role to play in reducing carbon emissions and contributing to a green, fair and resilient economic recovery. A wide range of renewable technologies are capable of delivering these benefits, although it is likely that the onshore wind sector will play the greatest role in the coming years. The planning system should support all forms of renewable energy development and energy storage, together with new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure. It should also support new and emerging technology including hydrogen and carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS).

### Policy 19: Green Energy

- a) Local development plans should seek to ensure that an **area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources is achieved**. Opportunities for new development, extensions and repowering of existing renewable energy developments should be supported.
- b) Development proposals for **all forms of renewable energy and low-carbon fuels**, together with enabling works such as transmission and distribution infrastructure, and energy storage such as battery storage, should be supported in principle.
- c) Development proposals for **wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas** should not be supported.
- d) **Outwith National Parks and National Scenic Areas**, and recognising the sensitivity of any other national or international designations, development proposals for new wind farms should be supported unless the impacts identified (including cumulative effects), are unacceptable. To inform this, site specific assessments including where applicable Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) are required.
- e) Development proposals to **repower, extend and expand existing wind farms** and for the extension of life to existing windfarms should be supported unless the impacts identified (including cumulative effects) are unacceptable.
- f) Development proposals for **small scale renewable energy generation technology** should be supported.
- g) **Areas identified for wind farms should be suitable for use in perpetuity**. Consents may be time-limited but wind farms should nevertheless be sited and designed to ensure impacts are minimised and to protect an acceptable level of amenity for adjacent communities.
- h) Major applications for energy generation from low carbon sources, for manufacturing or industrial developments should be accompanied by a **decarbonisation strategy** to demonstrate how greenhouse gas emissions from the process are appropriately abated. That strategy may include carbon capture and storage.
- i) Proposals for **negative emissions technologies** and carbon capture should be supported in principle.
- j) Development proposals for **solar arrays** should be supported where the planning authority is satisfied that the arrays would not adversely affect (including the effect of glint and glare) residential amenity, road safety, historic environment assets, or aviation interests. Ground mounted arrays should be installed using pile driven or screw foundations rather than trench foundations to facilitate restoration of the site.
- k) Specific considerations will vary relative to the scale of the proposal and area characteristics but development proposals for renewable energy developments must take into account:
  - net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities;
  - the scale of contribution to renewable energy generation targets;



- effect on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets;
- cumulative impacts – taking into account the cumulative impact of existing and consented energy development;
- impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including visual impact, residential amenity, noise and shadow flicker;
- landscape and visual impacts, including effects on wild land;
- effects on the natural heritage, including birds;
- impacts on carbon rich soils;
- public access, including impact on long-distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes;
- impacts on historic environment assets, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings and their settings;
- impacts on tourism and recreation;
- impacts on aviation and defence interests including seismological recording;
- impacts on telecommunications and broadcasting installations, particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised;
- impacts on road traffic and on adjacent trunk roads;
- effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk;
- the need for conditions relating to the decommissioning of developments, including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration, opportunities for energy storage; and
- the need for a robust planning obligation to ensure that operators achieve site restoration.

### **Policy 19: Green energy**

**Q40: Do you agree that this policy will ensure our places support continued expansion of low-carbon and net zero energy technologies as a key contributor to net zero emissions by 2045?**

## Zero waste

**We want our places to be more resource efficient, and supported by services and facilities that help to achieve a circular economy.**

The circular economy is a significant economic and environmental opportunity to manage waste and resources in a way that contributes to Scotland's net zero and sustainability ambitions and green recovery. The planning system should support development which reflects the waste hierarchy, prioritising the reduction and reuse of materials, and facilitate the delivery of new infrastructure required to achieve this.

The Scottish Government has commissioned an independent review of the role that incineration plays in Scotland's waste hierarchy. Any emerging outcomes will be taken into account in the finalised version of National Planning Framework 4.

### Policy 20: Zero Waste

- a) Local development plans should identify **appropriate locations for new infrastructure** to support the circular economy and meet identified needs in a way that moves waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible.
- b) Development proposals should aim to **reduce, reuse, or recycle materials in line with the waste hierarchy**. All developments should aim to use materials with the lowest forms of embodied emissions. Materials should be suitable for reuse with minimal reprocessing. The use of previously used, sustainable, local, recycled and natural construction materials that also store carbon, such as timber, is encouraged. Construction and demolition methods should minimise emissions as far as possible.
- c) Development proposals within the categories of national and major developments should take into account **circular economy principles** and aim to reduce, reuse or recycle waste in line with the waste hierarchy. Where appropriate, they should:
  - reuse existing buildings and infrastructure;
  - minimise demolition and salvage materials for reuse;
  - use design and construction measures to minimise waste, reduce pressure on virgin resources and enable building materials, components and products to be disassembled, and reused at the end of their useful life;
  - support maintenance, longevity, adaptability and flexibility;
  - identify how much waste the proposal is expected to generate and how and where the waste will be managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy, including demonstrating the management of as much waste as possible on site;
  - make provision for adequate and accessible storage space and collection systems when the development is operational to support the waste hierarchy, including reuse and recycling;
  - set out how performance will be monitored and reported.
- d) **Development proposals that are likely to generate waste** when operational, including residential, commercial and industrial properties, should include provision to maximise waste reduction and waste separation at source, and minimise the cross-contamination of materials, through:
  - appropriate segregation and storage of waste;
  - appropriate convenient access for the collection of waste; and
  - appropriate recycling and localised waste management facilities.
- e) Development proposals for **waste infrastructure and facilities** (except landfill and energy from waste) should be supported where:
  - there are no unacceptable impacts (including cumulative) on the residential amenity of nearby dwellings, local communities and historic environment assets;
  - environmental (including cumulative) impacts relating to noise, dust, smells, pest control and pollution of land, air and water are acceptable;
  - any greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the processing and transportation of wastes to and from the facility are minimised and offset;

- an adequate buffer zone between sites and settlements is provided taking account of the various environmental effects likely to arise;
  - a restoration and aftercare scheme (including appropriate financial mechanisms) is provided and agreed to ensure the site is restored in the event of operator failure.
- f) Development proposals for **new waste infrastructure (except landfill and energy from waste/incineration) should be supported if the proposal is located within an established area** suitable for business (class 4), general industrial (class 5) or storage (class 6) and provided they are in line with Scottish Government objectives on waste management to maximise the value of secondary resources to the economy and move waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible. Consideration should also be given to co-location with end users of outputs to support the establishment of associated industries and businesses to maximise the value of secondary resources where appropriate. Outwith those areas only small scale facilities needing a location accessible to the public will be supported (e.g. bottle banks and deposit return scheme return points).
- g) Development proposals for **new or extended landfill** sites should only be supported where:
- there is a demonstrable need for additional landfill capacity taking into account Scottish Government [objectives](#) on waste management; and
  - waste heat and/or electricity generation is included. Where this is considered impractical, evidence and justification must be provided.
- h) Proposals for the capture, distribution or use of gases captured from landfill sites or waste water treatment plant should be supported.
- i) Development proposals which involve the **recovery of energy from waste** should only be supported where the proposal:
- is in a location identified or supported by the local development plan; and,
  - is consistent with climate change mitigation targets and in line with circular economy principles; and,
  - can demonstrate that a functional heat network can be created and provided within the site for appropriate infrastructure to allow a heat network to be developed and that wherever possible, potential local consumers have been identified; and
  - is supported by a heat and power plan, which demonstrates how energy recovered from the development would be used to provide electricity and heat, including the scope to efficiently distribute heat to sites which have a long-term high heat demand and where consideration is given to methods to improve the sustainability of the facility, such as carbon capture and storage. The accompanying information should account for future and current annual figures of waste infrastructure capacity needs for a variety of technologies (e.g. those produced by SEPA) including thermal treatment infrastructure and that options for alternative technologies that retain the value of materials have been exhausted. It should also account for potential changes in waste composition and demonstrate that it will not prevent waste being moved further up the waste hierarchy; and
  - comply with the Thermal Treatment of Waste Guidelines published by SEPA; and
  - should supply a decarbonisation strategy aligned with Scottish Government decarbonisation goals and be refused where the strategy is insufficient; and
  - deliver demonstrable community benefits if the energy from waste proposal would treat waste from an area wider than the local authority.
- Development proposals should not be supported if they would, either directly or indirectly, **limit the operation of existing or proposed waste management facilities.**

### Policy 20: Zero waste

**Q41: Do you agree that this policy will help our places to be more resource efficient, and to be supported by services and facilities that help to achieve a circular economy?**

## Sustainable aquaculture

**We want to support investment in aquaculture and minimise its potential impacts on the environment.**

Aquaculture is an increasingly important industry for Scotland, helping to sustain economic success in the rural and coastal communities of the north and west. The planning and licensing system should support the prosperity of the finfish, shellfish and seaweed sectors, including by guiding new development to locations that reflect industry needs and take into account wider marine planning.

### Policy 21: Aquaculture

- a) Local development plans should guide new aquaculture development to locations that **reflect industry needs and take account of environmental impact, including cumulative impacts that arise from other existing and planned aquaculture developments in the area, and wider marine planning.**
- b) In order to **safeguard migratory fish species** further salmon and trout open pen fish farm developments on the north and east coasts of mainland Scotland should not be supported.
- c) Development proposals for aquaculture should be supported where they **comply with the local development plan, the National Marine Plan and, where relevant, the appropriate Regional Marine Plan.**
- d) Development **proposals for fish farm developments** should demonstrate that:
  - operational impacts (including from noise, acoustic deterrent devices (where applicable) light, access, containment, deposition, waste emissions and sea lice, aquaculture litter and odour) are acceptable and comply with the relevant regulatory framework; and that significant cumulative impacts are appropriately managed;
  - the siting and design of cages, lines and associated facilities are appropriate for the location; and,
  - the siting and design of any land based facilities are appropriate for the location.

### Policy 21: Aquaculture

**Q42: Do you agree that this policy will support investment in aquaculture and minimise its potential impacts on the environment?**

## Minerals

**We want to support the sustainable management of resources and to minimise the impacts of extraction of minerals on communities and the environment.**

The extraction and use of minerals makes an essential contribution to the Scottish economy by providing important raw materials for manufacturing, construction, agriculture and other industries. The planning system should safeguard important mineral resources and ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet the demands of industry in a way that minimises the impacts of extraction on the environment and local communities.

### Policy 22: Minerals

- a) **Local development plans should support the 10-year landbank** at all times in the relevant market areas, whilst promoting sustainable resource management, safeguarding important workable mineral resources, which are of economic or conservation value, and take steps to ensure these are not sterilised by other types of development.
- b) Planning applications that seek to explore, develop and produce **fossil fuels** (excluding unconventional oil and gas) will not be supported other than in exceptional circumstances. Any such exceptions would need to demonstrate that the proposal is consistent with national policy on energy and targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- c) The Scottish Government does not support the development of **unconventional oil and gas in Scotland**. This means development connected to the onshore exploration, appraisal or production of coal bed methane or shale oil or shale gas using unconventional oil and gas extraction techniques, including hydraulic fracturing and dewatering for coal bed methane.
- d) Extraction criteria: Development proposals for the sustainable **extraction of aggregates** should be supported where they:
  - will not result in adverse impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment, sensitive habitats and the historic environment, as well as landscape and visual impacts;
  - provide an adequate buffer zone between sites and settlements taking account of the specific circumstances of individual proposals, including size, duration, location, method of working, topography, and the characteristics of the various environmental effects likely to arise;
  - demonstrate acceptable impacts (including cumulative impact) on any nearby homes, local communities and known sensitive receptors and designations;
  - demonstrate acceptable levels (including cumulative impact) of noise, dust, vibration and potential pollution of land, air and water;
  - minimise transport impacts through the number and length of lorry trips and by using rail or water transport wherever practical;
  - have appropriate mitigation plans in place for any adverse impacts;
  - include schemes for a high standard of restoration and aftercare and commitment that such work is undertaken at the earliest opportunity. As a further safeguard a range of [financial guarantee options](#) are available and the most effective solution should be considered and agreed on a site-by-site basis. Solutions should provide assurance and clarity over the amount and period of the guarantee and in particular, where it is a bond, the risks covered (including operator failure) and the triggers for calling in a bond, including payment terms.
- e) Development proposals for **borrow pits** should be supported where:
  - the proposal is tied to a specific project and is time-limited;
  - the operator is required to comply with the mineral extraction criteria; and
  - appropriate restoration proposals are enforceable.

### Policy 22: Minerals

**Q43: Do you agree that this policy will support the sustainable management of resources and minimise the impacts of extraction of minerals on communities and the environment?**



## Digital infrastructure

**We want our all of our places to be digitally connected.**

Digital connectivity has a central role to play in unlocking the potential of our places and the economy and in opening up more remote parts of Scotland for investment and population growth. This will play an increasingly important role in supporting essential services including healthcare and education. We want to ensure that no areas are left behind by closing the digital divide. The planning system should continue to support the roll-out of digital infrastructure across all of Scotland, ensuring that policies recognise the importance of future-proofing infrastructure provision whilst addressing impacts on local communities and the environment.

### Policy 23: Digital Infrastructure

- a) Local development plans should support the **delivery of digital infrastructure**, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.
- b) Development proposals should incorporate **appropriate, universal and futureproofed digital infrastructure**. This should be done in consultation with service providers.
- c) Development proposals that deliver **new digital services or provide technological improvements**, particularly in areas with no or low connectivity capacity, should be supported. Planning authorities should not question the need for the service to be provided where proposals are clearly aligned with fulfilling the delivery of local or national policy objectives which support the roll-out of digital infrastructure in areas with no or low connectivity where there are benefits of this connectivity for communities and the local economy.

- d) Development **proposals for telecommunications development** should be supported where:
  - the visual and amenity impact of the proposed development has been minimised through careful siting, design and where appropriate landscaping;
  - it has been demonstrated that all practicable options and alternative sites have been considered, including the possibility of using existing masts, structures and buildings and/or site sharing;
  - there is no physical obstruction to aerodrome operations, technical sites or existing transmitter/receiver facilities.
- e) Development proposals that are likely to have an adverse effect on the **operation of existing digital infrastructure** or on the delivery of strategic roll-out plans should not be supported unless appropriate mitigation measures can be provided.

### Policy 23: Digital infrastructure

**Q44: Do you agree that this policy ensures all of our places will be digitally connected?**





## Distinctive Places

### City, town, commercial and local centres

**We want our places to support low carbon, healthier urban living.**

Our cities and towns are a national asset and their centres bring together a wide range of functions and land uses. As a result of long term change, exacerbated by COVID-19, our city, town and local centres are facing significant and serious economic, environmental and societal challenges. The planning system should help them adapt and be vibrant, healthier, creative, enterprising, accessible and resilient places for people to live, learn, work, enjoy and visit and should identify opportunities to enhance town centres. To do this their role at the heart of place based strategies and in supporting 20 minute neighbourhoods must be recognised and supported. Planning should direct development to the most sustainable locations, that are accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes and provide communities with easy access to the goods and services they need.

#### Policy 24: Centres

- a) Local development plans should support **sustainable futures for city, town and local centres and identify a network of centres**. This should reflect the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the town centre vision, and take into account how they are connected by public transport and walking, wheeling and cycling.
- b) Development proposals that improve the **vitality and viability of city, town and local centres**, including by extending the mix of types of development, should be supported.

#### Policy 25: Retail

- a) Development proposals for **retail development which will generate significant footfall** in:
  - town centre sites should be supported;
  - edge-of-town centre or commercial centres, should not be supported unless they are explicitly supported by the development plan;
  - out-of-town locations should not be supported.
- b) Retail developments (whether new development, expansions or changes of use) should be of an appropriate scale and should have an **acceptable impact on the character and amenity of the area**. Consideration should be given to the location and design of retail stores, or click-and-collect locker pick up points, to best channel footfall and activity to benefit the place as a whole.
- c) Development proposals should not be supported if they contribute to the number and **clustering of some non-retail uses**, such as hot food takeaways, including permanently sited vans, betting offices and high interest moneylending premises, if the further provision of particular activities would undermine the character and amenity of centres or the health and wellbeing of centres and their communities, particularly in disadvantaged areas.
- d) When considering proposals for **neighbourhood shopping** planning authorities, developers, owners and occupiers should be flexible and realistic in applying the sequential approach, recognising the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods. Consideration should be given to where a retail proposal will alleviate a lack of convenience goods/fresh healthier food and drink provision, especially in disadvantaged or remoter areas.

- e) **In islands and rural areas, shops ancillary to other uses, such as farm shops that will help meet demand for fresh produce, craft shops and shops linked to petrol/service/charging stations** should be supported. They can serve a useful role, by providing new sources of jobs and services. The lack of public transport in some rural areas should not preclude small scale retail or service developments, where this would serve local needs. In assessing such proposals planning authorities should take account of the potential impact on nearby town and commercial centres or village/local shops; desirability of providing a service throughout the year; and likely impact of traffic generated and access and parking arrangements.

### Policy 26: Town centre first assessment

- a) Development proposals for other **uses which will generate significant footfall** (or in the case of drive-throughs, a significant number of visitors) including commercial leisure uses, offices, community and cultural facilities and, where appropriate, other public buildings such as libraries, education and healthcare facilities and public spaces where people can gather, should only be considered acceptable in out-of-centre locations if a town-centre first assessment demonstrates that:
- all town centre, edge of town centre and other commercial centre options have been sequentially assessed and discounted as unsuitable or unavailable;
  - the scale of development proposed is appropriate, and that the proposal cannot reasonably be altered or reduced in scale to allow it to be accommodated in a city, town or local centre;
- the impacts on existing town centres have been thoroughly assessed and there will be no significant adverse effect on the vitality and viability of existing town centres; and
  - the proposal will not adversely impact on action to tackle climate change by generating significant levels of additional journeys with reliance on the private car and the proposal fully complies with the transport policy on significant travel-generating uses.
- b) The town centre-first assessment should identify the potential **relationship of the proposed development with the network of centres** identified in the development plan. Where possible, developers should agree the data required with the planning authority and present information on areas of dispute in a succinct and comparable form. This should demonstrate the potential economic impact of development and any possible displacement effects including the net impact on jobs. It should also consider supply chains and whether local suppliers and workers will be a viable option and the environmental impact of transporting goods and of staff and visitors travelling to the location.
- c) To support the role of town centres in a 20 minute neighbourhood, the town centre first assessment and associated requirements should be applied flexibly and realistically for **community, education, health and social care and sport and leisure facilities** so that they are easily accessible to the communities that they are intended to serve. Consideration should be given to making more space available for walking, wheeling and cycling as an integral part of this.

## Policy 27: Town Centre Living

- a) **Town centre living should be encouraged and supported.** Planning authorities should seek to provide a proportion of their housing land requirements in city and town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities.
- b) Development proposals for **new residential development within city/town centres** should be supported. If the development is for the reuse of a vacant building it should be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable.
- c) Development proposals for the **conversion, or reuse of vacant upper floors for residential use** should be supported.
- d) Development proposals for **residential use at ground floor level** should be supported where the planning authority is satisfied the proposal will:
- retain an attractive and appropriate frontage;
  - not adversely affect the vitality and viability of a shopping area or the wider town centre; and
  - not result in an undesirable concentration of uses, or ‘dead frontages’.

- e) Development proposals for city or town centre living should **ensure suitable residential amenity can be achieved.** This will require careful consideration if the proposed development is in the same built structure as:

- a hot food shop, amusement centre, amusement arcade, casino or licensed premises (with the exception of hotels, restaurants, cafés or off licences); and/or
- there is a common or shared access with licenced premises or other use likely to be detrimental to residential amenity;

If putting forward proposals for new homes in such cases, the onus will be on the developer to clearly demonstrate that suitable residential amenity can be achieved.

### Policies 24 to 27: Distinctive places

**Q45: Do you agree that these policies will ensure Scotland’s places will support low-carbon urban living?**

## Historic assets and places

**We want to protect and enhance our historic environment, and to support the reuse of redundant or neglected historic buildings.**

Our historic environment is important to many aspects of life, from defining the character of the places where we live and work, promoting a sense of belonging and cultural identity and encouraging civic participation to supporting the tourist economy. The planning system should protect and enhance historic environment assets and places and recognise their cultural heritage benefits and associated social, environmental and economic value to our national, regional and local economies, cultural identity, and for their potential to support health and wellbeing, the circular economy, and climate change adaptation.

### Policy 28: Historic Assets and Places

- a) **Local development plans and their spatial strategies should identify, protect and enhance locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued historic assets and places.**
- b) In considering development proposals and projects with a potentially significant impact on **historic assets or places**, planning authorities should consider whether further and more detailed assessment is required to establish a shared understanding of the cultural significance of historic assets and places. This should then provide a sound basis for understanding the impact of any proposals for change. Development proposals should also be informed by Managing Change Guidance Notes published by Historic Environment Scotland.
- c) Development proposals for the **demolition of listed buildings or other works that adversely affect the special interest of a building or its setting** should not be supported. This should only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and where it has been adequately demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain, reuse and/or adapt the listed building.
- d) Development proposals for the **reuse, alteration or extension of a listed building** should only be supported where its character, special architectural or historic interest and setting are not adversely affected. Development proposals affecting the setting of a listed building should also not adversely affect its character, special architectural or historic interest.
- e) Development proposals should **preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and their settings** by means of use, scale and massing, context, high quality design, suitable materials, careful layout and siting. Proposals should have regard to the character of the area as identified in the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal/Management Plan (if available) and should respect the density, built form and layout and the architectural and historic character of the area.
- f) The **demolition of buildings in a conservation area** which make a positive contribution to its character should not be supported. Before demolition is considered, reasonable efforts should be made to retain, repair and reuse the building. In some cases, demolition may be considered acceptable, for example, if the building is of little townscape value, if its structural condition rules out its retention at reasonable cost, or if its form or location makes its reuse extremely difficult. In instances where demolition is to be followed by re-development within a conservation area, the consent to demolish should only be considered when there is an acceptable design and materials for the new building.
- g) Development proposals should ensure that **existing natural and built features which contribute to the character of the conservation area and/or its setting** are retained especially structures, boundary walls, railings, trees and hedges.
- h) **Scheduled monuments** are designated to secure their long-term protection in the national interest, in situ and as far as possible in the form they have come down to us. This helps to ensure their long-term

protection wherever possible. Development proposals which affect scheduled monuments should only be supported where they avoid direct impacts on scheduled monuments and any adverse impacts upon their setting, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Where it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances, impacts on the monument or its setting should be minimised and mitigated as far as possible. Scheduled Monuments are designated by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and regulated through their Scheduled Monument Consent process. Development management decisions should also be informed by HES's Scheduled Monument Consents Policy.

- i) Development proposals affecting sites within the **Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes** should only be supported where they protect, preserve and enhance such places and do not impact adversely upon the cultural significance, character and integrity of the site; nor upon important views to, from and within them; nor upon the setting of component features which contribute to their historical, architectural, archaeological, artistic, scenic, horticultural and nature conservation interest.
- j) Development proposals affecting sites within the **Inventory of Historic Battlefields** should protect and, where appropriate, enhance a battlefield's cultural significance, key landscape characteristics, physical remains and special qualities.
- k) Development proposals that extend offshore should not significantly hinder the preservation objectives of **Historic Marine Protected Areas**.
- l) Development proposals that affect a **World Heritage Site** or its setting should only be supported where their Outstanding Universal Value is protected and preserved.
- m) Development proposals that sensitively repair, **enhance and bring back into beneficial use historic environment assets identified as being at risk** should be supported. The Buildings At Risk Register (BARR) should be

used to inform and guide decision making and investment within the historic environment and other placemaking activities. Planning authorities with the support of Historic Environment Scotland are encouraged to use the BARR as a focus and catalyst for heritage regeneration, as well as an aid for greater understanding and appreciation of a place's historic environment.

- n) **Enabling development for historic assets or places that would otherwise be unacceptable**, should only be supported where it can be demonstrated that development will secure the future of a historic place or asset at risk of serious deterioration or loss and what is being proposed is the minimum necessary to secure its restoration, adaptation and long term future. The beneficial outcomes for the asset or place should be secured early in the phasing of the development and will be secured through conditions and/or legal agreements.
- o) Development proposals should avoid **adverse impacts on non-designated historic environment assets, areas and their setting**. Where impacts cannot be avoided they should be minimised and mitigated as far as possible. Planning authorities should protect and preserve these resources in situ wherever feasible. Where it has been demonstrated that retention is not possible, excavation, recording, analysis, archiving and publication may be required through the use of conditions or legal obligations.
- p) When **archaeological discoveries** are made in the course of development works, they should be reported to the planning authority to enable discussion on appropriate inspection, recording and mitigation measures.

#### **Policy 28: Historic assets and places**

**Q46: Do you agree that this policy will protect and enhance our historic environment, and support the reuse of redundant or neglected historic buildings?**



## Urban edges and the green belt

**We want to increase the density of our settlements, restore nature and promote local living by limiting urban expansion and using the land around our towns and cities wisely.**

Green belts can be used as a settlement management tool around Scotland's towns and cities to help to direct growth to the most appropriate, sustainable locations. Green belts can have a role in protecting and enhancing the character, landscape and natural setting and identity of settlements, providing outdoor access to green networks which link urban and rural areas and supporting nature networks. A green belt will not be necessary for most settlements, as other policies can provide an appropriate basis for directing development to the right locations, and protecting nature, landscapes and green networks.

### Policy 29: Urban edges

a) **Local development plans should consider using green belts where appropriate in some of the most accessible or pressured rural or peri-urban areas**, where there is significant danger of unsustainable growth in car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside. In such circumstances green belts can provide a more restrictive approach to development, to benefit quality of life and environment in our cities and towns, increase urban density and minimise the need to travel using unsustainable modes. Green belts should be identified or reviewed when preparing plans with detailed boundaries clearly identified.

b) Development **proposals within a green belt designated within the local development plan should not be supported** unless for:

- development associated with agriculture, woodland creation, forestry and existing woodland (including community woodlands); residential accommodation required and designed for a worker in a primary industry within the immediate

vicinity of their place of employment where the presence of a worker is essential to the operation of the enterprise, or retired workers where there is no suitable alternative accommodation available;

- horticulture, including market gardening and directly connected retailing, as well as community growing;
- recreation, outdoor sport, leisure and tourism uses that are compatible with a countryside or natural setting; and developments that provide opportunities for access to the open countryside (including routes for active travel);
- flood risk management (such as development of blue and green infrastructure within a 'drainage catchment' to manage/mitigate flood risk and/or drainage issues);
- development meeting a national requirement or established need, if no other suitable site is available;
- essential infrastructure (such as digital communications infrastructure, telecoms infrastructure, electricity grid connections, transport proposals and travel networks identified in the local development plan, or new cemetery provision), where these cannot be accommodated anywhere other than the green belt;
- minerals operations and renewable energy developments (where located within an identified area of search);
- intensification of established uses, including extensions to an existing building where that is ancillary to the main use;
- the reuse, rehabilitation and conversion of historic environment assets; and
- one-for-one replacements of existing permanent houses currently in occupation.



- c) Development proposals in such cases will be required to provide a statement identifying the search area and the site options assessed, where applicable the details of the existing or proposed activity to which the proposal relates, and the **reasons as to why a green belt location is essential**. The primary consideration will be whether the development could instead be located on an alternative site outwith the green belt. Proposals should also support the qualities of successful places and safeguard historic environment assets and green and blue infrastructure. In particular all such applications should ensure the development:
- does not undermine the purpose of the green belt at that location;
  - is fully compatible with the surrounding established countryside and landscape character;
  - is of a scale, massing, external appearance, and uses materials that contribute to harmony with the visual character of the green belt;
  - has no unacceptable long-term impacts on the environmental quality of the green belt.
- d) Proposals on sites in the green belt for other types of development should not be supported.

### **Policy 29: Urban edges and the green belt**

**Q47: Do you agree that this policy will increase the density of our settlements, restore nature and promote local living by limiting urban expansion and using the land around our towns and cities wisely?**

## Vacant and derelict land and empty buildings

### We want to proactively enable the reuse of vacant and derelict land and buildings.

The reuse of vacant and derelict land and properties can contribute to climate change targets and support biodiversity, health and wellbeing improvements and resilient communities by providing much needed greenspace, growing spaces and other community benefits. Redevelopment for housing or businesses can also turn an under-utilised and latent asset into productive use and limit the need for urban expansion. The planning system should prioritise the use of vacant and derelict land and properties including supporting appropriate temporary uses where proposals for permanent development are unlikely to be imminent.

### Policy 30: Vacant and Derelict Land

- a) **Local development plans should seek to reuse vacant and derelict land and redundant buildings as a priority including in proposals to creatively and sustainably repurpose buildings and structures.**
- b) Planning applications for proposals that result in the **permanent or temporary reuse of vacant or derelict land and buildings** should be supported in principle.
- c) Proposals on **greenfield sites** should not be supported unless the site has been allocated for development or the proposal is explicitly supported by policies in the development plan, and there are no suitable brownfield alternatives.
- d) Where land is known or suspected to be **unstable or contaminated**, development proposals must be able to demonstrate that the land is, or can be made, safe and suitable for the proposed new use.
- e) Development proposals for the **reuse of existing buildings** should be supported, taking into account their suitability for conversion to other uses. Demolition should be regarded as the least preferred option.

### Policy 30: Vacant and derelict land

**Q48: Do you agree that this policy will help to proactively enable the reuse of vacant and derelict land and buildings?**

## Rural places

### We want our rural places to be vibrant and sustainable.

Scotland's diverse rural places provide valuable natural resources for key economic sectors, especially food and drink, but also energy, tourism, creative industries and life science whilst each area will face unique locational challenges often centred around depopulation and service provision. The planning system should encourage development that helps to support, sustain and grow rural areas and stimulate a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy whilst safeguarding and growing the natural assets that underpin businesses and jobs. Rural economic activity, innovation, and diversification should be encouraged, while ensuring that the distinctive character of the rural area, the service function of small towns and natural assets and cultural heritage are safeguarded and enhanced.

### Policy 31: Rural places

- a) **Local development plans should set out proposals to support the sustainability and prosperity of rural communities and economies.** Plans should identify accessible, intermediate and remote areas across the mainland and islands. The spatial strategy should set out an appropriate approach to development in areas of pressure and decline, including proposals for future population growth. It should also be informed by an understanding of population change over time.
- b) Development proposals that support the **resettlement of previously inhabited areas** should be supported where the proposal is consistent with climate change mitigation targets.
- c) Development proposals in **rural areas** should be supported where the development will:
  - reflect the development pressures, environmental assets, and economic needs of the area;
  - address issues of need for a rural location and are suitably scaled, sited and designed to be in keeping with the rural character of the area;
  - reuse a redundant or under used building;
  - provide an appropriate use of a historic environment asset or is appropriate enabling development to secure the future of historic environment assets; or
  - reuse vacant and derelict land or brownfield where a return to a natural state is not likely; or
  - provide affordable housing on a small site that may not normally be used for housing where it can be shown that there is a significant unmet local need for affordable housing; or
  - contribute towards sustainable settlements and 20 minute neighbourhoods.
- d) Development proposals that contribute to the **viability, sustainability and diversity of the local economy** should be supported, including:
  - diversification of farms, crofts or other land use businesses, where use of good quality land for development is minimised and businesses viability is not adversely affected;
  - diversification of existing business;
  - production and processing facilities for local produce and materials, for example sawmills, or local food production;
  - essential community services;
  - critical infrastructure required to support transport or digital connectivity;
  - small scale developments that support new ways of working such as remote working, homeworking and community hubs;
  - improvement or restoration of the natural environment.

- e) Other than in accessible areas, or areas of pressure identified in local development plans, proposals for **new homes in rural areas outwith existing rural settlements** should be supported, where the proposal:
- is demonstrated to be necessary to support the sustainable management of a viable rural business or croft, and there is an essential need for a worker (including those taking majority control of a farm business), to live permanently at or near their place of work;
  - is a single home for the retirement succession of a viable farm holding;
  - would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling;
  - would represent the appropriate use of a cultural heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of historic environment assets;
  - would reuse redundant or disused buildings or reinstate a former dwelling house; or
  - involves redevelopment of derelict land or a brownfield where a return to a natural state is not likely.
- f) Development proposals in **accessible or pressured rural areas** should only be supported where they are consistent with the spatial strategy set out in the local development plan and do not lead to the unsustainable growth in long-distance car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside.
- g) Development proposals in **remote rural areas**, where new development can often help to sustain fragile communities, should be supported where they:
- encourage sustainable development that will provide employment;
  - support and sustain fragile and dispersed communities for example through provision of new housing, and digital infrastructure;
  - include provision for small-scale housing and other development, taking account of environmental protection policies and addressing issues of location, access, siting, design and environmental impact.
- h) Development proposals on **prime agricultural land**, or land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use, should not be supported except where it is essential:
- to meet an established need, for example for essential infrastructure, where no other suitable site is available; or
  - for small-scale development directly linked to a rural business, farm or croft; or essential worker for the rural business be able to live onsite; or
  - for the development of production and processing facilities, associated with the land produce, where no other local site is suitable; or
  - for the generation of energy from a renewable source or the extraction of minerals where this accords with other policy objectives and there is secure provision for restoration to return the land to its former status; and
  - can demonstrate that the layout and design of the proposal minimises the amount of good quality land that is required as far as possible.

### Policy 31: Rural places

**Q49: Do you agree that this policy will ensure that rural places can be vibrant and sustainable?**

## Natural places

### We want to protect and restore natural places.

Scotland's natural environment underpins our economy, health and wellbeing, biodiversity and climate resilience. We have a shared responsibility to manage our natural assets in a sustainable, regenerative way so they can continue to provide the essential benefits and services upon which people and businesses rely. The planning system should protect, restore and enhance Scotland's natural assets; make best use of nature-based solutions; and actively support our national commitment to reverse biodiversity loss, including by delivering positive effects for biodiversity from new developments and by securing and growing nature networks.

### Policy 32: Natural Places

- a) **Local development plans should identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued natural assets, landscapes, species and habitats.** These assets and areas should be safeguarded in the spatial strategy in a way which corresponds with the level of their statutory status. Spatial strategies should also be designed to better connect nature rich areas through establishing and growing nature networks to help protect and restore the biodiversity, ecosystems and natural processes in their area.
- b) Development proposals that would have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment including biodiversity objectives should not be supported.
- c) Development proposals likely to have a significant effect on an existing or proposed **European site** (designated as a Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which is not directly connected with or necessary to their conservation management must be subject to an 'appropriate assessment' of the implications for the conservation objectives. The relevant tests for such developments are set out in legislation.
- d) Development proposals that will affect a **National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve** should only be supported 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, environmental or economic benefits of national importance. Planning decisions for development within National Parks must be consistent with the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. All Ramsar sites are also European sites and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest and are extended protection under the relevant statutory regimes.
- e) Development proposals that would be likely to have an adverse effect on a **protected species** should not be supported unless it meets the relevant statutory tests. If there is evidence to suggest that a protected species is present on site or may be affected by a proposed development, steps must be taken to establish their presence. The level of protection afforded by legislation must be factored into the planning and design of the development and any impacts must be fully considered prior to the determination of the application.
- f) Where non-native species are present on a site, or where planting is planned as part of a development, developers should take into account legislation on non-native species.
- g) Development proposals that affect a site designated as a **Local Nature Conservation Site or a Local Landscape Area** should be supported where development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been identified; or any such effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of local importance.

- h) Planning authorities should apply the **precautionary principle** where the impacts of a proposed development on nationally or internationally significant landscape or natural heritage assets are uncertain but there is sound evidence indicating that damage could occur. If there is any likelihood of damage, modifications to the proposal to eliminate the risk of such damage should be considered and implemented. If there is uncertainty, research, surveys or assessments to remove or reduce uncertainty should be undertaken.
- i) Development proposals for development in areas identified as **wild land** (per [Nature Scot Wild Land Areas map 2014](#)) should only be supported where:
- the proposed development cannot be reasonably located outside of the wild land area; or,
  - it is for small scale development directly linked to a rural business, croft or required to support a fragile population in a rural area; and,
  - a site based assessment of any significant effects on the qualities of the areas is undertaken, and use of siting, design or other mitigation minimises adverse impacts.

### Policy 32: Natural places

**Q50: Do you agree that this policy will protect and restore natural places?**



## Peat and carbon rich soils

### We want to protect carbon rich soils and preserve and restore peat.

Peat and carbon rich soils have a critical role to play in helping to achieve net zero by 2045 through sequestering and storing carbon. They also provide essential ecosystem services for nature, people and our economy and will play a key role in helping us to adapt to future climate change.

#### Policy 33: Soils

- a) **Local development plans should protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued soils.**
- b) Development proposals should only be supported if they are designed in a way that minimises the amount of **disturbance to soils** on undeveloped land and protects them from damage including erosion or compaction.
- c) Development on **peatland, carbon rich soils and priority peatland habitat** should not be supported unless essential for:
  - essential infrastructure, where there is a locational need and no other site is suitable; or
  - the generation of energy from a renewable source, where the proposal supports a zero carbon electricity system and will maximise the function of the peatland during its operational life and in decommissioning; or
  - small scale development directly linked to a rural business, farm or croft; or
  - supporting a fragile population in a rural or island area; or
  - restoration of peatland.

A detailed site specific assessment will be required to identify depth, quality and stability of soil and the effects of the development on peatland, including the likely effects of development on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This should inform careful project design and ensure that adverse impacts, including emissions release, can be avoided and minimised through siting, design and appropriate mitigation.

Where an assessment identifies peat onsite, a peatland management plan will be required to demonstrate that any unnecessary disturbance, degradation or erosion has been avoided or minimised, including appropriate mitigation measures. Where peatland / peatland vegetation is displaced this must be reintegrated into a functional peatland system, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy and relevant biodiversity policies.

- d) Development proposals for **new commercial peat extraction, including extensions to existing sites**, should not be supported, unless:
  - the extracted peat is supporting an industry of national importance to Scotland, and
  - there is no reasonable substitute; and
  - the area of extraction is the minimum necessary and the proposal aims to retain a residual depth of peat of no less than one metre across the whole site; and
  - the time period for extraction is the minimum necessary; and the proposal is supported by a comprehensive site restoration plan which will return the area of extraction back to its original environmental status.

#### Policy 33: Peat and carbon rich soils

**Q51: Do you agree that this policy protects carbon rich soils and supports the preservation and restoration of peatlands?**

## Trees, woodland and forestry

### We want to expand woodland cover and protect existing woodland.

Trees and woodland have a critical role to play in helping to achieve net zero by 2045 through sequestering and storing carbon. They also provide essential ecosystem services for nature, people and our economy and will play a key role in helping us to adapt to future climate change and reversing biodiversity loss. Existing woodlands should be protected wherever possible.

#### Policy 34: Trees, Woodland and Forestry

- a) **Local development plans should identify and protect existing woodland and potential for its enhancement or expansion** to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity, helping to support nature networks. The spatial strategy should identify and set out proposals for the development of forestry and woodlands in their area, in associated Forestry and Woodland Strategies, including their development, protection and enhancement, resilience to climate change, and the expansion of woodlands of a range of types to provide multiple benefits to the physical, cultural, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area, in accordance with The Right Tree in the Right Place guidance.
- b) Development proposals should not be supported where they would result in:
  - any loss of **ancient woodlands**, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition;
  - adverse impacts on **native woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees** of high biodiversity value or identified for protection in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy;
  - fragmenting or severing **woodland habitats**, unless mitigation measures are identified and implemented;
  - conflict with **Restocking Direction, Remedial Notice or Registered Notice to Comply** issued by the Scottish Government Forestry Regulator, Scottish Forestry.
- c) Development proposals involving **woodland removal** should only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits. Where woodland is removed in association with development, developers will generally be expected to provide compensatory planting.
- d) Where a planning application is proposed which includes an area **of existing woodland or land identified as being suitable for woodland creation** (under the FWS), opportunities to enhance and expand woodland onsite and integrate it into design, or create new woodlands in accordance with the Forestry and Woodland Strategy in association with development, should be considered.
- e) **Sustainably managed woodland** can bring a range of benefits and planning applications should be supported where they enhance, expand and improve woodland to deliver benefits such as carbon sequestration, improving air quality; enhancing energy efficiency and providing shelter and shade, providing opportunities for woodland play and recreation; improving biodiversity; helping prevent flooding; and other ecosystem services.

#### Policy 34: Trees, woodland and forestry

**Q52: Do you agree that this policy will expand woodland cover and protect existing woodland?**

## Coasts

**We want to help our coastal areas adapt to climate change and to support the sustainable development of coastal communities.**

Scotland's coastal areas and their communities support important economic sectors like tourism, outdoor recreation and food and drink but there is a need to address the long-term resilience of some communities against the impacts of climate change. The planning system should consider the long term impacts of climate change and provide a framework for protecting coastal communities and assets, including the potential for using nature-based solutions to support resilience.

### Policy 35: Coasts

- a) **Local development plan spatial strategies should consider how to adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change.** Plans should recognise that rising sea levels and more extreme weather events resulting from climate change will potentially have a significant impact on coastal and islands areas, and that a precautionary approach to flood risk including by inundation should be taken. An appropriate strategy for development should be set out that reflects the diversity of coastal areas and communities. This should take account of opportunities to use nature-based solutions to improve the resilience of coastal communities and assets.
- b) Development proposals that require a **coastal location** should be supported in areas of developed shoreline where the proposal does not result in the need for further coastal protection measures and does not increase the risk to people of coastal flooding or coastal erosion and is anticipated to be supportable in the long term.
- c) Development proposals in **undeveloped coastal areas** should only be supported if the proposal is necessary to support the blue economy, net zero emissions or if it would contribute to the economic regeneration or wellbeing of communities whose livelihood depend on marine or coastal activities.

Proposals should not result in the need for further coastal protection measures, taking into account future sea level change or increase the risk to people of coastal flooding or coastal erosion, including through the loss of natural coastal defences including dune systems. Any such developments should also be designed to have a very short lifespan or be in a location that will remain supportable in the long term.

- d) Development proposals for **coastal defence measures** should be supported if:
  - the proposal is consistent with any relevant coastal or marine plans including the National Marine Plan and any Regional Marine Plans, Dynamic Coast maps or local coastal change adaptation plans (shoreline management plans) if available;
  - nature-based solutions are utilised and permit managed future coastal change wherever practical;
  - any in-perpetuity hard defense measures can be demonstrated to be necessary to protect essential assets.
- e) Where a design statement is submitted with any planning application that may impact on the coast it should address any appropriate issues regarding **long term coastal vulnerability and resilience**.

### Policy 35: Coasts

**Q53: Do you agree that this policy will help our coastal areas adapt to climate change and support the sustainable development of coastal communities?**

# Part 4 – Delivering Our Spatial Strategy

**Delivering our strategy and realising our collective ambitions requires collaborative action from the public and private sectors and wider communities. Actions will range across different scales and include a mix of strategic and project investments. It will be important to focus implementation and monitoring on delivering strategic actions and key developments.**

As we refine and work towards a final NPF4 we will work with a range of key partners including Scottish Government portfolios, the Infrastructure Delivery Group, the Scottish Futures Trust, local authorities, the key agencies and others to work up a detailed delivery programme to accompany the final NPF4. Our engagement programme will include a series of workshops to explore delivery in more detail.

We expect that our approach to delivery will draw on the following key delivery mechanisms:

## Aligning Resources

A collaborative approach that aligns interests will play a central role in delivering the spatial strategy. We will work with multiple parties to explore opportunities to align existing or planned public sector investment funding to support the delivery of the spatial strategy. We will apply the Place Principle that promotes better joined up actions to deliver improved outcomes for our places. Principally this will be through ‘anchor’ national programmes and projects outlined in our infrastructure investment plan (IIP) pipeline or those generated through strategic processes such as the second Strategic Transport Projects

Review 2 and the City Region Growth Deals. We will also strengthen the approach to targeting investment to the places where it will have the greatest impact and through our place based investment programme. Further information about which strategies and programmes our themes will align with and a list of potential funding programmes is available on our website at [www.transformingplanning.scot](http://www.transformingplanning.scot) and will be refined as we work on a delivery programme to accompany the final NPF4.

## Infrastructure First

A key element of planning reform centres around the need to implement an infrastructure first approach through the planning system. This began with recommendations from the independent review of the planning system (2016) which recognised the need for planning to ‘regain confidence’ in the delivery of infrastructure, with the need for greater co-ordination and collaboration in infrastructure investment decisions.

We have already made progress towards this by publishing this draft NPF4, which embeds the infrastructure first policy principle into national policy, which will be applied across land use decisions. This policy and forthcoming regulation and guidance will promote the infrastructure first approach through the preparation of local development plans and their associated delivery programmes, which will also implement the changes introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Together, these actions will help strengthen the link between the planning and delivery of infrastructure.



Once these key parts of the new system are in place, further work will be taken forward to support an infrastructure-first approach to the planning system. The Scottish Government will produce new guidance to support innovation to build a more delivery-focused approach to planning. We will also work with partners, including the Scottish Futures Trust and members of the Infrastructure Delivery Group, to identify how planning authorities can be better supported to take full account of infrastructure considerations to inform future development plan spatial strategies.

Once adopted, National Planning Framework 4 will also inform the next iteration of Scotland's Infrastructure Investment Plan, with the spatial priorities guiding future public sector investment.

## Delivery of National Developments

Our draft list of national developments have been selected on the basis of their potential to support delivery of the priorities sets out in our national spatial strategy. Many of these projects will be delivered by bringing together public and private sector investors. We will collectively work with key partners to ensure that our final approved list of designated national developments are supported and delivered. Further information about each national development is contained in Annex D.

## Development Plan Policy and Regional Spatial Strategies

Scotland's regions, working together, will play a key role in taking forward this strategy. Throughout Scotland places are coming together to develop Regional Economic Strategies underpinning City Region Growth Deals, Regional Economic Partnerships, Regional Land Use Partnerships, and to provide regional input to the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2. Building on this, and by guiding future Regional Spatial Strategies, we will take forward:

Our package of national planning policies (Part 3) which once adopted will be part of the statutory development plan will also help support our strategy. This will improve the predictability

and consistency of the Scottish planning system and set a clear direction for planning decisions that will aid delivery of our strategy.

Local development plans and new regional spatial strategies will also play a vital role in delivering the national strategy at a regional and local level. Planning authorities in particular have a pivotal role to play in enabling future investment and transforming our local places to meet our shared national strategic objectives.

New regional spatial strategies can identify areas for future population growth, align with regional economic strategies and identify key sectors and clusters for future development and investment. We expect them to set out a clear place-based spatial strategy that guides future development across different areas of Scotland. This will include identification of networks of regionally significant centres, growth and investment areas and ensuring that future development and infrastructure works with each area's assets and whilst conserving and enhancing nationally and regionally recognised natural and historic areas and assets.

In line with our national planning policies, local development plans have a key role to play, alongside local housing strategies, in taking forward the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement for their area to confirm the amount and location of deliverable land for future housing development. This should be informed by an infrastructure first approach and supported by the accompanying local development plan delivery programme setting out who will be responsible for delivering what infrastructure and how it will be funded. Local development plans will also identify proposals for business development and investment as part of the spatial strategy and support a place based approach to future development. Key aspects include identifying networks of centres, protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and highlighting opportunities for the redevelopment of vacant and derelict land and supporting coastal communities. New guidance on local development plans will bridge the gap between our national strategy and implementation at a local level.

A range of other delivery mechanisms can help to support delivery. These include:

- **Local Place Plans.** Communities can play an active role in informing the local development plan by identifying their needs, preferences and proposals for new development in their area which supports liveable places. Communities may wish to consider the contribution of local places to economic success, and in particular opportunities for community wealth building. They may also wish to consider the contribution of local place to future development which reflects the strengths, assets and challenges of the community and its local environment. New regulations and guidance on local place plans have been brought forward as a priority as part of our planning reform programme to implement the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.
- **Planning obligations.** Planning obligations have a key role to play in mitigating the impacts of development and ensuring proposals are acceptable in planning terms – where the [relevant tests](#) are met, this can include contributions to, or provision of, infrastructure. We are taking forward a review of developer contributions to evaluate the effectiveness of existing mechanisms, which will inform our consideration of new approaches, taking into account the powers introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 to introduce an infrastructure levy of Scotland.
- **Land assembly.** Taking a positive and proactive approach to land assembly, including the use of [compulsory purchase powers](#), can help to achieve planning and placemaking objectives by supporting the delivery of a range of development, infrastructure and regeneration projects in the public interest.
- **Masterplan Consent Areas.** We will implement the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 to introduce new regulations for Masterplan

consent areas. Partners will be able propose Masterplan Consent Areas that essentially secure up-front planning permission for development which accords with a detailed scheme. This can be used to support future investment in priority areas. We will consider how the Scottish Government can support the roll-out of masterplan areas in our future work programmes.

- **Investing in the planning service.** We recognise that our economic recovery will benefit from a better resourced planning service, and that the recent decline in the capacity of planning authorities needs to be addressed. As a first step, we will bring forward regulations for revised planning fees to help planning authorities to move towards full cost recovery and introduce proportionate, but realistic charging for additional services. We will continue to ensure that additional resources for authorities are linked with performance monitoring and improvement.

## Monitoring

The finalised and approved NPF4 will be accompanied by an effective monitoring process. As we work towards an adopted NPF4, we will work with a range of stakeholders to develop an appropriate monitoring programme for NPF4 that allows us to assess progress and take action where required. Monitoring will be required at both a national and local level and needs to be proportionate and effective.

An agreed monitoring programme will need to complement, and potentially combine, wider planning performance work including Planning Performance Frameworks and RTPi work on monitoring outcomes, as well as reflecting national outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework. We will also consider the extent to which monitoring of NPF4 can be linked to the role of the National Planning Improvement Co-Ordinator.

**Q54: Do you agree with our proposed priorities for the delivery of the spatial strategy?**

**Q55: Do you have any other comments on the delivery of the spatial strategy?**



# Part 5 – Annexes

## Annex A – NPF4 Outcomes statement

This statement sets out how the Scottish Ministers consider that development will contribute to each of the outcomes identified in Section 3A(3)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

### **(a) meeting the housing needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for older people and disabled people**

Scottish Ministers consider that development of land supported by the policies and proposals in the NPF will contribute to this outcome by inclusion of a policy on Quality Homes that supports the delivery of high-quality, sustainable homes that meet the needs of people throughout their lives.

In particular, Policy 9 (c) notes that diverse needs should be taken into account across all areas and Policy 9 (f) states that proposals for new homes that improve affordability and choice should be supported and that an equalities led approach to addressing identified gaps in provision should be taken, which could include: accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accessible homes; a range of size of homes such as those for homes for older people; and other specialist groups.

Furthermore, Policy 7: Local Living states that development proposals that are consistent with the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods should be supported. As part of this, consideration should be given to: affordable housing options, ability to age in place, housing diversity.

### **(b) improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland**

Scottish Ministers consider that development of land supported by the policies and proposals in the NPF will contribute to this outcome by including policies that recognise that the natural environment is fundamental to our health and wellbeing from food growing, clean air and water, to the health and wellbeing benefits we get from being in nature.

Policy 14 notes the importance of Health and Wellbeing.

Built environment policies that support active and healthier lifestyles and encourage better health and wellbeing for everyone include active travel, green infrastructure, and 20 minute neighbourhoods. A policy has been introduced on lifelong health, wellbeing and safety that directs LDPs to tackle health inequalities and set out policies for air quality, noise and community food growing.

### **(c) increasing the population of rural areas of Scotland**

Scottish Ministers consider that development of land supported by the policies and proposals in the NPF will contribute to this outcome by requiring LDP's to set out an appropriate approach to development in areas of pressure and decline and include proposals for future population growth, informed by an understanding of population change over time.

In addition, rural policies support resettling and encourage development that will help to sustain and grow fragile communities providing employment and providing new housing. Development proposals that contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of rural economies are supported.

Specifically, Policy 31: Rural Places supports development proposals in rural areas and also makes reference to the importance of digital connectivity. This is reinforced by Policy 23: Digital Infrastructure which will support the delivery of digital infrastructure to support investment and population growth in rural areas.

### **(d) improving equality and eliminating discrimination**

Scottish Ministers consider that development of land supported by the policies and proposals in the NPF will contribute to this outcome by an overarching Policy 4: Human rights and equality which notes that development plans and planning decisions should seek to eliminate discrimination and promote equality and reduce disadvantage.

Further measures identified throughout the draft require action to address equality and discrimination along with a responsibility to consult and engage collaboratively and meaningfully to ensure everyone can engage in local development planning and the development decisions which affect them. A further example, Policy 5: Community wealth building, identifies a need to address economic disadvantage and inequality.

### **(e) meeting any targets relating to the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, within the meaning of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, contained in or set by virtue of that Act**

Scottish Ministers consider that development of land supported by the policies and proposals in the NPF will contribute to this outcome by placing the global climate emergency at the heart of our strategy which addresses both emissions reduction and adaptation. Policy 2: Climate emergency states that when considering all development proposals significant weight should be given to the Global Climate Emergency.

More generally, on emissions reduction our policies address: localisation and digital infrastructure to reduce the need to travel unsustainably; infrastructure first, energy efficiency and the circular economy to influence building related emissions; reuse of existing buildings, nature-based approaches and negative emissions technologies to support emissions capture and sequestration; electricity generation from renewable sources and support for appropriately emissions abated low carbon fuels to support emissions reduction from the energy needed for business, homes and communities. Our approach supports the green sectors and investment in communities and areas that would most benefit from it in support of a just transition to net zero.

**(f) securing positive effects for biodiversity.**

Scottish Ministers consider that development of land supported by the policies and proposals in the NPF will contribute to this outcome by ensuring that development secures positive effects for biodiversity, and that our approach to planning is designed to help halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to invest in nature-based solutions, benefiting people and nature.

Policy 3: Nature Crisis states that development plans and proposals that contribute to the enhancement of nature networks should be supported in principle. It also notes that adverse impacts of development proposals on the natural environment should be minimised through careful planning and design and that this should consider the need to reverse biodiversity loss.

The policy position makes clear that proposals for local development should only be supported if they include appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity and that development proposals that would have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment including biodiversity objectives should not be supported.

The aim of securing positive effects for biodiversity is also evident in policies on Blue and Green Infrastructure (Policy 12); Natural Places (Policy 32); and, Trees, Woodland and Forestry (Policy 34).

**Q56: Do you agree that the development measures identified will contribute to each of the outcomes identified in Section 3A(3)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997?**

## Annex B – Housing numbers

This Annex sets out the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) for each planning authority in Scotland. This is to meet the requirement of Section 3A(3)(d) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Local, City Region and National Park Authority	Proposed MATHLR
Aberdeen City	7,000
Aberdeenshire	7,550
<b>Aberdeen City Region</b>	<b>14,550</b>
Angus	2,550
Fife (North)	1,700
Dundee City	4,200
Perth & Kinross	8,500
<b>Dundee City Region</b>	<b>16,950</b>
City of Edinburgh	41,300
East Lothian	6,400
Fife (Central and South)	5,650
Midlothian	8,050
West Lothian	9,600
Scottish Borders	4,800
<b>Edinburgh City Region</b>	<b>75,800</b>
East Dunbartonshire	2,500
East Renfrewshire	2,800
Glasgow City	21,350
Inverclyde	1,500
North Lanarkshire	7,350
Renfrewshire	4,900
South Lanarkshire	7,850
West Dunbartonshire	2,100
<b>Glasgow City Region</b>	<b>50,350</b>
Argyll & Bute	2,150
Clackmannanshire	1,500
Dumfries & Galloway	4,550
East Ayrshire	4,050
Eilean Siar	192
Falkirk	5,250


Local, City Region and National Park Authority	Proposed MATHLR
Highland	9,500
Moray	3,450
North Ayrshire	2,950
Orkney	1,600
Shetland	850
South Ayrshire	2,000
Stirling	3,500
Cairngorms National Park	850
Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park	300
<i>All Fife</i>	<i>7,350</i>

**Q57: Do you agree with the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) numbers identified above?**

## Annex C – Glossary of definitions

<b>20 minute neighbourhood</b>	A method of achieving connected and often compact neighbourhoods designed in such a way that people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle (within approx. 800m) of their home. The principle can be adjusted to include varying geographical scales from cities and urban environments, to rural and island communities. Housing would be planned together with local infrastructure including schools, community centres, local shops and health and social care to significantly reduce the need to use unsustainable methods of travel, to prioritise quality of life, help tackle inequalities, increase levels of health and wellbeing and respond to the climate emergency.
<b>Affordable home/affordable housing</b>	Housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on low incomes. This can include social rented, mid-market rented, shared-ownership, shared-equity, housing sold at discount (including plots for self-build), self-build plots and low-cost housing without subsidy.
<b>Agent of change principle</b>	Where an application is made for a residential development which is likely to be affected by noise from existing development such as, but not limited to, music venues, manufacturing or industrial sites, large retail outlets, etc, the applicant is required to demonstrate that they have assessed the potential impact on residents of the proposed residential development and that the proposed design incorporates appropriate measures to mitigate this impact.
<b>Appropriate Assessment</b>	Regulation 48 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended, requires an authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for certain plans or projects likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Great Britain (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) to make an ‘appropriate assessment’ of the implications for the site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.
<b>Article 4 Direction</b>	Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 gives the Scottish Government and planning authorities the power to remove permitted development rights by issuing a direction.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The variability in living organisms and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems (UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992).
<b>Blue economy</b>	The Blue Economy is sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the health of marine and coastal ecosystems.
<b>Blue infrastructure</b>	Water environment features within the natural and built environments that provide a range of ecosystem services. Blue features include rivers, lochs, wetlands, canals, other water courses, ponds, coastal and marine areas including beaches, porous paving, sustainable urban drainage systems and raingardens.



<b>Brownfield</b>	Land which has previously been developed. The term may cover vacant or derelict land, land occupied by redundant or unused buildings and developed land within the settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.
<b>Buildings at Risk Register</b>	The Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) for Scotland ( <a href="http://buildingsatrisk.org.uk">buildingsatrisk.org.uk</a> ) has been in operation since 1990 and highlights properties of architectural or historic merit that are considered to be at risk. Buildings at risk are not necessarily in poor condition, they may simply be standing empty with no clear future use or be threatened with demolition.
<b>Carbon sequestration</b>	The long-term removal, capture, or sequestration of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to slow or reverse atmospheric CO <sub>2</sub> pollution and to mitigate or reverse climate change.
<b>Circular economy</b>	<p>A circular economy is one that is designed to reduce the demand for raw material in products; to encourage reuse, repair and manufacture by designing products and materials to last as long as possible in line with the waste hierarchy.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Waste Hierarchy</p>
<b>Commercial centre</b>	Centres which have a more specific focus on retailing and/or leisure uses, such as shopping centres, commercial leisure developments, mixed retail and leisure developments, retail parks and factory outlet centres.
<b>Community</b>	A body of people. A community can be based on location (for example people who live or work in or use an area), common identity (for example a shared ethnicity, language, age) or common interest (for example the business community, amenity, sports, social or heritage groups).
<b>Conservation Area</b>	Conservation areas are areas which have special architectural or historic interest that are considered worthy of protection. To be designated as a conservation area it must meet the criteria of 'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance', as set out in Section 61 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Scotland) Act 1997.
<b>Community Hub</b>	A community hub is a <b>multipurpose centre</b> , such as a community centre, medical centre or school, that provides a range of high quality and cost effective services to the local community, with the potential to develop new services in response to changing community needs.
<b>Community facilities</b>	Buildings or services used by the community, including community halls, recreation centres, libraries, etc.

<b>Cultural significance</b>	Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance can be embodied in a place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.
<b>Cumulative impact</b>	Impact in combination with other development. That includes existing developments as appropriate, those which have permission, and valid applications which have not been determined. The weight attached to undetermined applications should reflect their position in the application process.
<b>Cumulative effects (in the context of the strategic transport network)</b>	The effect on the operational performance of transport networks of a number of developments in combination, recognising that the effects of a group of sites, or development over an area may need different mitigation when considered together than when considered individually.
<b>Custom-build housing</b>	Where a person tasks a house builder to tailor a home to their preferences before it is built.
<b>Decarbonisation</b>	Reducing the amount of gaseous carbon compounds released by buildings, activities or operations.
<b>Deliverable land</b>	Land that is free from constraints or there is a commitment to overcome constraints, and development is able to be delivered within the pipeline period identified for the site.
<b>Design Flood</b>	Magnitude of the flood adopted for the design of a site, usually defined in relation to the severity of the flood in terms of its return period.
<b>Ecosystem services</b>	The benefits people obtain from ecosystems.
<b>Egress (safe, flood free pedestrian access and egress)</b>	A route for the movement of people (not vehicles) of all abilities (on foot or with mobility assistance) between the development and a place of safety outwith the design flood level.
<b>Enabling development</b>	Enabling development is development that would not be in compliance with local and/or national planning policies, and not normally be permitted, except for the fact that it would secure the future conservation of a historic environment asset and the wider benefits outweigh the impacts of not adhering to those policies.
<b>Essential infrastructure (in a flood risk area for operational reasons)</b>	Essential transport infrastructure and essential utility infrastructure which may have to be located in a flood risk area for operational reasons. This includes electricity generating stations, power stations and grid and primary sub stations, water treatments works and sewage treatment works and wind turbines.
<b>Evidence report</b>	A supporting document to the Local Development Plan. An evidence report summarises the evidence base for those proposals and policies set out in the development plan and demonstrates that appropriate consultation has been undertaken and regard given to the views of the community.

<b>Flood</b>	The temporary covering by water from any source of land not normally covered by water, but not including the overflow of a sewage system.
<b>Flood plain</b>	The generally flat areas adjacent to a watercourse or the sea where water flows in time of flood or would flow but for the presence of flood prevention measures. The limits of a flood plain are defined by the peak water level of an appropriate return period event. See also Future functional flood plain.
<b>Flood risk</b>	The combination of the probability of a flood and the potential adverse consequences associated with a flood, for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.
<b>Forestry and Woodland Strategy</b>	A strategy prepared by a planning authority either singly or in collaboration with other planning authorities, which sets out policies and proposals for the development of forestry and woodlands in their area, according to the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.
<b>Freeboard</b>	Freeboard is the difference between the design flood level and either the finished floor levels, solum level, or deck level of a specific development. It is a safety margin designed to allow for the uncertainties involved in flood estimation and physical factors that cannot be assessed and vary between sites e.g. post-construction settlement and wave action. In many cases an adequate freeboard allowance is 600mm above the design flood level <sup>4</sup> (in some situations a more detailed assessment of appropriate freeboard will need to be carried out).
<b>Future functional flood plain</b>	The areas of land where water flows in times of flood which should be safeguarded from further development because of their function as flood water storage areas. For planning purposes the future functional floodplain will generally have a greater than 0.5% (1:200) probability of flooding by 2080 <a href="https://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmaps/FloodRisk">https://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmaps/FloodRisk</a>
<b>Gardens and designed landscapes</b>	The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes recognises sites where garden grounds and landscapes have been intentionally laid out for artistic effect which are of national importance. The inventory is maintained by Historic Environment Scotland.
<b>Green infrastructure</b>	Features or spaces within the natural and built environments that provide a range of ecosystem services.
<b>Green networks</b>	Connected areas of green infrastructure and open space, that together form an integrated and multi-functional network.
<b>Green space</b>	Space which provides a recreational function, an amenity function, or aesthetic value to the public such as areas of: (a) grass, (b) trees, (c) other vegetation, (d) water, but not including agricultural or horticultural land.

<sup>4</sup> In line with CIRIA Guidance C624 Development and Flood Risk – Guidance for the Construction Industry 2004.

<b>Historic Battlefields</b>	The Inventory of Historic Battlefields recognises sites where a nationally important battle took place, soldiers fought and died, and where significant military activities happened. Their selection, assessment and designation is carried out by Historic Environment Scotland.
<b>Historic Environment</b>	The historic environment is ‘the physical evidence for human activity that connects people with place, linked with the associations we can see, feel and understand’.
<b>Historic Environment Asset</b>	An asset (or ‘historic asset’ or ‘heritage asset’) is a physical element of the historic environment – a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having cultural significance.
<b>Historic Marine Protected Areas</b>	Historic Marine Protected Areas are areas designated in Scottish territorial waters (0-12 miles) under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 for the purpose of preserving marine assets of national importance. These can be wrecks of boats or aircraft or more scattered remains, such as groups of artefacts on the seabed from a submerged prehistoric landscape. Their designation is carried out by Marine Scotland based on advice from Historic Environment Scotland.
<b>Housing land requirement</b>	The amount of land identified in National Planning Framework for a 10-year period for each authority area that is to be identified within the pipeline of housing development.
<b>Huts</b>	A simple building used intermittently as recreational accommodation (ie. not a principal residence); having an internal floor area of no more than 30 square meters; constructed from low impact materials; generally not connected to mains water, electricity or sewerage; and built in such a way that it is removable with little or no trace at the end of its life. Huts may be built singly or in groups.
<b>Lifeline links</b>	A lifeline ferry service required in order for a community to be viable. Glossary of the Ferries Plan 2012.
<b>Listed building</b>	A listed building is a built structure of ‘special architectural or historic interest’. The term ‘building’ can be defined as ‘anything made by people’ such as houses, schools, factories, boundary walls, bridges and sculptures. They are designated by Historic Environment Scotland under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 and they maintain the list.
<b>Local housing strategy</b>	Local Housing Strategies were introduced as part of the <b>Housing (Scotland) Act 2001</b> to widen the strategic and enabling role for local authorities in relation to housing in their area. The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out the outcomes the Council and its partners want to achieve, and the actions they will take, to address housing need and demand in their area.
<b>Masterplan</b>	A strategic scheme within which a location is proposed to be regenerated or changed in order to meet a perceived challenge or strategic need.

<b>Masterplan consent area</b>	A masterplan consent area scheme can grant authorisation for the type of development set out in the scheme, within the geographic location (area) to which the scheme relates. In setting out the type of development that the scheme authorises, this can be either expressly specified or described as type of development that is specified in the scheme.
<b>Mitigation hierarchy</b>	The mitigation hierarchy indicates the order in which the impacts of development should be considered and addressed. These are: i. avoid – by removing the impact at the outset; ii. minimise – by reducing the impact; iii. restore – by repairing damaged habitats; iv. offset – by compensating for the residual impact that remains, with preference to on-site over off-site measures.
<b>Nature network</b>	A Nature Network is a joined-up system of places important for wild plants and animals, on land and at sea. It allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and enables the natural world to adapt to change, providing plants and animals with places to live, feed and breed. Effectively functioning nature networks will connect existing nature rich areas through habitat corridors, habitat ‘stepping stones’ or habitat restoration areas.
<b>Net zero</b>	Scotland has set a target to become ‘Net Zero’ by 2045. This means the amount of greenhouse gas emissions we put into the atmosphere and the amount we are able to take out will add up to zero.
<b>Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs)</b>	A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values (CBD, 2018).
<b>Open space</b>	Space within and on the edge of settlements comprising green space or civic areas such as squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped areas with a civic function.
<b>Open Space Strategy</b>	An open space strategy is to set out a strategic framework of the planning authority’s policies and proposals as to the development, maintenance and use of green infrastructure in their district, including open spaces and green networks. It must contain: an audit of existing open space provision, an assessment of current and future requirements, and any other matter which the planning authority consider appropriate.
<b>NTS2 National Transport Strategy 2</b>	<p>The National Transport Strategy sets out an ambitious vision for Scotland’s transport system for the next 20 years. The vision is underpinned by four priorities: Reduces Inequalities, Takes Climate Action, Helps Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth and Improves our Health and Wellbeing, each with three associated outcomes.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out the strategic framework within which future decisions on investment will be made, including the sustainable travel and investment hierarchies.</p>

<b>Placemaking</b>	Placemaking is the process of creating good quality places that promotes people's health, happiness and wellbeing. It concerns the environment in which we live; the people that inhabit these spaces; and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their surroundings. Placemaking is a collaborative approach involving the design and development of places over time, with people and communities central to the process.
<b>Remedial Notice (forestry)</b>	<p>A Remedial Notice is a notice issued by Scottish Ministers if it appears to them that a person has failed or is failing to comply with a condition on felling permission, a felling direction (including any condition imposed on it), a restocking direction (including any condition imposed on it), or a registered notice to comply.</p> <p>A Remedial Notice requires the person to take such steps or stop such activity as may be specified in the notice on order to comply with or otherwise give effect to the condition, direction or (as the case may be) registered notice to comply, and, to take steps or stop the activity within the period specified in the notice.</p>
<b>Restocking Direction</b>	A Restocking Direction is a notice issued by Scottish Ministers, in response to an unauthorised felling or a failure to comply with a continuing condition on a felling permission. A restocking direction requires an owner of the land on which the felled tree was located or the land to which the continuing condition relates, to stock the land in question.
<b>Self-build housing</b>	Where a person builds their own house or appoints their own builder.
<b>Self-provided housing</b>	Includes self-build housing, custom-build housing and collective build housing.
<b>Setting</b>	<p>Setting is more than the immediate surroundings of a site or building, and may be related to the function or use of a place, or how it was intended to fit into the landscape or townscape, the view from it or how it is seen from areas round about, or areas that are important to the protection of the place, site or building.</p> <p>'Setting' is the way the surroundings of a historic asset or place contribute to how it is understood, appreciated and experienced.</p>
<b>Scheduled Monument</b>	Scheduled monuments are archaeological sites or monuments of national importance that are legally protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. They are designated by Historic Environment Scotland who maintains the schedule.
<b>Short-term let</b>	<p>The use of a dwellinghouse (a residential house or flat) for rental by persons other than the owner for short periods and for financial or other remuneration.</p> <p>Typically includes properties advertised as being available for holiday let, although can apply to other situations.</p>
<b>Strategic Transport Network</b>	Includes the trunk road and rail networks. Its primary purpose is to provide the safe and efficient movement of strategic long-distance traffic between major centres, although in rural areas it also performs important local functions.



<b>Sustainable development</b>	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (The Brundtland Definition. Our Common Future, The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987.)
<b>Sustainable Travel Hierarchy</b>	The National Transport Strategy 2 Sustainable Travel Hierarchy should be used in decision making by promoting walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people. The efficient and sustainable freight transport for the movement of goods, particularly the shift from road to rail should also be promoted.
<b>Sustainable Investment Hierarchy</b>	The National Transport Strategy 2 Sustainable Investment Hierarchy will be used to inform future investment decisions and ensure transport options that focus on reducing inequalities and the need to travel unsustainably are prioritised. We also need to focus on maintaining and safely operating existing assets, taking due consideration of the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Investment promoting a range of measures, including innovative solutions, to make better use of existing capacity will then be considered, ensuring that existing transport networks and systems are fully optimised. Only following these steps should investment involving targeted infrastructure improvements be considered.
<b>Town Centre</b>	Centres which display: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a diverse mix of uses, including shopping;</li> <li>– a high level of accessibility;</li> <li>– qualities of character and identity which create a sense of place and further the wellbeing of communities;</li> <li>– wider economic and social activity during the day and in the evening; and</li> <li>– integration with residential areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Transport Appraisal</b>	A Transport Appraisal should inform the spatial strategy by appraising the impact of the potential spatial strategy options on the transport network, in line with Transport Scotland's DPMTAG guidance. It should determine the potential impacts of development on the transport network and mitigation to address adverse impacts, how they will be funded and who should deliver these. This should inform the Proposed Plan.
<b>Transport Assessment</b>	A Transport Assessment report should aim to provide supporting evidence to accompany the planning application to demonstrate that the development is sited in a location where current and likely future travel behaviour will produce a desired and predicted transport output. The TA should provide information in a suitable form to enable the local authority and, if necessary, Transport Scotland to assess and determine the planning application, seek any changes to the proposal and devise necessary planning conditions or negotiate planning or other legal agreements.

<b>Travel Plan</b>	A Travel Plan (TP) is a document that sets out a package of positive and complementary measures for the overall delivery of more sustainable travel patterns for a specific development. Their ability and success in influencing travel patterns is dependent upon the commitment of the developer or occupier of a development and the enforcement of travel plan monitoring by the local authority. Travel Plans should be implemented to encourage a shift in transport mode for those travelling to and from a development.
<b>Vacant and derelict land</b>	Vacant land – Previously developed land, without physical constraint, which the Planning Authority has indicated is currently available for redevelopment.  Derelict land – Previously developed land which is un-remediated and/or which has a constraint caused by its previous use which hampers its redevelopment or naturalisation.
<b>World Heritage Sites</b>	World Heritage Sites are internationally important cultural and/or natural heritage sites which have been inscribed for their ‘Outstanding Universal Value’. Though no additional statutory controls result from world heritage designation, the impact of proposed development upon the outstanding universal value, including its authenticity and integrity of a World Heritage Site and its setting, is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Their selection, assessment and designation is carried out by UNESCO based on advice from State Parties and the relevant devolved Government.

**Q58: Do you agree with the definitions set out above? Are there any other terms it would be useful to include in the glossary?**



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PPDAS916506 (11/21)



# Ambition · Opportunity · Place

**Scotland's Third National Planning Framework**

Some cover images from: The Steve Tiesdell Legacy Image Collection

Laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Ministers under PART 1A Section 3C (1) of the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006

June 2014

SG/2014/100

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# Ministerial Foreword



The central purpose of the Scottish Government is to make Scotland a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth.

This, Scotland's Third National Planning Framework – NPF3 – is the spatial expression of the Government Economic Strategy, and of our plans for infrastructure investment. It is about our ambition to create great places that support sustainable economic growth across the country.

NPF3 is a strategy for all of Scotland – championing our most successful places and supporting change in areas where, in the past, there has been a legacy of decline. It builds on the success of our city regions and will help to transform our towns. It highlights opportunities for rural development that will strengthen our communities. And it sets out an ambitious agenda to secure investment in the unique assets of our coast and our islands.

NPF3 brings together our plans and strategies in economic development, regeneration, energy, environment, climate change, transport and digital infrastructure to provide a coherent vision of how Scotland should evolve over the next 20 to 30 years. In turn, this vision will help to inform our future policies and prioritise investment decisions.

I am grateful to the many people, communities and organisations and the Scottish Parliament, who have shared their views and ideas to inform the development of NPF3. We now have an opportunity to build on this shared sense of ownership to shape the delivery of our national spatial plan. All local authorities are required to reflect our national planning policy within their strategic and local development plans. In turn, I expect development plans to form an integral part of local community planning alongside place-based Single Outcome Agreements, supporting public sector bodies to work together, and with communities, to make a real difference to local places and people's lives.

A planning system that provides clarity and confidence to developers and communities is vitally important to Scotland. Together with the Scottish Planning Policy, NPF3 provides a clear national vision of what is expected of the planning system and the outcomes that it must deliver for the people of Scotland. Whilst some of these outcomes will only be realised in the long-term, there is much that can be achieved within the five year lifespan on NPF3. I urge all those with an interest in planning in Scotland to work together now to drive forward our ambition and deliver real and positive change on the ground.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Derek Mackay'.

**Derek Mackay MSP**

Minister for Local Government and Planning



## Planning in Scotland

**Scottish Planning Policy** is Scottish Government policy on how nationally important land use planning matters should be addressed across the country. As a statement of Ministers' priorities, we expect it to carry significant weight in the preparation of development plans and to be a material consideration in planning decisions.

The **National Planning Framework** (NPF) is a long-term strategy for Scotland. It is the spatial expression of the Government Economic Strategy, and of our plans for development and investment in infrastructure. NPF identifies national developments and other strategically important development opportunities in Scotland. It is accompanied by an Action Programme which identifies how we expect it to be implemented, by whom, and when.

Statutory development plans must have regard to the NPF, and Scottish Ministers expect planning decisions to support its delivery. The forthcoming National and Regional Marine Plans should also be taken into account where relevant. NPF3 informs development and investment decisions of the Scottish Government, its agencies, planning authorities, private investors and other bodies.

Statutory land use planning also has a key to play as part of community planning partnerships – NPF3 should be considered by local authorities as they work with community planning partners to take forward their Single Outcome Agreement as a binding plan for place.

Together, NPF and SPP, applied at the national, strategic and local levels, will help the planning system to deliver our vision and outcomes for Scotland, and will contribute to the Scottish Government's central purpose.

Supporting information, including the accompanying environmental, business and equalities assessments, consultation responses and our analysis of proposals for national development status in NPF3, is available on our website at:

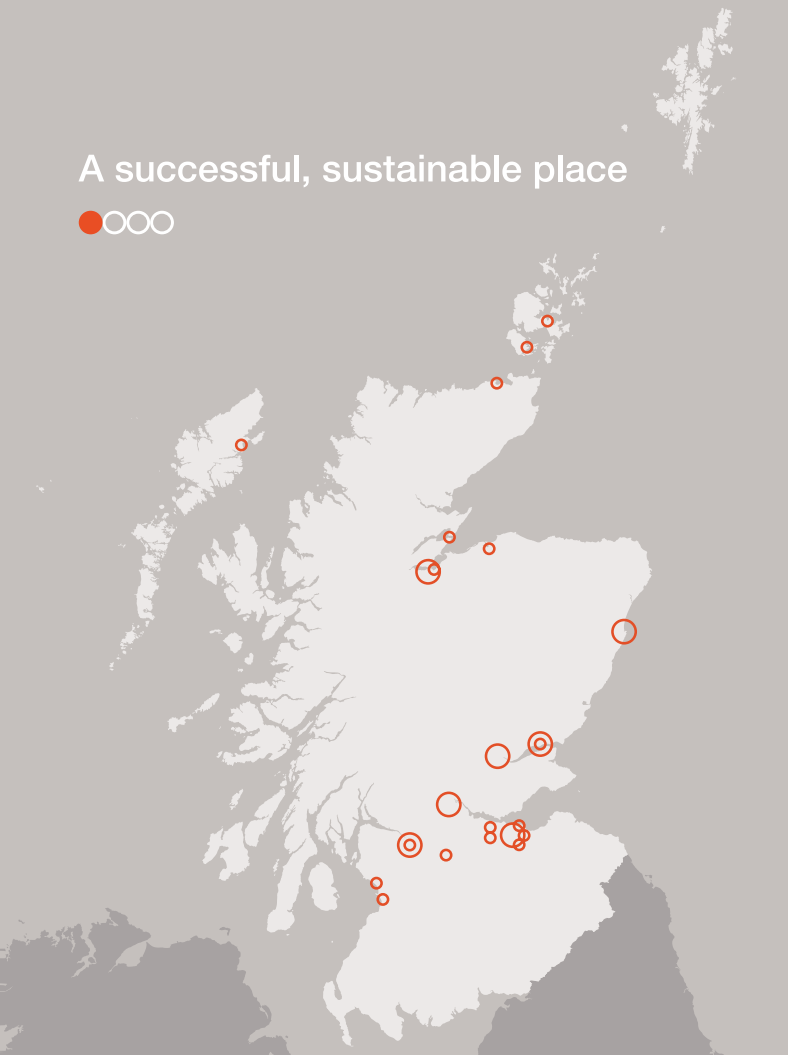
**<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning>**

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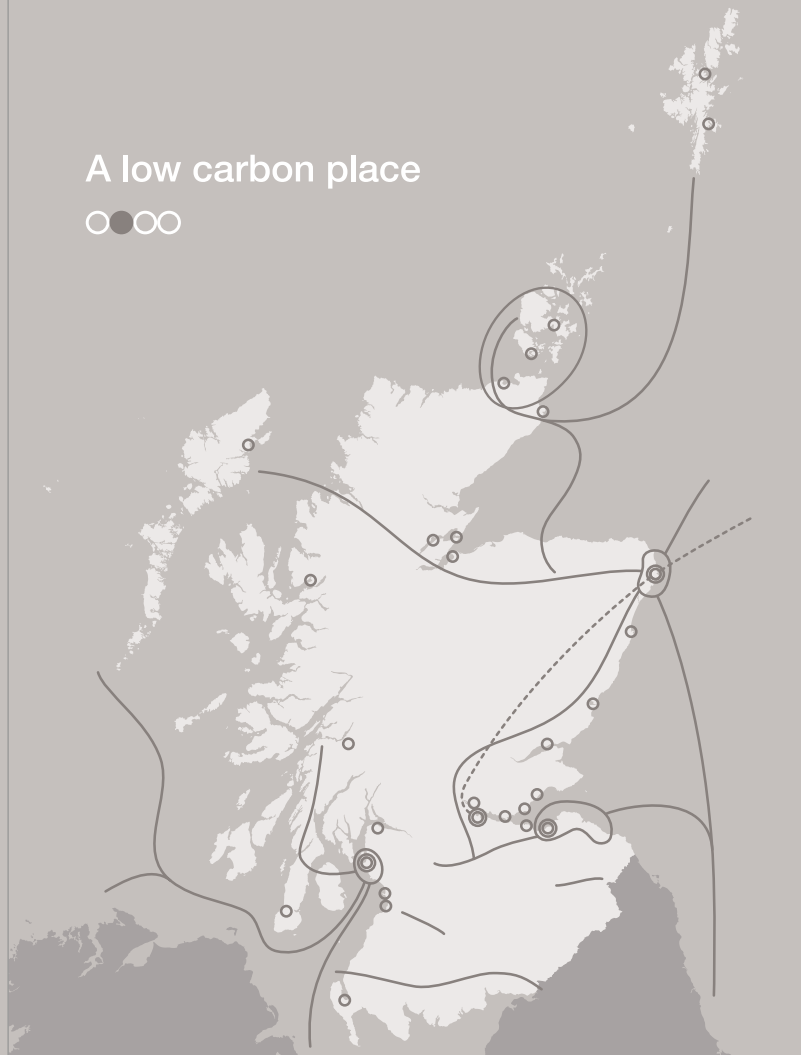
## A successful, sustainable place

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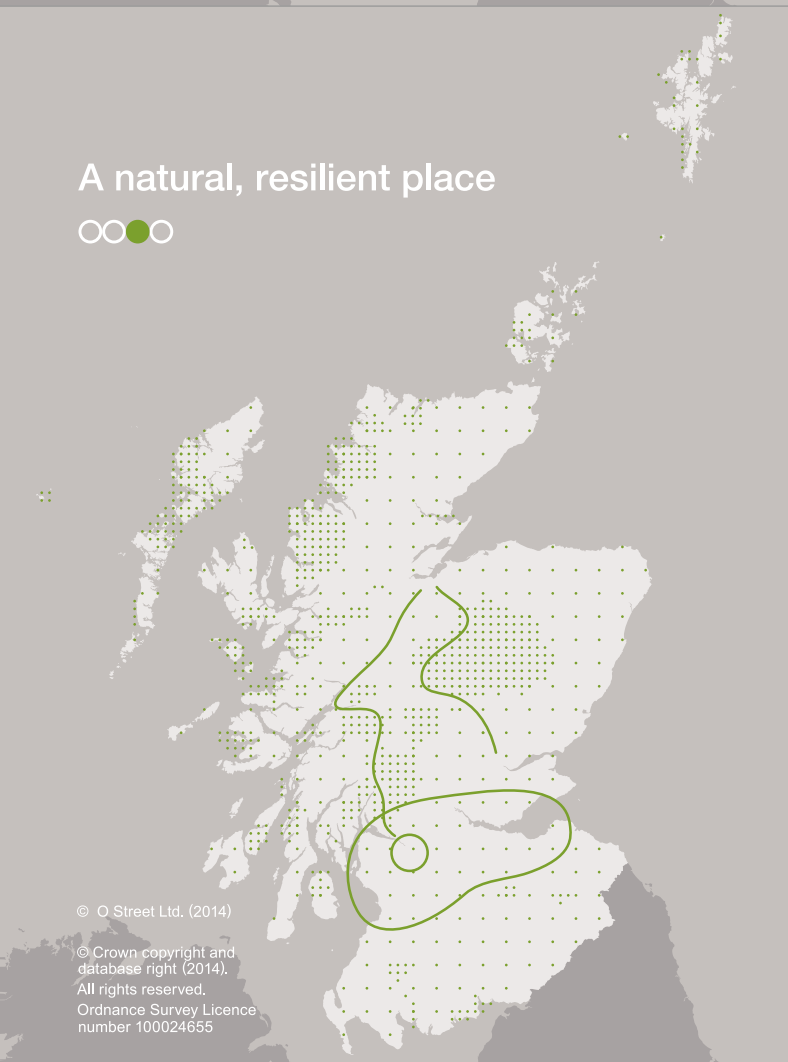
## A low carbon place

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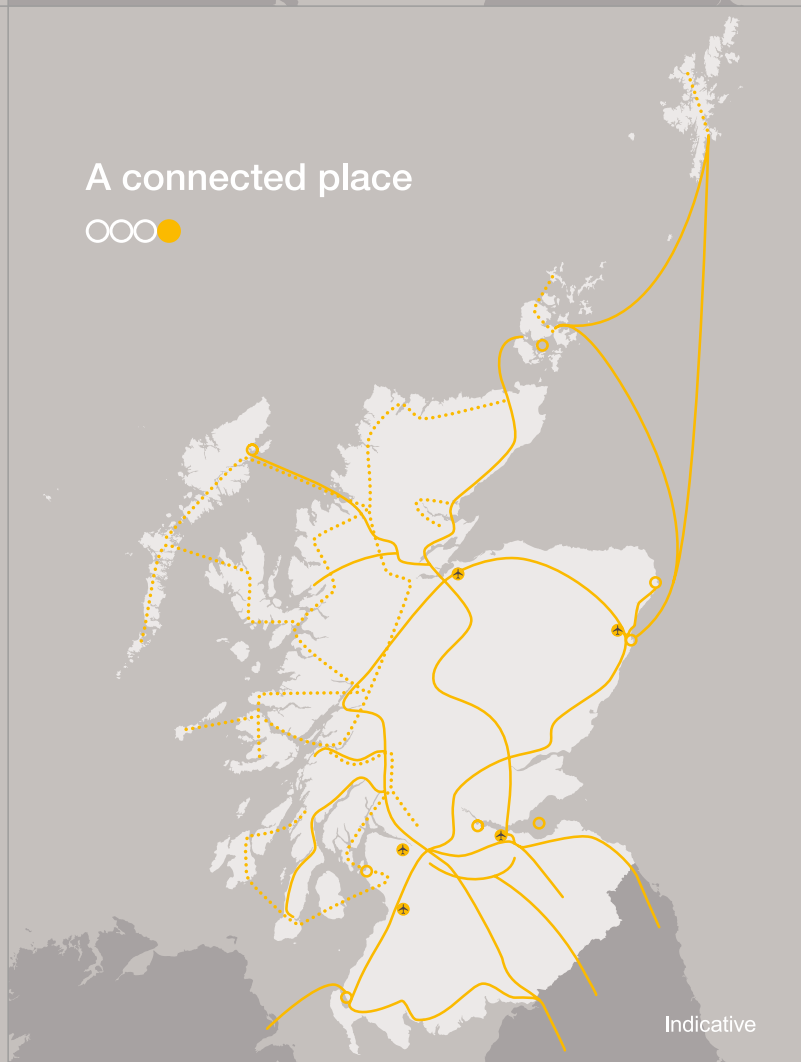
## A natural, resilient place

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## A connected place

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Indicative

Using the maps in this document: Strategy maps are provided for each of the four themes included in the document: *a successful, sustainable place*, *a low carbon place*, *a natural, resilient place* and *a connected place* and the national developments. A fold-out key is provided for each of the full size individual maps.

## Ambition, Opportunity...

**1.1** The Scottish Government's central purpose is to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. To achieve this, the Government Economic Strategy aims to share the benefits of growth by encouraging economic activity and investment across all of Scotland's communities, whilst protecting our natural and cultural assets.

**1.2** Our vision is a Scotland which is:

- **a successful, sustainable place.** We have a growing low carbon economy which provides opportunities that are more fairly distributed between, and within, all our communities. We live in high quality, vibrant and sustainable places with enough, good quality homes. Our living environments foster better health and we have reduced spatial inequalities in well-being. There is a fair distribution of opportunities in cities, towns and rural areas, reflecting the diversity and strengths of our unique people and places.
- **a low carbon place.** We have seized the opportunities arising from our ambition to be a world leader in low carbon energy generation, both onshore and offshore. Our built environment is more energy efficient and produces less waste and we have largely decarbonised our travel.
- **a natural, resilient place.** Natural and cultural assets are respected, they are improving in condition and represent a sustainable economic, environmental and social resource for the nation. Our environment and infrastructure have become more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- **a connected place.** The whole country has access to high-speed fixed and mobile digital networks. We make better use of our existing infrastructure, and have improved internal and international transport links to facilitate our ambition for growth and our commitment to an inclusive society.

**1.3** Our spatial strategy shows where there will be opportunities for growth and regeneration, investment in the low carbon economy, environmental enhancement and improved connections across the country. It indicates where we expect most change to happen, from our city regions to rural areas and coastal towns.

## ... Place

**1.4** Scotland is a diverse country. Our national spatial strategy provides a flexible framework for sustainable growth and development which reflects the varied assets of our many distinctive places.

**1.5** Scotland's seven city regions are home to the majority of our population and economic activity. In the coming years, our **cities network** will continue to be a focus for investment. We will build on the collective strengths of the city regions and on the opportunities which are unique to each. We aim to transform cities into models of low carbon living, supporting growth, addressing regeneration and improving connections. Many of our largest and most vibrant **towns** are located close to our cities.

Our spatial strategy provides a growth and development agenda for each of our city regions, and highlights where infrastructure investment will be a priority. Many nationally important developments are located in or close to our cities.

**1.6** A sustainable, economically active **rural area**, which attracts investment and supports vibrant, growing communities, is essential to our vision. Within this, we recognise the collective national importance of our networks of rural **towns and villages**. We are committed to safeguarding our natural and cultural assets and making innovative and sustainable use of our resources.

Our spatial strategy provides a vision for sustainable growth and development across rural Scotland, and highlights the role of some of our rural towns in achieving this. Our rural areas are diverse – but this strategy sets an agenda that will be shared by communities from the south of Scotland to the northern Highlands and Islands.

**1.7** Scotland's varied **coast and islands** have an exceptional, internationally recognised environment. They now have an unprecedented opportunity to secure growth from renewable energy generation as well as other key economic sectors including tourism and food and drink. In our more remote areas, this will bring new employment, reverse population decline and stimulate demand for development and services. Infrastructure investment, including improved transport and digital links and a planned approach to development, will be required to support this change and realise this potential.

Our spatial strategy emphasises the importance of our islands and coast as an economic opportunity and a resource to be protected and enjoyed. Many coastal and island towns act as transport and service hubs and provide a focal point for investment and growth.

# A successful, sustainable place

●○○○ We will create high quality, diverse and sustainable places that promote well-being and attract investment

## Detail key

### Place

#### Cities

- 1 Inverness
- 2 Aberdeen
- 3 Dundee
- 4 Perth
- 5 Stirling
- 6 Edinburgh
- 7 Glasgow

#### Enterprise Areas

- 8 Prestwick International
- 9 Irvine
- 10 Creative Clyde
- 11 Broxburn
- 12 Livingston
- 13 Midlothian BioCampus
- 14 Edinburgh BioQuarter
- 15 Port of Leith
- 16 Dundee Port
- 17 Enterprise Park Forres
- 18 Inverness Campus
- 19 Nigg
- 20 Arnish
- 21 Scrabster
- 22 Lyness
- 23 Hatston

#### National Developments

- 24 Ravenscraig
- 25 Dundee Waterfront



## 2. A successful, sustainable place

**We will create high quality, diverse and sustainable places that promote well-being and attract investment.**

### Scotland today

**2.1** Scotland has the highest level of Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in the UK outside of London and the South East of England, and productivity levels match the UK as a whole. Whilst the recession in Scotland has been shallower than that experienced elsewhere in the UK, economic recovery is expected to continue through the 5-year lifetime of NPF3.

**2.2** We want to build on our success. The Scottish Government Economic Strategy aims to stimulate economic activity and investment across all of Scotland's communities. It sets out the action we are taking to accelerate economic recovery and provide jobs and identifies seven key sectors with particular opportunities for growth. These opportunities arise from existing competitive advantage and the potential to capitalise on our natural assets. Our key sectors are: energy; food and drink; life sciences; tourism; financial and business services; universities and the creative industries.

**2.3** Employment levels and community resilience vary across Scotland. Fragile places can be found not only in remote areas, but also close to and within some of our towns and cities. The Scottish Government is committed to reducing the gap between those who are most and least advantaged in society, and this has a spatial dimension. Our Cohesion Target aims to narrow the gap in economic participation between the best and worst performing regions by 2017.

**2.4** All of our people are entitled to a good quality living environment. The population of Scotland is expected to rise from 5.31 million in 2012 to 5.78 million in 2037. The population is ageing, particularly in rural areas and household sizes are getting smaller: 2010-based projections indicate that we will have 2.89 million households by 2035, an increase of 23%. Growth is projected to be highest in the local authority areas of Edinburgh, Perth and Kinross, Aberdeen, East Lothian and Aberdeenshire. In other areas, including some in the west, the increases are much smaller, although Glasgow itself is projected to grow by 28%. These contrasts between areas reflect very different circumstances around the country.



**2.5** The financial climate has reduced the amount of new housing built in recent years. In the coming years, we want to see a significant increase in house building to ensure housing requirements are met across the country.

## Scotland tomorrow

**2.6** Our strategy aims to ensure that all parts of Scotland make best use of their assets to build a sustainable future. Planning will help to create high quality, diverse and sustainable places that promote well-being and attract investment.

**2.7** Great places support vibrant, empowered communities, and attract and retain a skilled workforce. Emerging technologies for renewable energy and improved digital connectivity are changing our understanding of what constitutes a sustainable community. We must ensure that development facilitates adaptation to climate change, reduces resource consumption and lowers greenhouse gas emissions.

**2.8** We will support growth in priority sectors and locations, and promote a place-based approach to development. We want to capitalise on the distinctive potential of each of our cities as economic drivers, reinvigorate our towns and encourage innovation in our rural areas. Much can be gained by focusing on our energy resources; on the natural and cultural assets that underpin our tourism and food and drink sectors; on our highly educated and skilled people; on our emerging growth sectors including life sciences and creative industries; on our established strengths in financial services and higher education; and on our existing infrastructure in the transport, energy and industrial sectors.

**2.9** We need to close the gap between our best- and worst-performing regions. To address long-standing problems of inequity we will need new solutions that reflect the distinctive character of all our places.

**2.10** Flexibility is required to allow for different approaches to housing provision that respond to varying local requirements. Planning should focus its efforts particularly on areas where the greatest levels of change are expected and where there is pressure for development.



**2.11** Our Enterprise Areas are a particular priority for action. Successful places can emerge from areas which have, in the past, seen decline. Scotland's Regeneration Strategy promotes community-led regeneration with a particular emphasis on the economic, physical and social fabric of disadvantaged communities. The Scottish Futures Trust is helping to make more efficient use of public assets to improve the quality of places. Legislation on community empowerment will strengthen opportunities for communities to have their voices heard in decisions that affect them and their local area, as well as scope to take ownership of and manage properties to support their aspirations. The Town Centre Action Plan will help us to realise the full potential of our many and varied towns.

## Spatial priorities for change

### Cities will be a focus for investment

**2.12** Scotland's seven distinctive cities, together with their surrounding regions, will continue to be a focus for investment in the coming years. Our spatial strategy recognises the strengths which are shared across the city regions, as well as the distinctive assets of each. Each city's relationship with its surrounding region is unique.

**2.13** Cities are the main driver of our economy – notably the performance of Aberdeen and Edinburgh exceeds what may be expected from their population size. All of the seven key sectors in our economic strategy have a strong presence in the cities, in particular the creative industries, financial and business services, learning and life sciences. Many of our Enterprise Areas are located in and around our cities.

**2.14** There is considerable scope for our cities to capitalise on new and growing economic sectors. The cities and their wider regions host many of the sites identified in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan, and other key economic development sites, for example those near our main airports. There are a number of sites within the cities network where there is scope to make use of our cool climate, skills, and fibre network to attract investment in data centres. The Scottish Cities Alliance has prepared City Investment Plans showing the key investment and development opportunities in each city.





**2.15** City centres are key assets for attracting investment and providing services. Quality of place is fundamental to the success of our cities, in particular city centres. We wish to see ambitious, up-to-date frameworks for city centre development. These should focus on the quality, sustainability and resilience of the built environment and wider public realm, and on improving accessibility by public and sustainable transport modes, such as cycling.

**2.16** Reducing the impact of the car on city and town centres will make a significant contribution to realising their potential as sustainable places to live and invest by addressing congestion, air pollution and noise and improving the public realm. Significant health benefits could be achieved by substantially increasing active travel within our most densely populated areas.

**2.17** The cities are, of course, at the core of their regions, but the towns within these regions are also important centres where many people live and work. Many of these towns are crucial transport, commercial and cultural hubs. The Town Centres Review called for a 'town centres first' approach to planning policy. The Scottish Planning Policy responds to that objective and the Town Centre Action Plan reflects a further call to expand this beyond planning policy to a principle which drives public sector investment decisions. We are committed to working with COSLA and other partners to determine how this principle will work in practice.

**2.18** In some parts of the cities network, population decline is expected, whilst in other places there is projected growth. Some cities have greater pressure for additional housing development. In some, regeneration remains a priority. But throughout, there will be a need to ensure a generous supply of housing land in sustainable places where people want to live, providing enough homes and supporting economic growth.

**2.19** In some of our city regions, infrastructure capacity is limiting the delivery of new housing and other development. We expect to see more concerted efforts – involving planning authorities, developers, government agencies and infrastructure providers – to remove these constraints. Solutions could include new infrastructure provision in some cases, but more viable and sustainable options are likely to make best use of existing infrastructure and service capacity. Strategic thinking, partnership working and innovation will be required to unlock funding for capacity enhancement. Housing requirements will continue to be at their most acute around Edinburgh, Perth and Aberdeen – requiring targeted action to better match demand for land with infrastructure capacity.



**2.20** Further increasing the density of development, particularly in the centre of towns and cities and in key locations which are well-served by public transport, could accommodate much of this growth. However, more ambitious and imaginative planning will be needed to meet requirements for a generous and effective supply of land for housing in a sustainable way. Planning can ensure it enhances quality of life through good placemaking, and lead a move towards new, lower carbon models of urban living. More empowered communities have a key role to play in this. Our programme of town centre charrettes will demonstrate how significant change can be achieved through a design-led and collaborative approach.

**2.21** Most of Scotland's vacant and derelict land lies in and around our cities, and particularly in west central Scotland. This presents a significant challenge, yet also an opportunity for investment. Planning has an important role to play in finding new and beneficial uses for previously used land including, in the right circumstances, 'green' end uses. A planned approach will continue to deliver development in the parts of our city regions where there is a continuing need for regeneration.

**2.22** The challenges and opportunities vary across the country. The longstanding proposals at **Ravenscraig** to bring one of Europe's largest areas of previously developed land back into use will benefit from additional impetus of national development status to secure further investment. The redevelopment of the **Dundee Waterfront**, also a national development, demonstrates the way in which planning can effectively deliver large-scale transformation.

## **A flexible strategy for diverse places – distinctive city regions**

**2.23** This is a national strategy with a shared vision for Scotland, but it will be applied in different ways in each of our seven cities. The following section demonstrates the diverse and distinctive opportunities for Scotland's city regions to develop as successful, sustainable places.

## Glasgow and the Clyde Valley

The Glasgow region encompasses, North and South Lanarkshire, East and West Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde, and is home to around a third of Scotland's population.

The area is Scotland's biggest economic region. There are opportunities to develop each of our seven key economic sectors in the region, and there are particular strengths in energy, financial services, universities, life sciences and tourism. Glasgow is aiming to be widely recognised as an exemplary Green City. Building on its economic strategy, the city is working with its neighbouring local authorities to develop proposals for a city deal to drive employment and economic development across the city region.





The city region has ambitious plans for growth in a development corridor extending through the city and along the Clyde. The Creative Clyde Enterprise Area reflects the importance of this sector for the city region and supports the development of a new, vibrant digital quarter on the Clyde waterfront. Glasgow city centre is the key economic asset for the region, and contains a number of significant opportunities for investment, most notably its waterfront area. The City of Glasgow College development and new South Glasgow Hospital will be completed in 2015. Much development will be focused on the city centre, in the key regeneration areas and at a number of Community Growth Areas around the city region.

Regeneration is the central focus of planning across this city region. Partnership working is driving consolidation and renewal of the built environment, embedding future growth within a distinctive placemaking agenda. The Urban Regeneration Companies at Clyde Gateway, Clydebanks and Riverside Inverclyde are continuing to transform some of Scotland's most extensive post-industrial areas. It is essential that we build on the success already achieved to address nationally significant and longstanding issues of disadvantage.

Facilities for the 2014 Commonwealth Games are in place and the focus over the coming years will be on building a legacy for all of Scotland. As a key part of this, there has already been excellent progress in the regeneration of the Clyde Gateway, an ambitious transformational project where there has been outstanding progress to date. We are confident that the long-term vision for regeneration in this area, delivered through partnership working and involving local people, agencies and developers, provides a strong foundation to attract investment. In the next five years and beyond, this initiative will create a vibrant place that benefits communities and investors alike.

Other longstanding regeneration priorities will require further impetus to secure delivery. The masterplanned development of Ravenscraig, a national development, will transform one of Europe's largest areas of vacant and derelict land into a new, sustainable community.

New opportunities continue to emerge. The Strathleven area has significant potential for growth and regeneration and there are proposals for a Simplified Planning Zone at Hillington. The work of the Glasgow Canals Partnership to drive forward regeneration along the Forth and Clyde Canal corridor demonstrates the scope to secure investment that transforms the quality of the environment for communities across the city and the wider Central Belt.

Integral to the delivery of these infrastructure and regeneration projects will be the Central Scotland Green Network – improving quality of place, addressing environmental inequalities and enhancing health and well-being. Alongside this, the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership is improving the quality of the water environment in the Glasgow area and facilitating growth and regeneration. Sustainable infrastructure networks will form the foundations of regeneration and development and build resilience to climate change. There is significant scope for district heating in the north of the city and in the central Glasgow area.

The relationship between Glasgow and its surrounding communities is crucial. Considerable progress is being made in transforming many of the towns across the region. Whilst sharing the common driver of adapting to economic change, these towns are finding distinctive solutions which reflect each of their unique qualities, whilst working together to contribute to the wider cities agenda. Initiatives range from using Paisley's distinctive street pattern and historic buildings to create a 21st-century town centre, to revisiting the role of Cumbernauld's town centre to better reflect today's lifestyles.

Connectivity is key to the success of the region, with High Speed Rail between Glasgow and Edinburgh, and in time on to London, aimed at making the Central Belt a stronger and more unified economic region in European terms. Improvements to the regional rail network, including links to Ayrshire and Inverclyde, are progressing through a £430 million investment over 16 years. The gateway role of Glasgow and Prestwick Airports, and the growth of their associated economic investment zones including the Prestwick International Aerospace Park Enterprise Area, will bring economic and connectivity benefits. Continuing work to improve surface access to Glasgow Airport has been informed by the Glasgow Airport Strategic Transport Appraisal and forthcoming review of the Airport Surface Access Strategy.



## Edinburgh and the south east

Edinburgh is Scotland's capital city, and the south east of the country supports many of our most important economic assets – and many more future opportunities. The city region includes West Lothian, Midlothian and East Lothian, extends north into Fife and south into the Scottish Borders.

Edinburgh is one of Europe's most important centres for financial services and tourism, and the world's foremost festival city. Energy will be an increasingly important sector, centred on the city and at sites around the Forth. Life sciences will also see growth, in particular in clusters linked to universities. Creative industries, universities and food and drink all have a strong presence in the city region, and good prospects for growth.





The City of Edinburgh Council's Economic Strategy sets out a vision for Edinburgh to be “a confident, creative and inspiring capital city, powering growth and providing jobs for the city region and Scotland. A city whose quality of life and commitment to sustainability draws talent and investment from around the world where the public, private and third sectors collaborate with common purpose.”

As with Glasgow, Edinburgh will benefit from unifying projects across the Central Belt including High Speed Rail and the Central Scotland Green Network. Enhancement of the gateway role of Edinburgh Airport will bring economic and connectivity benefits, as will new freight capacity on the Forth. Within the city, efforts to promote active travel are being taken forward, providing health and environmental benefits. Southwards, the Borders Railway will provide a new sustainable transport connection from the city to the Scottish Borders, whilst the A1 provides an essential cross-border link. The completion of the Queensferry Crossing, the Forth Replacement Crossing which was included as a national development in NPF2, will further strengthen connectivity along Scotland's east coast economic corridor.

The SESPlan area is projected to have the second largest rate of growth of the four SDPAs – a 20% increase in population and 32% increase in households between 2010 and 2035. A planned approach is required to ensure development needs are met, whilst taking into account existing and future infrastructure capacity. Led by SESplan, we wish to see greater and more concerted effort to deliver a generous supply of housing land in this area.

Whilst programmed transport improvements will collectively go some way towards enhancing capacity for growth, the longer-term spatial strategy for delivering housing land will need to acknowledge and address the region's infrastructure constraints. To help unlock effective housing land in the city-region, strategic, cross-boundary transport infrastructure improvements are required. Securing funding for these projects will be crucial to realise the region's potential for growth. Road network capacity, including the A720 where interventions are being taken forward at Sherriffhall Roundabout, has particular implications for future development.

Within Edinburgh, the city centre, the waterfront, West Edinburgh and South East Edinburgh will be a focus for growth. The city centre is the civic, cultural, tourism and commercial hub, with its world-renowned built heritage as a key asset. The waterfront is a priority for regeneration, new homes and port, energy and industrial development. West Edinburgh is a significant location for investment, with the airport, the National Showground and the International Business Gateway. Development here will require continued co-ordination and planning to achieve a successful business-led city extension which fulfils its potential for international investment, new jobs and high quality of place. Further south, the National Performance Centre for Sport at Heriot Watt University will open in 2016. There are existing district heat networks in central Edinburgh and potential for these to expand in areas of development.

South East Edinburgh, and into Midlothian, will accommodate significant growth and is a key location for life sciences based around the Edinburgh BioQuarter and nearby Midlothian BioCampus. Both are part of a national Life Sciences Enterprise Area, whilst the Low Carbon/Renewables East Enterprise Area includes Leith Port. North and west of the city, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Livingston are important hubs for employment and services, and strategic growth areas are identified across the region. In West Lothian, key economic initiatives include the Heartlands development, where a new junction has been opened on the M8, and the Enterprise Areas at Broxburn and Livingston. The Fife Energy Corridor, which extends from Methil to Longannet, has potential for significant investment in energy-related business development, as do the Cockenzie and Torness areas in East Lothian.

As well as growth, regeneration remains a priority in some parts of the city region. PARC, an Urban Regeneration Company, continues to work to regenerate the Craigmillar area of Edinburgh. Work is also ongoing at several locations around the city and in other towns, in particular the coalfield areas.



## Stirling

Stirling is the historic city at the heart of Scotland. Energy, food and drink, financial and public services, and tourism are among the key economic sectors, and the city is a nationally important centre for sport. The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is a short journey away. Stirling also has close links with surrounding areas, including Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and into west Fife.

Stirling's city vision is to be a location of choice with a vibrant and growing economy, a place with jobs and opportunities for all, providing a high quality of life for residents and visitors.

Planning in Stirling focuses on both regeneration and sustainable growth, for the city itself and the nearby towns and villages. Its central, well-connected location, outstanding built heritage and thriving university campus make it ideally positioned to attract investment.

The city centre is a key focus for that investment, with the City Investment Plan emphasising its role as a focal point for business activity, tourism and city centre living. Infrastructure investment priorities include improving digital connectivity and transport links, and enhancing the quality and availability of business premises.

The Forthside area is also a priority for mixed development, including the new National Conservation Centre, and there is potential for the Stirling University Innovation Park to be extended. Continued regeneration, in particular at Raploch and the Eastern Villages, will remain a priority, as will tackling flood risk issues. There are plans for growth and regeneration in several locations outwith the city, including a new settlement proposed at Durieshill and at a number of strategic development areas.





## Perth

Perth is Scotland's newest city and a strategically important gateway to the north and north east of the country. Along with Dundee, it sits within a wider region with scenic countryside and towns.

Perth's central location within Scotland's road and rail network makes it ideally placed to attract investment, as does its high quality of life with a strong cultural scene in and around the city and a range of outdoor activities on its doorstep. Key tourism assets include the towns and countryside in Perthshire and Angus, extending into the Cairngorms National Park. Gleneagles, located close to Perth, is the venue for the 2014 Ryder Cup.

The City Investment Plan sets out a vision to develop Perth into the most desirable place in Scotland to live, work, visit and invest. The city centre will be a focus for investment, as will strategic growth areas identified at west and north west Perth and at Oudenarde. These, together with a number of strategic growth areas in Dundee, Angus and north Fife, will provide a focus for most new housing and business development.



## Dundee and Tayside

Dundee is undergoing transformational change, led by over £1 billion of investment in the regeneration of its waterfront. Along with Perth, it sits within a wider city region with high quality countryside and distinctive towns. The Dundee city region extends northwards into Angus and southwards into Fife.

The City Investment Plan vision is for “Dundee to be an internationally recognised city at the heart of a vibrant region with more and better employment opportunities for our people.” Priorities include growing businesses and sectors, employability and skills, improving physical infrastructure, place marketing and tourism promotion.

Dundee is an established and growing centre for creative industries (particularly video-gaming), for universities, life sciences and for high-tech manufacturing. Energy will become an increasingly important sector, with opportunities at Dundee Port which is part of the Low Carbon/Renewables East Enterprise Area, and elsewhere on the coast, including at Montrose. Key tourism assets include the towns and countryside in Perthshire and Angus, extending into the Cairngorms National Park, and into Fife where St Andrews is a focus for visitors.

The redevelopment of Dundee Waterfront encompasses 240 acres along 8km of the River Tay, in five distinctive areas – Central Waterfront, Seabraes, City Quay, Dundee Energy Parks and the Port of Dundee. This project includes the V&A at Dundee, improvements to the railway station and port and industrial development. It is facilitating growth and regeneration in the city and the wider region. As part of this, significant improvements to the public realm will strengthen the city's appeal to investors and reinforce civic identity.

A strategic approach to green infrastructure will help to achieve sustainable development patterns and contribute to placemaking in and around the city. Transport connections to the rest of the cities network will continue to be a priority. In the longer term, there is a need to finalise the best approach to upgrading the A90 through Dundee, either by improving the existing road or on a new alignment by-passing the city.



## Aberdeen and the north east

Aberdeen is the energy capital of Europe. The north east of Scotland has above-average incomes, low unemployment and a high quality of life. The area's exceptional economic performance provides a real opportunity to build on its success and benefit Scotland as a whole. The City Investment Plan sets out an ambition "to maintain Aberdeen's position as one of the world's key energy capitals and to maximize its growth potential and diversification into other sectors." Infrastructure provision is a key part of this agenda for growth and investment.

Aberdeen and its wider city region is well-placed to take advantage of continued exploitation of North Sea oil and gas reserves and to develop its expertise in serving this sector, and the growing renewable energy sector around the world.

Opportunities from oil and gas reserves West of Shetland, from decommissioning existing infrastructure and from the deployment of offshore renewables will become increasingly important. Food and drink, life sciences, universities, creative industries and tourism are among the other key sectors for this city region.





The expansion of Aberdeen Harbour will strengthen its key role in supporting the economy of the north east, as too will continued improvements to infrastructure including the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and Aberdeen Airport. The economic significance of the region is recognised through the need for infrastructure capacity enhancement, both within the city region and in terms of wider links. Beyond the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route by 2018, the Infrastructure Investment Plan commitment to improving rail links from Aberdeen to the Central Belt by 2030 will be progressed in phases with improvements being seen by 2019, as well as progress in the planning for removing single track sections around Montrose. £170 million of improvements to the Aberdeen to Inverness railway including improvements between Aberdeen and Inverurie will be in place by 2019 and work is underway to dual the A96 by 2030.

Development of Carbon Capture and Storage technology focussed on Peterhead, and possibly St Fergus, enhancements to the electricity grid and new connections for offshore renewables underline the importance of energy-related development to this region, as does the planned European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre off the coast of Aberdeen. There is a growing district heat network in the centre of the city.

The city region extends from the city into wider Aberdeenshire. The area has the greatest projected population growth of Scotland's four strategic development plan areas (23%), with a 35% increase in households between 2010 and 2035. Much of the new housing development in the city region will be in a number of strategic growth areas in the city and in corridors extending from it – northwards to Peterhead, north west to Huntly and southwards to Laurencekirk. Affordable housing will continue to be a strategic priority in the North East given the wider context provided by the buoyant private housing market in the region. The focus of regeneration efforts will be in the city centre, other parts of the city, and in some coastal communities – most notably Peterhead and Fraserburgh. The city, and the whole region, will benefit from improved conference facilities.

There are particular opportunities in the 'Energetica' corridor from Aberdeen northwards towards Peterhead, where a key hub for energy infrastructure and related development is envisaged. There will be benefits to taking a co-ordinated approach to planning for this and related development in the wider Peterhead area.



## Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth

Inverness is the capital of the Highlands – the fastest-growing city in Scotland, serving the whole region and acting as a gateway to the Highlands and Islands. The City Investment Plan envisages Inverness as “a can-do place where individuals, communities and businesses are able to realise their full potential and fulfil ambitions that benefit them, their city and the wider region.”

Key economic sectors include energy, tourism and life sciences. Better surface access to Inverness Airport, with the dualling of the A96 and a new rail station at Dalcross, will bring economic and connectivity benefits. The University of the Highlands and Islands is centred at the new £100 million Inverness Campus, and life sciences are a particular focus here and in the A96 corridor, with the Forres Enterprise Park forming part of a Life Sciences Enterprise Area. Financial services are becoming ever more important to the area's economy.

Inverness city centre is the administrative, transport, services and tourist hub for the region. Further hotel accommodation will strengthen this. The city is expanding to the west, south and, in particular, to the east, with growth along the A96 Corridor to Moray, including development of a new settlement at Tornagrain. A further growth corridor extends from Muir of Ord and the Black Isle north eastwards through to Tain and Nigg. Regeneration is a priority at a number of locations in Inverness, including at the Muirtown Basin and at Longman. Making more use of the harbour and Caledonian Canal can bring particular benefits.



A number of key ports and industrial sites around the Moray and Cromarty Firths – including Ardersier, Nigg, Highland Deehaven, Invergordon and Buckie – are well-placed to take advantage of investment in the energy sector, both in renewables and in oil and gas. The Nigg yard is part of the Low Carbon/Renewables North Enterprise Area. Their development will go hand in hand with continuing protection of the very special environment of the Firths.

## We will have vibrant rural areas

**2.24** Rural areas support a number of economic sectors, including tourism, food and drink and other primary industries. Growth and investment in these sectors relies on the continuing environmental quality of our countryside, infrastructure and the sustainable use of our natural resources. It is now far easier to access further and higher education in rural Scotland, helping to attract and retain people and investment. In many areas, the knowledge economy is a positive driver for change, stimulating skills and innovation. This extends across the country, from the Dumfries Learning Town initiative and Heriot Watt's Galashiels campus in the south to the University of the Highlands and Islands in the north.

**2.25** Increased population growth will be vital to sustain many of our rural communities. Patterns of population change vary across rural Scotland. Between 2002 and 2012 Argyll and Bute experienced a 4.5% fall in population whilst in Aberdeenshire, the Orkney Islands and Highland there was an increase of around 11%. 2010-based household projections for local authorities range from significant growth between 2010 and 2035 in more accessible rural areas such as Aberdeenshire, Perth and Kinross, East and West Lothian and Clackmannanshire, and lower growth in more remote areas including the Western Isles, Dumfries and Galloway and Argyll and Bute. By making higher education, jobs, housing and public transport available in more remote rural areas, we are working to address the continued out-migration of young people from rural areas.

**2.26** We do not wish to see development in our rural areas unnecessarily constrained. There will be a continuing need for new housing – we expect more people to live and work in Scotland's rural areas as digital links and opportunities for remote working and new enterprises continue to grow. The Scottish Planning Policy sets out a framework for planning for rural housing which reflects the varying characteristics and pressures of rural communities. It highlights that careful planning is required to manage demand in our most accessible countryside around towns and cities. Remote areas are likely to benefit from a more flexible approach, particularly where it helps to sustain fragile communities. Facilitating the delivery of affordable rural housing remains a priority to support community vitality and increase population growth. Design solutions will ensure that affordability need not be at odds with achieving more ambitious emissions standards.

**2.27** Nationally, the Scottish Government will continue to work with the housing sector to identify innovative approaches to rural housing, including assisting rural enablers to support individual house building and, as in all of Scotland, to ensure a sufficient supply of new and affordable housing for both rent and ownership. This is a significant factor in sustaining rural communities, and there are particular housing support mechanisms available in crofting communities.

**2.28** Our diverse and vibrant rural towns support clusters of services, have a significant share of homes and jobs, and act as transport hubs for a much wider rural community. We want to see the role of these towns strengthened and diversified. Benefiting from the actions set out in the Town Centre Action Plan, they will also be a focus for increased active travel initiatives and for new technologies, including low carbon and renewable heat and digital connectivity.



**2.29** Whilst many regionally and locally important towns will continue to grow and prosper, we also need innovation and vision for our more fragile towns to make the most of their resources and build their resilience. Community ownership of assets and an emphasis on 'local people leading' will help to stimulate further initiatives that revive the fortunes of many of our key towns, villages and rural communities. Our target is for one million acres of land to be community owned by 2020. All over Scotland, 'transition towns' are demonstrating new ideas for alternative, lower carbon ways of living through community-led initiatives. Successful places will be those which attract ideas, investment and people.

## **A flexible strategy for diverse places – rural towns**

**2.30** All of our towns are important. To illustrate their diversity, the following section highlights the opportunities arising in just five of our towns in different parts of rural Scotland.

### **Elgin – a diversifying town**

The Elgin 'City for the Future' study noted the town's important role as a regional leader, providing a good range of services. Its vision is to stimulate business development, diversification and innovation. Key initiatives include a 'high street first' approach to regeneration, innovation in technology and business, education and health, the visitor economy and arts, culture and heritage. By 2030, dualling of the A96 will enhance the connectivity of this part of the country, with Elgin acting as an important transport hub. Marine renewables could provide opportunities for economic diversification in the area around Elgin. Nearby Buckie has potential as an operational and maintenance base for offshore renewable energy development in the Moray Firth, and a grid connection will come onshore at Portgordon and connect to the network at Blackhillock, near Keith.

### **Fort William – a tourism town**

Fort William provides important services to an extensive rural area. Given the town's location and its role as a gateway to some of Scotland's most iconic and scenic coastal and mountain areas, tourism forms a key part of the local economy. Lochaber has become known as a nationally important centre for outdoor activities like sailing, climbing and mountain biking, and there are further opportunities for regeneration and to develop activities along the Caledonian Canal. Programmed improvements to the A82 and the scenic routes initiative will support this further.



### **Kilmarnock – a changing town**

Like many other areas of Scotland, East Ayrshire has experienced economic challenges in recent years. East Ayrshire's strategy for growth focuses on the regeneration of Kilmarnock, including the redevelopment of the former Diageo site, an extensive area of previously used land in the heart of the town. Kilmarnock is a strategically important hub for the wider rural area, supporting jobs and providing services to its surrounding communities. Its relationship with other towns, including nearby Ayr, Irvine and Cumnock, requires consideration through a place-based approach to development. Transport connections from this area to Glasgow and the wider cities network, and to the south, will continue to be a priority, as will the development of the Central Scotland Green Network across Ayrshire.

### **Galashiels – a connected town**

The Central Borders is expected to accommodate a significant share of the wider area's future housing requirements, and will continue to be a focus for economic investment and services. The completion of the Borders Railway will support new, more sustainable locations for development in the Central Borders, with Galashiels providing an important transport interchange. There are opportunities for the town, as in other distinctive towns across the Borders, to increase footfall in its town centre, including through diversification of retail facilities. In Hawick, Selkirk and Galashiels, flood protection measures are a priority to unlock central sites for development and build future resilience. Opportunities for district heating serving Galashiels are also expected.

### **Dumfries – a gateway town**

Dumfries is the regional capital of the south west of Scotland. Demonstrating the potential of rural towns to make a unique and significant contribution to the national spatial strategy, regeneration of the Crichton Quarter and the Learning Town initiative are providing opportunities for local learning, skills development and innovation, including in carbon management and rural development. Tourism, food and drink and primary industries will continue to be important for Dumfries. A new hospital will be developed, strengthening the role of Dumfries as an important service centre. The Solway has significant opportunities for marine renewable energy generation, which could help to further diversify the local economy over the long-term. Wider opportunities for economic growth are also likely to be located along the A74 corridor. The area has a close relationship with Carlisle, and connections, including by rail and via the A77 and A75, will continue to be important locally and for longer-distance links to Ireland, England and Europe.



### *Regional spatial priorities – South of Scotland*

The South of Scotland has a key role to play as a Gateway to Scotland. In 2013, the 'Borderlands' Report highlighted the opportunities arising for closer collaborative working between local authorities in the south of Scotland and north of England. Building on this, cross-border working is now being explored, focusing on opportunities for tourism, transport connections and business development across the region as a whole. Complementing this, our national spatial strategy aims to facilitate sustainable rural development across the south of Scotland and highlights the role of key towns, such as Dumfries, Stranraer and Galashiels as priority areas for further action and investment. The strategy also reflects the importance of connections between this area and other parts of Scotland, the north of England and Northern Ireland.

## **Coastal and island communities will benefit from new investment**

**2.31** Our islands and coastal areas contain some of our most vibrant and culturally distinctive communities. Working together with the National Planning Framework, Scotland's first National Marine Plan will provide the strategic policy framework to encourage sustainable development and use of the marine environment to deliver economic and social benefits for island and coastal communities.

**2.32** Whilst some of our coastal and island areas are characterised by low density and dispersed development, in particular crofting settlements, there are also towns which act as hubs for services and transport networks and will be a focus for new development. Examples range from Stranraer in the south west where regeneration is ongoing following relocation of the ferry terminal to Cairnryan, to Wick and Thurso in the far north where charrettes have begun to define new visions for these more remote communities.

**2.33** Some towns around our coast may be more vulnerable because of the economic downturn and the challenging financial climate for the public sector. Our Town Centre Action Plan highlights what we are doing to support investment and a mix of uses to reinvigorate centres like these. Land reform and the community right to buy can also strengthen relatively remote communities, empowering them to create new futures.





**2.34** There are opportunities to develop the existing strengths of many of our coastal and island areas, for example in tourism and in primary industries like food and drink. They have continuing strengths in key sectors including whisky, forestry (notably in Argyll and Dumfries and Galloway), fishing in many ports along the coast and in the islands, and crofting. In the east, existing links with the oil and gas sector, and the growing opportunities in and around the cities network for renewable energy development, have a strong coastal dimension. Land use and marine planning should aim to balance development with environmental quality and activities such as fishing and tourism.

**2.35** Seizing new opportunities such as those in the learning economy and the energy sector will help to deliver sustainable economic growth, attracting and retaining population and supporting services. The University of the Highlands and Islands, and other centres of learning and research like the Heriot Watt Campus in Kirkwall, are transforming the further and higher education sector in many of our island and coastal communities.

**2.36** Aquaculture is an important aspect of the economy across parts of coastal Scotland, supporting many jobs – often in small communities – and representing a significant element of Scotland's exports. The industry has identified ambitious growth targets which we want to see realised.

**2.37** We are working with the oil and gas sector to maintain the competitiveness of the industry and capitalise on skills, experience and existing infrastructure. There will be significant opportunities for increased production from oil and gas reserves in the West of Shetland and northern North Sea, and for decommissioning of existing infrastructure reaching the end of its life. Many of the sites identified in our National Renewables Infrastructure Plan have the potential to benefit from this. Existing assets – like Sullom Voe, the adjacent TOTAL gas plant and the Flotta oil terminal – will continue to play an important economic role.



## A flexible strategy for diverse places – coastal and island hubs

**2.38** Many coastal and island communities have key towns, where development opportunities, employment, homes and services are often clustered. Place-based development plans for our coastal and island areas should recognise the role of these towns as important focal points for investment and transport connections. To illustrate their diversity, the following section highlights the opportunities arising in just six of our northern and western and northern coastal and island towns.

### Stranraer

Stranraer and Cairnryan are Scotland's gateway to Northern Ireland. Since relocation of the ferry terminal from the centre of Stranraer, regeneration plans for the waterfront have become of critical importance to the town and wider region. Local partners are working together to fulfill their vision for the town as a marine leisure destination. A masterplan is driving forward regeneration of the town centre and redevelopment of derelict land at the former ferry port. Housing renewal and retail initiatives are helping to reinvigorate the centre of town, and the refurbished West Pier was reopened in 2013. It is important that the momentum gained from designating Port Facilities at Loch Ryan as a national development in NPF2 is not lost – following opening of the new facilities in 2011, targeted interventions are being made to improve the A77 and A75 and a new electric bus service is providing a low carbon transport link from the new port facilities to the town centre. The A75 is a Euroroute, providing a vital link from Northern Ireland across the region to the rest of Scotland, England and Europe.

### Campbeltown

Like a number of other coastal towns in south west Scotland, research suggests that Campbeltown could be particularly vulnerable to the economic downturn. However, it also has significant opportunities for business development and future growth – for example, Scotland's only facility for the manufacture of wind turbine towers is located at nearby Machrihanish. The recent upgrading of Campbeltown Harbour, and emerging plans for offshore renewables, mean the town is now well-placed to act as a green energy hub, as reflected in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan. Improved access from the Central Belt is underway, including trunking of the A83. A 3-year summer-only pilot ferry service has also been introduced between Ardrossan and Campbeltown. The Kintyre peninsula provides important links to Islay, Gigha and Jura, acting as a transport hub for much of Argyll. Plans to improve digital and electricity grid connections will play a key role in supporting business development.



### Oban

Oban is a gateway to the isles and a popular tourism destination in its own right. The Lorn Arc Initiative aims to make use of Oban's strategic location by repositioning the town's economy. Through regeneration and development, the initiative aims to generate employment across a number of sectors, including renewable energy, tourism and marine science. The wider area has significant potential as a focus for innovation and expertise – the nearby Scottish Association for Marine Science is a key centre for marine study and there are plans to establish a European Marine Science Park, whilst Balcargine has been identified as a location for renewable energy-related business development. Investment in infrastructure is planned, including the extension of Oban North Pier and improvements to road infrastructure. Oban is an important transport interchange with a crucial rail service and connections by bus and ferry to Argyll and the Inner Hebrides. Oban Airport will continue to play a role in supporting business activity and providing essential links to services for wider rural communities.

### Stornoway

Stornoway's strategic location, economic potential and role as a service centre underline its importance to the Western Isles. Improved grid connection to the islands will be essential to realise the area's renewable energy potential. Alongside this, new energy technologies for the islands are being explored, for example energy storage, energy efficiency measures and infrastructure for electric and hydrogen fuelled vehicles. This could not only build resilience but also help to address disadvantage and higher fuel costs. Arnish is part of the Low Carbon/Renewables North Enterprise Area. Stornoway is an important transport hub for passenger and commercial transport. Stornoway harbour's strategic location means that it will be well placed as a stopping point for international shipping with the opening of the North East Passage to navigation. It also has significant potential as a destination for cruise ships and leisure craft. The Scottish Government's Step Change Programme will transform digital connectivity through significant investment in next generation broadband.





## **Kirkwall**

Kirkwall has an important role to play within the wider area of co-ordinated action for the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters. Ambitious plans for wave and tidal energy, together with the wider area's importance as a strategic location for shipping and energy infrastructure, provide significant new opportunities for the town. Improvements to Hatston pier, identified within the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan, are helping to position the town at the forefront of innovation in the energy sector. The Orkney Islands have enviable opportunities for tourism development, building on the unique and internationally recognised heritage of the islands and the quality of the natural environment. Kirkwall is an important transport hub for accessing many of the other islands. Improved grid connection will be a vital component in the future success of Orkney's marine energy sector. As part of this, there will be opportunities to develop new technologies and approaches to harness renewable power generation on and around the islands.

## **Lerwick**

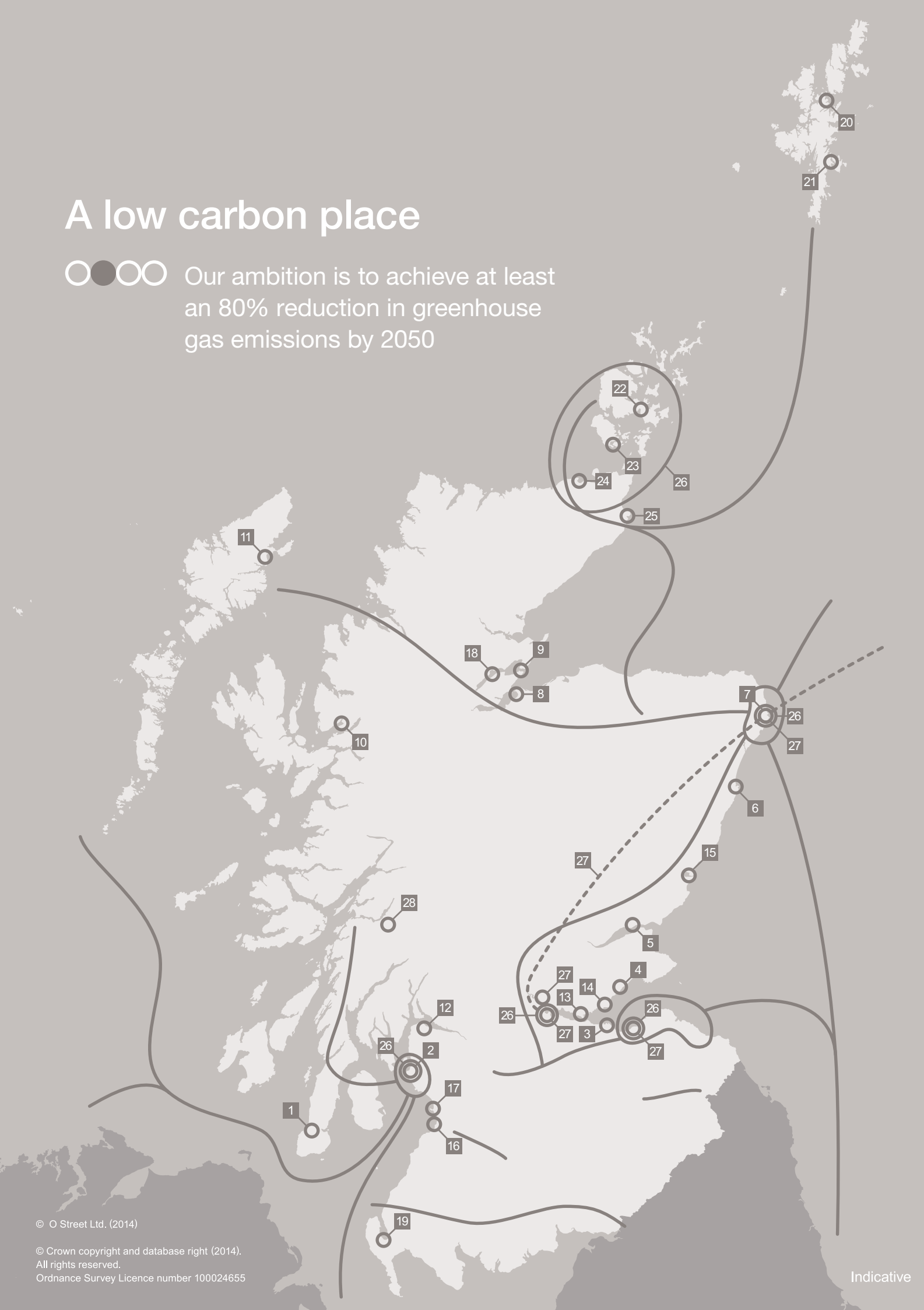
Lerwick forms a focus for regeneration and development activity, provides crucial services and acts as a cultural centre for the Shetland Islands. Fishing continues to increase its already significant contribution to the Shetland economy. Tourism and creative sectors are priorities for growth. The town is an important transport hub, with the harbour providing inter-island ferry connections and links to Aberdeen, Orkney and further afield, and benefiting from continuing growth in the cruise market. Lerwick has significant potential to support renewable energy development in the waters off Shetland, as recognised in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan. The development of a grid connection to the mainland will be essential to facilitate this. Work is underway to construct a major new gas plant adjacent to the existing Sullom Voe Oil Terminal, and substantial investment has been committed to improve and refurbish the existing terminal in preparation for increased flows of oil from west of Shetland. Opportunities will arise from the decommissioning of existing offshore oil and gas infrastructure.

### *Regional spatial priorities – Northern and Western Isles*

In July 2013, the Lerwick Declaration affirmed the Government's commitment to subsidiarity and local decision-making. As part of this commitment, Scottish Ministers recognise the case for further empowering our island communities, and have worked with the island councils of Shetland, Orkney and Eilean Siar, as well as the mainland Councils with islands, to explore how to give this practical effect. In line with this, our spatial strategy reflects the special planning challenges and opportunities for the Northern and Western Isles, including their potential to lead deployment of new offshore renewable technologies, scope for other sectors including tourism and food and drink, and the importance of digital and transport links to the rest of Scotland.

# A low carbon place

Our ambition is to achieve at least an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050



## Detail key

### Infrastructure

#### NRIP sites

- |                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1 Machrihanish/Campbeltown | 6 Aberdeen  |
| 2 Hunterston               | 7 Peterhead |
| 3 Leith                    | 8 Ardersier |
| 4 Methil                   | 9 Nigg      |
| 5 Dundee                   | 10 Kishorn  |
|                            | 11 Arnish   |

#### NRIP – further potential sites

- 12 Inverclyde
- 13 Rosyth
- 14 Burntisland
- 15 Montrose
- 16 Ayr
- 17 Troon
- 18 Highland Deephaven
- 19 Stranraer/Cairnryan
- 20 Sella Ness
- 21 Lerwick
- 22 Hatston (Kirkwall)
- 23 Lyness
- 24 Scrabster
- 25 Wick

#### Energy Hubs – Areas of Co-ordinated Action

- 26 Peterhead, Hunterston, Cockenzie, Grangemouth, Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters

#### National Developments

- 27 Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Network and Thermal Generation
- High Voltage Energy Transmission Network
- 28 Pumped Storage (Cruachan)

## 3. A low carbon place

**Our ambition is to achieve at least an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.**

### Scotland today

**3.1** Planning will play a key role in delivering on the commitments set out in Low Carbon Scotland: the Scottish Government's report on proposals and policies (RPP2). The priorities identified in this spatial strategy set a clear direction of travel which is consistent with our world-leading climate change legislation.

**3.2** At present, the energy sector accounts for a significant share of our greenhouse gas emissions. To address this, we need to employ our skills and innovation to help capitalise on our outstanding natural advantages.

**3.3** Scotland is estimated to account for nearly 60% of total EU oil and gas reserves. This forms our largest industrial sector, contributing an estimated £22 billion to Scotland's GDP in 2012. The industry employs around 200,000 people across Scotland by supporting the wider economy.

**3.4** We have long relied on hydropower for a source of clean energy. It is estimated that untapped potential could sustain the electricity needs of around a quarter of our homes. We have a significant wind resource, both onshore and offshore, and electricity generation from wind continues to rise. Scotland also has 25% of Europe's tidal resource and 10% of its wave potential. We are pioneering marine renewable energy technologies – there are more marine energy devices commissioned, partly commissioned, under construction or permitted in Scotland than in any other country in the world.

**3.5** Heating and cooling constitutes around half of our total demand for energy, and our renewable heat infrastructure is growing. The distribution of new and planned district heating schemes is broadening from small-scale, rural installations towards larger projects across our towns and cities. Both will be required if we are to meet our target for renewable heat.



**3.6** Industry estimates are that renewable energy currently supports around 11,000 jobs in Scotland and we expect employment in this sector to grow significantly over the coming years.

**3.7** A planned approach to development has ensured that onshore wind energy development largely avoids our internationally and nationally protected areas. Whilst there is strong public support for wind energy as part of the renewable energy mix, opinions about onshore wind in particular locations can vary. In some areas, concern is expressed about the scale, proximity and impacts of proposed wind energy developments. In others, it is recognised as an opportunity to improve the long-term resilience of rural communities. We are seeing more communities benefiting from local ownership of renewables, with at least 285 MW of community and locally-owned schemes installed by 2013.

## Scotland tomorrow

**3.8** By 2020, we aim to reduce total final energy demand by 12%. To achieve this, and maintain secure energy supplies, improved energy efficiency and further diversification of supplies will be required. We want to meet at least 30% of overall energy demand from renewables by 2020 – this includes generating the equivalent of at least 100% of gross electricity consumption from renewables, with an interim target of 50% by 2015. Heat accounts for a significant share of our energy consumption, and by 2020 we are aiming to source 11% of heat demand and 10% of transport fuels from renewable sources.

**3.9** Our Electricity and forthcoming Heat Generation Policy Statements set out how our energy targets will be met. We are making good progress in diversifying Scotland's energy generation capacity, and lowering the carbon emissions associated with it, but more action is needed. Maintaining security of supplies and addressing fuel poverty remain key objectives. We want to continue to capitalise on our wind resource, and for Scotland to be a world leader in offshore renewable energy. In time, we expect the pace of onshore wind energy development to be overtaken by a growing focus on our significant marine energy opportunities, including wind, wave and tidal energy.



**3.10** The Electricity Generation Policy Statement sets out a continued and important role for thermal generation in Scotland's future energy mix. There will be a requirement for new or upgraded efficient fossil fuel thermal generation capacity, progressively fitted with carbon capture and storage (CCS).

**3.11** Some of our coal and nuclear power stations are nearing the end of their current life. In Scotland, we need a minimum of 2.5 GW of thermal generation with CCS to meet our requirements and support diversification of supplies. There will be no nuclear new build in Scotland, although we have not ruled out extending the operating life of Scotland's existing nuclear power stations at Hunterston B and Torness. Subject to strict safety considerations, this could help to maintain security of supply over the next decade while the transition to renewables and cleaner thermal generation takes place. Proposals are also now coming forward for world-leading projects for energy generation that implement CCS technology and use our natural capacity to store carbon in the geological formations of the oil and gas fields of the North Sea.

**3.12** Both terrestrial and marine planning have a key role to play in reaching these ambitious targets by facilitating development, linking generation with consumers and guiding new infrastructure to appropriate locations. We are clear that development must work with and sustain our environmental assets, and should provide opportunities for communities.

**3.13** The low carbon energy sector is fast moving and will continue to be shaped by technological innovation and a changing environment. As a result, our strategy must remain sufficiently flexible to adapt to uncertainty and change so we are well placed to make the most of the new opportunities that will undoubtedly emerge.

**3.14** Our natural energy resources will result in unprecedented opportunities for associated development, investment and growth in the coming years. Ports and harbours identified in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan will invest in their facilities to accommodate manufacturing, servicing and maintenance of our renewable energy infrastructure. We expect planning to enable development in all of these locations.

**3.15** In line with our commitment to reducing social and spatial inequalities in Scotland, the transition to a low carbon economy will provide opportunities for communities across the country. As a key part of this, we are aiming to achieve at least 500 MW of renewable energy in community and local ownership by 2020 and are working to secure greater benefits from commercial-scale developments.



## Spatial priorities for change

### Cities will be exemplars of low carbon living and a focus for essential energy infrastructure

**3.16** Much of our energy infrastructure, and the majority of Scotland's energy consumers, are located in and around the cities network. The cities network will also be a focus for improving the energy efficiency of the built environment. A key challenge, but also a significant opportunity for reducing emissions, lies in retrofitting efficiency measures for the existing building stock.

**3.17** We are seeing an increasing number of district heating networks across the country. We can make much better use of the heat sources we have, including unused and renewable heat, and have prepared a Scotland heat map to help this to happen. We believe that there are significant opportunities for the cities in particular to use renewable and low carbon heat energy. New development should be future-proofed to ensure that connections to existing or planned heat networks are taken forward as soon as they are viable.

**3.18** CCS provides a major opportunity to reduce emissions from the energy sector, and to establish Scotland as a world leader in this new technology. This has implications for both land use and marine planning. Where feasible, replacement and new large-scale electricity generation, fuelled by gas or coal but designed to operate with CCS technology, will be located at existing generating sites or in areas of industrial activity close to where the majority of the population live. These sites may also provide opportunities to make residual or unused heat available to a heat network servicing homes and businesses.

**3.19** The conversion of Peterhead gas-fired power station can pioneer CCS technology and make best use of existing infrastructure, including existing pipelines, and help to establish the area as a hub for CO<sub>2</sub> transport and storage. A further coal-fired power station with CCS is proposed at Grangemouth. There is consent for a new Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Station at Cockenzie, and Longannet will require alterations as requirements for CCS increase. To make best use of existing infrastructure, we have identified proposals for **new and replacement facilities at all four sites** as a national development.

**3.20** In the long-term, we expect that a CCS network may emerge around the Forth, where there is a particular cluster of industrial activities and energy generation and the potential to link to existing pipeline infrastructure. By building expertise, and ultimately connecting this network beyond our national boundaries, there will be scope for the CCS sector to generate significant employment and business opportunities for Scotland.



**3.21** Several of the sites in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan are located within or close to urban areas. Cities have also been a focus for investment and business development in the energy sector, with head offices focused particularly in Glasgow and Aberdeen, and the Green Investment Bank in Edinburgh. The importance of retaining the economic benefits from investment in the energy sector in Scotland is driving other initiatives within city regions, including the Fife Energy Corridor and Aberdeenshire's Energetica project.

**3.22** The cities network includes a number of important industrial areas that are linked with energy production and processing. At Grangemouth, existing infrastructure and industry form a nationally important resource, and there are proposals for enhanced freight facilities which are supported by national development status. There is potential for use of any available excess heat from Grangemouth to provide heat through a district heating network. Co-ordinated action will ensure best use of these assets, and should be accompanied by improvements to the quality of place and environment in the Grangemouth-Falkirk area, contributing to the wider delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network.

## **Rural communities will benefit from well-planned renewable energy development**

**3.23** Onshore wind will continue to make a significant contribution to diversification of energy supplies. We do not wish to see wind farm development in our National Parks and National Scenic Areas. Scottish Planning Policy sets out the required approach to spatial frameworks which will guide new wind energy development to appropriate locations, taking into account important features including wild land.

**3.24** Local and community ownership and small-scale generation can have a lasting impact on rural Scotland, building business and community resilience and providing alternative sources of income. Collectively, the potential benefits of community energy projects are nationally significant.



**3.25** Opportunities for manufacturing and servicing to support the renewable energy sector will continue to grow across rural areas, changing Scotland's economic geography by broadening the distribution of employment and development. Many of the ports identified in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan, such as Ardersier, Nigg, Highland Deephaven, Montrose, Ayr, Troon and Stranraer, are within rural areas where new employment could have a significant impact on local economies.

**3.26** Given the relatively high energy costs for households in rural Scotland, there will be particular benefits from improving the energy efficiency of homes and businesses. The lower density of development in much of the rural area will need new approaches to heating including microgeneration – individual small-scale heat projects can collectively help to reduce fuel costs for homes and businesses. Planning of rural towns and their surrounding areas must support low carbon living, decarbonisation of heat and transportation.

**3.27** Plans for updating and decommissioning of elements of the gas transmission network to meet the requirements of the European Union Industrial Emissions Directive, whilst maintaining reliable and affordable supplies, are expected to require further action in the coming years.

**3.28** Electricity grid enhancements will facilitate increased renewable electricity generation across Scotland. An updated national development focusing on enhancing the **high voltage transmission network** supports this, and will help to facilitate offshore renewable energy developments. Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) also have plans to make essential upgrades to the distribution networks. This will be vital, particularly for enabling areas that are remote from the main grid to realise their renewable energy potential. The environmental impacts of this type of infrastructure require careful management.

**3.29** We recognise that there will be a need to mitigate the environmental impacts of new or upgraded high voltage onshore transmission lines and that there will be a cost associated with this. Mitigation corridors bringing wider benefits to landscape and visual amenity, and which promote green places and active travel networks, may be an effective option in some areas.



**3.30** Hydroelectric power is a key asset in the north of Scotland, where there are many opportunities for new 'run of river' hydroelectric development. On a larger scale, increasing the capacity of pumped storage hydroelectricity can complement our ambitions for more renewable energy capacity. Amongst the most advanced plans for this, and one which builds on an existing asset, are the proposals to increase capacity at Cruachan. We have identified new and expanded **pumped storage** facilities, including Cruachan, as a national development. We are also currently exploring the potential role of other storage technologies within the future energy mix.

**3.31** At former nuclear generation sites at Dounreay in Caithness, Hunterston A in Ayrshire and Chapelcross in Dumfries and Galloway, site decommissioning is progressing, as are plans for an economically sustainable future for those sites and their wider areas. Similar challenges will arise for areas around Hunterston B and Torness, following future decommissioning.

## **Coastal and island communities will attract innovation and investment**

**3.32** Many of the economic opportunities arising from the transition to a low carbon economy are emerging in our coastal areas and islands – including the deployment of onshore and, in particular, offshore renewable energy. Significant areas for wind, wave and tidal energy have been identified inshore, and, in the longer term, new construction methods will open up opportunities for generation in deeper waters much further offshore.

**3.33** Two adjacent offshore wind farms in the Outer Moray Firth have been granted consent, representing the world's third largest windfarm with a generating capacity of 1866 MW. We also expect proposals for offshore wind to come forward off the Firths of Tay and Forth. Scottish Ministers are committed to maximising the economic benefits arising from the manufacturing, construction, operations and maintenance activities associated with offshore wind energy developments.





**3.34** Major infrastructure investment will provide the marine renewable energy industry with upgraded and new-build port and harbour facilities. We expect to secure manufacturing commitments from major inward investors in the coming years and for planning to enable development in key locations. Many opportunities lie in and around our cities and on the more developed east coast, where ports and harbours already support significant industrial activity. We expect that future infrastructure provision, combined with new business and industrial development, will reinforce the importance of key locations including Hunterston, Peterhead and Cockenzie. We want to see a co-ordinated approach to guide development in these areas – making the most efficient use of resources, reducing environmental impacts and supporting high quality development.

**3.35** Marine planning is identifying further opportunities for offshore wind off the west coast and for wave and tidal energy across the north and west coasts and islands. Wave energy offers particular potential off the Western Seaboard, and there is both wave and tidal energy in the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Energy Park. It has been estimated that the renewables sector could, by reaching its full potential, bring over 3,500 full-time equivalent jobs to the Western Isles, almost 2,900 to Shetland, and over 4,500 on Orkney by 2030. There is a need to plan for enough homes and infrastructure to accommodate this growth, delivering benefits for existing communities and supporting the creation of high quality places.

**3.36** Plans have been approved to redevelop Kishorn in Wester Ross as a manufacturing base to support offshore renewable energy development, and could create up to 2,500 jobs in the area. Projects are being taken forward at several other locations – for example Lyness and Hatston (which both form part of a Low Carbon Enterprise Area) and Coplands Dock, all on the Orkney mainland.

**3.37** Significant ports and smaller harbours on the Caithness and Sutherland coast and the Moray coast can support development of the renewable energy sector. Initiatives such as the Nigg Energy Park and Skills Academy and the promotion of Buckie Harbour form an integral part of local economic strategies and are linked with offshore proposals. To the south, further ports and harbours have been identified as having potential for renewables-based investment, including Montrose, Methil, Burntisland, Ayr and Troon.



**3.38** Onshore planning has a role to play in helping to realise these ambitious plans. Longer-term improvements to road and rail access to north Caithness are likely to be required as investment and employment in this currently sparsely-populated area grows. Given the resource of the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters and its pioneering role in marine energy, Wick, Thurso and Scrabster will have an important role to play as centres for investment, hubs for transport and servicing and as places to live and work. Plans for a transshipment container hub within Scapa Flow, which could benefit in the long-term from the opening up of northern trade routes, are supported by the emphasis within our spatial strategy on broadening opportunities for more remote rural communities.

**3.39** Careful planning is needed to make best use of the natural and infrastructure assets across our coastal and island areas, and to balance potentially competing uses within often sensitive environments. A strategic approach to mitigating potential impacts on this sensitive environment is likely to form an integral part of marine planning, whilst issues arising in the coastal interface should be reflected in land use plans.

**3.40** Strengthening the electricity grid will be essential in unlocking renewable resources, both onshore and offshore. Interconnectors to the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland and onshore connections for offshore renewables on other parts of the coast are all required to fully realise the potential for diverse and widely distributed renewable energy development.

## A flexible strategy for diverse places – areas of co-ordinated action

**3.41** The low carbon agenda forms a crucial part of our strategy. We expect development plans to promote a positive, planned approach to providing low carbon infrastructure across Scotland. In spatial terms, the following key locations are of particular significance, and will benefit from co-ordinated action and masterplanning to deliver development in the coming years.

**Peterhead** is a focus for a number of important projects, including the conversion of the existing power station to provide CCS and proposals for further expansion of the harbour to support this and other opportunities for diversification. Nearby St. Fergus has a potentially nationally important role in supporting an emerging CCS network. The area may also be the landfall for an international North Sea interconnector and could be a focus for onshore connections to support offshore renewable energy. These can support wider aspirations for growth, including the Energetica corridor where energy-driven opportunities are being used to focus investment and promote a place-based approach to development.

**Cockenzie**, and the Forth coast extending to Torness, is also a potentially important energy hub. There are significant plans for offshore wind to the east of the Firths of Forth and Tay. Proposals for grid connections for these projects are now emerging, requiring undersea cabling connecting with converter stations and substations. We want developers to work together to minimise the number and impacts of these developments by combining infrastructure where possible. Whilst we have safeguarded Cockenzie as a site for future thermal generation, it may present significant opportunities for renewable energy-related investment. We expect developers, East Lothian Council and the key agencies, including Scottish Enterprise to work together to ensure that best use is made of the existing land and infrastructure in this area. Given the particular assets of Cockenzie, if there is insufficient land for competing proposals, we wish to see priority given to those which make best use of this location's assets and which will bring the greatest economic benefits.

We wish to see co-ordinated action at **Grangemouth**, a nationally important area for infrastructure and investment. The Grangemouth Investment Zone is designated as a national development, along with a new power station with CCS. Together with wider developments on the Firth of Forth, these projects will make a significant contribution to the spatial strategy and support major employment and investment. The area includes many communities who have long lived adjacent to significant industrial activities and it will be important to ensure that their living environment and quality of life are protected and enhanced. A strategic approach will be needed to avoid adverse impacts on the environment of the Forth Estuary. There is considerable potential to support this through the delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network.



**Hunterston** has long been identified as a priority for industrial and employment use. It benefits from good transport connections, and close proximity to the cities network. North Ayrshire Council and its partners are exploring future options for the site. Links with ongoing regeneration at Irvine through the Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company and its Life Sciences Enterprise Area will continue to be important. Future development at Hunterston should aim to make sustainable use of its key assets, including its deep water access. Activities which could align with our national strategy include manufacturing and servicing support for offshore renewable energy development, building on the success of the onshore test facility for offshore wind turbines. There is local support for coastal tourism development in the area, and the site owner, Clydeport, has its own ambitions. Given its existing infrastructure, Hunterston will be an important landfall for strategic grid connections, including the link from Carradale in Argyll and the ISLES Project.

The **Orkney, Pentland Firth and North Caithness** area is an internationally renowned historic and natural environment, with significant future prospects for growth and innovation. There are unparalleled opportunities for marine renewable energy development – generating significant new business and employment opportunities for the surrounding coastal and island communities. The Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters was designated as Scotland's first Marine Energy Park in July 2012. Orkney's European Marine Energy Centre is pioneering wave and tidal energy technologies and is the only centre of its kind in the world. Twelve wave and tidal development schemes are being progressed with a total capacity estimated at 1,600 MW on full deployment. Onshore and offshore grid connections, including an Orkney Islands interconnector, will be essential in fully realising this potential. The emerging Pilot Marine Spatial Plan for this area, together with land use planning, can support delivery of offshore renewables and help to ensure infrastructure and onshore facilities are provided in a co-ordinated way.

# A natural, resilient place

○○●○ We will respect, enhance and make responsible use of our natural and cultural assets

## Detail key

### Environment

1 Scenic Corridors

⋮⋮⋮ National Scenic Areas,  
National Parks and  
Biosphere Reserves

### National Developments

2 Central Scotland  
Green Network

3 Metropolitan Glasgow  
Strategic Drainage  
Partnership

⋮⋮ National Cycling and  
Walking Network

## 4. A natural, resilient place

**We will respect, enhance and make responsible use of our natural and cultural assets.**

### Scotland today

**4.1** Scotland has a world-class environment – our nature and culture are inextricably linked.

**4.2** Our principal physical asset is our land. Our most productive soils extend along the east coast and across the Central Belt into Ayrshire. Peatlands are an important habitat for wildlife and a very significant carbon store, containing 1,600 million tonnes of the 3,000 million tonnes in all Scottish soils. Our mineral resources support the construction and energy sectors. Woodlands and forestry are an economic resource, as well as an environmental asset.

**4.3** Scotland has abundant water resources, including iconic lochs and river networks and an extensive canal network, which contribute to the quality and distinctiveness of our environment. Clean, high quality drinking water is vital for quality of life and the success of our food and drink sector.

**4.4** Scotland's landscapes are spectacular, contributing to our quality of life, our national identity and the visitor economy. Landscape quality is found across Scotland and all landscapes support place-making. National Scenic Areas and National Parks attract many visitors and reinforce our international image. We also want to continue our strong protection for our wildest landscapes – wild land is a nationally important asset. Closer to settlements landscapes have an important role to play in sustaining local distinctiveness and cultural identity, and in supporting health and well-being.



**4.5** Biodiversity in Scotland is rich and varied. We have numerous internationally and nationally important habitats and species with a diverse network of protected sites, concentrated particularly in the north and west of Scotland, along our coasts and estuaries and in our upland areas. However, biodiversity is not just confined to our rural areas – our built environment, key infrastructure corridors and the greenspaces within our cities and towns also provide important habitats, and can together contribute to a wider national ecological network. Our marine wildlife is rich and varied. Geodiversity underpins our landscapes and provides important ecosystem services.

**4.6** The historic environment is an integral part of our well-being and cultural identity. Scotland currently has five World Heritage Sites, and many historic cities, towns and villages with a rich variety of buildings and townscapes. Our archaeological sites reflect our long history of human settlement.

## Scotland tomorrow

**4.7** We have long sought to protect Scotland's environment, recognising that it is a dynamic resource rather than a fixed asset. To better reflect this, more proactive and innovative environmental stewardship is required. The pressing challenge of climate change means that our action on the environment must continue to evolve, strengthening our longer-term resilience. A planned approach to development helps to strike the right balance between safeguarding assets which are irreplaceable, and facilitating change in a sustainable way. We must work with, not against, our environment to maintain and further strengthen its contribution to society.

**4.8** All of our resources, including our waste, require sustainable management to deliver on our climate change commitments and realise opportunities for business and employment. A decentralised network of processing facilities will be needed to achieve our vision for a circular economy where waste is recognised as an opportunity, not a burden. We expect planning authorities to work with the market to identify viable solutions and leave a sustainable legacy for future generations. Working together with the Zero Waste Plan, the Scottish Planning Policy provides a policy framework for achieving this within development planning and management.





**4.9** The Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy sets out key principles for the use and management of Scotland's land. It emphasises that land use should deliver multiple benefits, and encourages us to make best use of assets to support primary activities including food production, flood management and carbon storage. To achieve this, we must recognize that the environment is a functioning ecosystem and take into account the opportunity costs arising from poor decisions on land use.

**4.10** The 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity aims to promote and enhance Scotland's nature, and to better connect people with the natural world. Maintaining our natural capacity to provide services makes economic sense – to help achieve this, biodiversity in Scotland needs to be viewed at a landscape scale.

**4.11** Although there is great scope to further develop our tourism sector, our environment is more than a recreational resource. We will also need construction materials and energy minerals to support our ambition for diversifying the energy mix, and past extraction sites will require restoration. Climate change means that sustainable management of the water environment is not just a national opportunity, but a global issue. Innovation and investment will be required to develop our reputation as a Hydro Nation.

**4.12** Scotland's environmental agenda is not only about playing to our strengths. In the coming years, we want to see a step change in environmental quality, especially in places with long-standing disadvantages arising from a legacy of past industrial activity. Vacant and derelict land is a continuing challenge. We are committed to reversing the decline of some habitats and species and regulating environmental pollution. Environmental quality is central to our health and well-being. Green infrastructure and improved access and education have a key role to play in building stronger communities. Our spatial strategy identifies where development needs to be balanced with a strategic approach to environmental enhancement.



## Spatial priorities for change

### Quality of life and resilience in city regions will be supported by green infrastructure

**4.13** Natural and cultural assets in and around urban areas have a key role to play in supporting sustainable growth, maintaining distinctiveness and promoting quality of life. We expect development plans to identify green networks in all of the city regions. But for the next five years, our strategy continues to prioritise environmental improvements in the Central Belt, with the **Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN)** now helping to make this area more attractive to investors and residents. It remains a national development with a broad purpose and scope to achieve multiple benefits as it increasingly delivers transformational projects on the ground. Remediation of derelict land, prioritised action in disadvantaged communities and active travel (walking and cycling) should be the priorities for the CSGN Trust and others during the lifetime of NPF3.

**4.14** A more integrated approach and 'greening' of the urban environment through green infrastructure and retrofitting can improve quality of life within our towns and cities, alongside enhancing their longer-term environmental performance and climate resilience.

**4.15** Creating walkable places, with well-designed streets that link our open spaces and wider active travel networks, can deliver better environments for pedestrians and cyclists in town and city centres, and improve health and well-being. We need to plan now for the kind of change to urban environments which is needed to support the vision in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS), and the National Walking Strategy, for example by rolling out 20mph zones to more residential and shopping streets and further application of the principles set out in Designing Streets. Our vision is for pedestrian and cyclist friendly settlements and neighbourhoods, to be connected by a coherent national walking and cycling network, making active travel a much more attractive and practical option for both everyday use and recreation. A planned approach will be essential if we are to achieve our vision for 10% of all journeys by cycle safely and effectively.





**4.16** Our urban infrastructure will need to change to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The coastal location of many of Scotland's cities means that land use change may be needed to achieve more sustainable and resilient patterns of development in the long-term. In particular, water management and flooding issues will become increasingly important. We have designated the **Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership** as a national development, reflecting its role as an exemplar of sustainable water management at a catchment scale. The canals network supports this initiative and can make a wider contribution to regeneration, particularly across the Central Belt. Both have strong links to the delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network.

**4.17** Well-designed green infrastructure can support regeneration efforts within our towns and cities, and improved attractiveness and environmental performance can act as a catalyst for economic investment. Temporary uses for vacant and derelict land, for example for community growing or supporting biodiversity, can also help to attract investment in specific sites or wider areas. Whilst re-use of vacant land remains a priority, in some cases greening initiatives could be the best permanent solutions for sites where built development is unrealistic for cost or other reasons.

**4.18** We need to manage change on the urban edge and work to improve productivity and the quality of the landscape setting of our towns and cities. Much of our prime agricultural land, an important and finite resource, is located close to cities, in particular those on the east coast where demand for development land is greatest. This, together with sustainable transport and land for food production within towns and cities, will become increasingly important as we support more localised food distribution networks, reduce emissions and build longer-term resilience.



## Rural areas will provide important ecosystem services

**4.19** Scotland's rural areas provide many of our natural resources, and help to sustain the ecosystem services upon which our quality of life depends. Scotland's 2020 Challenge for Biodiversity aims to develop a national ecological network over time, and there is an opportunity to link this with green networks in and around our towns and cities. Benefits will be achieved by taking a long-term, strategic approach to environmental management and enhancement. A landscape-scale approach to environmental planning and management should address the decline in some ecosystem services by prioritising action across river catchments, as well as in and around our towns and cities. This can play a long-term role in sustaining diversity and delivering multiple benefits, not only for wildlife but also by providing sustainable food, fibre and fuel.

**4.20** We expect further integrated environmental initiatives to emerge over time, drawing on the experience of the Land Use Strategy's two pilot projects. For NPF3, priority lies in taking forward environmental mitigation and enhancement measures in the Firth of Forth, with strong links to be drawn with the Central Scotland Green Network.

**4.21** We want to see strengthened links between people and the land. Across Scotland, rural areas will play an important role in supporting the quality of life of all our people, including through renewed interest in hutting and increased community ownership of rural assets.

**4.22** Rural areas have a particular role to play in building Scotland's long-term resilience to climate change, and reducing our national greenhouse gas emissions. Peatland restoration is planned on a large scale. The National Peatland Plan will guide planning and decision-making to ensure we protect and enhance the multiple benefits of this internationally significant resource.



**4.23** We aim to increase the rate of woodland creation to deliver 100,000 hectares of new woodland over the next 10 years, and have pledged to plant 100 million trees by 2015. Future reviews will assess what further woodland expansion is required in the 2020s to ensure that we meet emissions reduction targets and wider land use objectives. Biomass has a growing role to play in providing heat. As our forests mature, there will be a need to consider timber transport networks and requirements for processing facilities.

**4.24** Given its long-term perspective, planning is well placed to deliver adaptation measures that build the resilience of our homes, businesses and infrastructure to our changing climate.

**4.25** Adaptation requirements will need to be wide ranging. Catchment-scale flood risk management will become more important in response to changing weather patterns. Planning authorities have a role to play within cross-boundary and multi-sectoral working. Sustainable land management and ecosystems enhancement provide opportunities for adaptation that delivers benefits for communities, the economy and the wider environment. As they emerge, we expect flood risk management plans to become an integral part of strategic and local development planning. Changing water supplies and water quality issues, coastal erosion and increased vulnerability of the historic building stock will also need to be factored into planning decisions over the longer term.

**4.26** Reserves of coal bed methane in the Scottish midland valley (Central Belt) could contribute to secure energy supplies in the medium term but will require careful planning to avoid negative environmental and community impacts from extraction activities. A framework for this is set out in the Scottish Planning Policy. There is also a continuing need to actively address the impacts of past uses of the land, including minerals extraction, through restoration and enhancement. Poor management of restoration obligations has left a legacy of opencast coal sites in South Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire, Fife and elsewhere, requiring intervention to ensure that they are properly restored. The Scottish Mines Restoration Trust has been established to help communities and other stakeholders involved in restoring open-cast coal sites across Scotland to bring together viable restoration plans.

**4.27** Rural Scotland provides significant opportunities for tourism, outdoor sports and recreation, as reflected in VisitScotland's National Tourism Development Framework, which development plans and planning decisions should support. Scotland's two National Parks are exemplars of sustainable development and growth based on environmental assets and natural resources. World Heritage Sites, geoparks, biosphere reserves and dark skies parks are distinctive assets, whilst forests and key areas for outdoor sports, such as Lochaber and the Scottish Borders, are already important centres for outdoor activities. Closer to the cities network, industrial heritage and the canals network provide opportunities for attracting visitors and are important, place-distinctive resources for communities.

**4.28** A **national long distance walking and cycling network** will link key outdoor tourism locations across the country and will be an important tourism asset in its own right. As a result, we have identified it as a national development. Along the length of the network of routes there will be opportunities to develop shared infrastructure to further enhance the tourism offering. Added benefits for rural communities can also be secured through connections with local core path networks to support recreation and active travel.

*A flexible strategy for diverse places – Scotland's National Parks*

Scotland's two National Parks – Cairngorms, and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs – are special places. National Park Partnership Plans provide the strategic framework for co-ordinated delivery of the four National Park aims, supporting their role as exemplars of a partnership approach to increasing sustainable economic growth and providing multiple benefits for residents, visitors and the wider Scottish economy.

Our National Parks are sustainable, successful places. We want to see positive planning and innovation continue to strengthen communities, encourage investment, support tourism, deliver affordable rural housing, and encourage high quality placemaking and visitor experiences. Both parks can be low carbon places, with potential for increased use of microgeneration and to support the biomass supply chain. They are also connected places, with programmed improvements to key routes including the A82 and A9, the scenic routes initiative, the development of the National Walking and Cycling Network, and other path network improvements.

Above all, our National Parks are natural, resilient places. We expect their exceptional environmental quality, comprising some of the very best of Scotland's nature and landscapes, to continue to form the foundations of their development plans.

## **The coast and islands will capitalise on their world-class environment**

**4.29** The environment of our coastal areas, on land and at sea, is an outstanding, internationally important resource. These natural assets support quality of life and underpin important economic sectors like tourism, outdoor recreation and food and drink.

**4.30** The marine environment, and its natural resources, are central to this. National and Regional Marine Plans will provide policies to achieve sustainable development, protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of the marine area. Onshore, land management practices, including crofting in the north and west and on the islands, help to sustain unique cultural and natural environments.

**4.31** As climate change impacts on Scotland's coastline, there will be a need to address the long-term resilience of some island and coastal communities.

**4.32** Outdoor recreation is important throughout the coastal and marine area, with the West Highlands being a particular asset. Sailing is worth around £100 million to the Scottish economy and is a growing sector. The west coast and the Hebridean islands are a main focus for development, but there is also potential in the north and on the east coast. Cruise activity is also expected to develop. This will bring opportunities for ports from Lerwick and Orkney, to Portree and Greenock, and may require further investment to accommodate larger vessels in the future. The Crinan and Caledonian canals are important assets, as are the World Heritage Sites in Orkney and St Kilda – and those included on the tentative list of sites for nomination in Caithness and Shetland. Many of the special mountain and coastal landscapes in this part of Scotland are identified as National Scenic Areas.

**4.33** Further south, there is potential to revive and re-invent the tourism tradition on the Clyde coast, to support regeneration and provide new opportunities for coastal and island communities by building on the area's assets and rich cultural heritage. On the east coast, tourism and recreation opportunities are rich and varied, from wildlife watching, to links golf courses, expansive beaches, and historic buildings and settlements.

**4.34** Our proposals for a national network of long-distance routes for walking and cycling, linked to local community networks, will support enjoyment of our coasts and island areas. The network has potential to improve and link a wide range of routes, including the Hebridean Way, the Kintyre Way, the Fife Coastal Path and paths along the Solway coast.



# A connected place

○○○● We will maintain and develop good internal and global connections

## Detail key

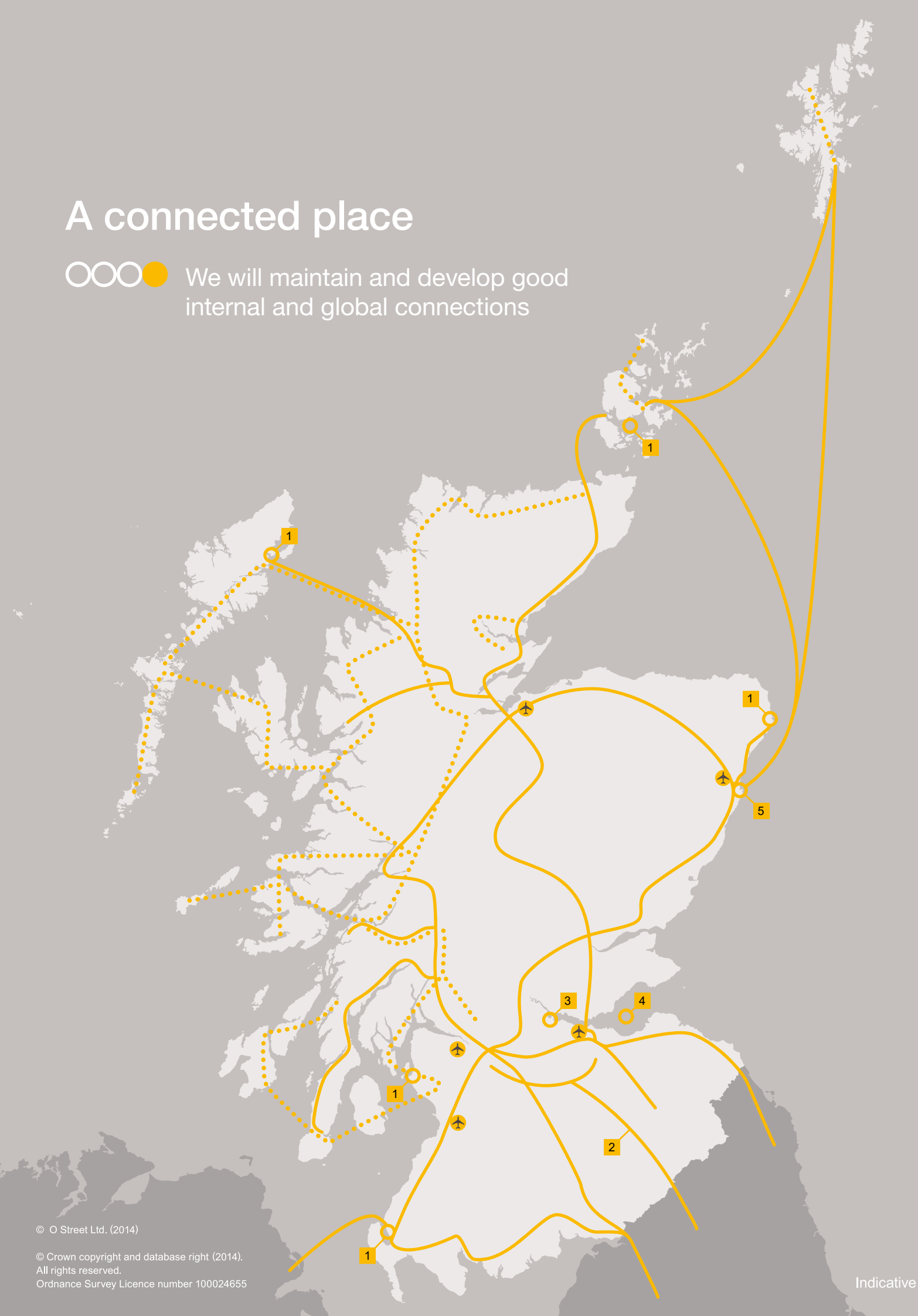
### Movement

- 1 Key ports**  
Cairnryan  
Peterhead  
Stornoway  
Scapa Flow  
Hunterston

**Key transport routes**

**National Developments**

- 2 High Speed Rail**  
**✈ Strategic Airport**  
Enhancements: Inverness, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Prestwick  
**3 Grangemouth Investment Zone**  
**4 Freight on the Forth**  
**5 Aberdeen Harbour**  
**● A Digital Fibre Network**





## 5. A connected place

**We will maintain and develop good internal and global connections.**

### Scotland today

**5.1** Scotland's location and its unique geography mean that connections, within our country and with the rest of the world, are crucial. In the 21st-century global connectivity and access to wider networks have become increasingly important.

**5.2** The Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan sets out our programme for investment in all modes of transport and other infrastructure. It emphasises the importance of place and aims to ensure that all of Scotland derives benefit from our infrastructure investment, maximising potential and reducing disparities. The Strategic Transport Projects Review provides the evidence base for much of this transport investment. In addition to these major capital investments, other projects can help to deliver our aspiration for sustainable economic growth. Our strategy complements the Infrastructure Investment Plan – in turn future reviews of infrastructure investment will take into account the longer term development strategy provided by NPF3.

**5.3** Our road network is extensive but requires maintenance and in some cases upgrading to provide sufficient capacity, reduce congestion and address safety issues. In recent years a number of major projects have been taken forward, including the Queensferry Crossing, to maintain nationally crucial links.

**5.4** Our rail network continues to improve – progress has been made on electrification and more work is planned on key routes, including between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Ports and harbours, as well as key rail freight and passenger terminals, are crucial gateways to Scotland. We are working with the private sector to promote new international routes and services to support our Economic Strategy and gain access to key markets.



**5.5** However, greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector remain high, generating just under a quarter of Scotland's total emissions. Cycling still only accounts for around 1-2% of our total travel, and car travel continues to rise. We want to significantly increase levels of everyday cycling and walking within and between our settlements, with Action Plans for both Walking and Cycling. The latter sets a vision for of 10% of journeys by bike by 2020 – our substantially increased funding will help to ensure that this vision is realised. We expect action on walking and cycling to extend throughout both urban and rural areas.

**5.6** Providing infrastructure to facilitate greater use of low carbon fuel options will be essential in reducing transport sector emissions and to realise our transformational vision of almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050. Through our work with local authorities and other partners there are already approximately 500 electric vehicle charging points located across the whole of Scotland, of which around 300 are publicly accessible as part of the 'ChargePlace Scotland' network. This network, which covers domestic, workplace and en-route installations, will continue to develop to meet the needs of the emerging electric vehicle market.

**5.7** In addition, we support the future development of a network of alternative fuelling stations, for example for hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles, making increased use of low carbon vehicles a viable proposition.

**5.8** Connectivity is not just about enabling physical movement, but also virtual links. High quality mobile and fixed broadband connections have become essential to support communities and business development in both rural and urban areas. At present, there remains a significant gap between our most and least connected areas, with digital access being considerably better in more accessible urban areas. Many parts of rural Scotland have little or no connection and require public investment to rebalance the distribution of infrastructure.

**5.9** Our Infrastructure Investment Plan aims to accelerate the roll out of next generation broadband to all parts of rural Scotland over the next five years, to support public service provision as well as investment in the digital economy and rural economic growth. Work is progressing to develop new fibre links connecting rural areas, with an expectation of fibre links to 95% of premises Scotland wide by 2017/18. Opportunities for smarter towns and cities are also being explored.



## Scotland tomorrow

**5.10** Our ability to attract international investment and to build links to global markets form an important part of the Scottish Government Economic Strategy – our target is to increase exports by 50% by 2017 and exposure to international trade will promote productivity and competition within Scottish markets. In the longer term, Scotland can capitalise on its position of the edge of Europe, strategically located to gain from the evolution of world trade routes as the North East Passage opens up. To achieve this, our international and cross-border physical, economic and cultural connections will be crucial.

**5.11** Over the coming years, there will be a need for further improvements to ensure that we get best value from our transport infrastructure. Whilst investment programmes are already in place, spatial priorities may change over the longer term.

**5.12** Many of our major road and rail infrastructure improvements will be realised in the next two decades, strengthening connections between cities and sustaining lifeline rural links. More efficient rail services and reduced road congestion will support productivity. Our ambition to significantly grow Scotland's exports means that strengthening of international gateways and freight networks will be essential.

**5.13** Our long-term ambition is a largely decarbonised transport sector in Scotland, and advances will bring about a revolution in the way we travel. We will look to use alternative fuel sources for trains and vehicles. Significant levels of behavioural change will also be required to fulfil our ambition. Planning will have a role to play in modernising our infrastructure and supporting this change and development strategies should be complemented by improved connections across all transport modes.

**5.14** As a key part of the low carbon agenda, we will encourage local authorities to develop at least one exemplar walking- and cycling-friendly settlement to demonstrate how active travel networks can be significantly improved in line with meeting our vision for increased cycling. These settlements, as well as wider core path networks, will act as key nodes on the national walking and cycling network.

**5.15** To further reduce the need to travel and ensure continuing economic competitiveness, we will see a step change in digital connectivity in the coming years, supporting our broader aspirations for growth across the country. This will require significant investment in digital infrastructure to ensure coverage extends to our most remote, but asset-rich, rural and island communities. As well as providing new infrastructure to connect existing areas, future developments will build in digital connectivity as a matter of course. We are extending permitted development rights to facilitate this.

## Spatial priorities for change

### Cities will be better connected and provide a gateway to the rest of the world

**5.16** Strengthened digital infrastructure will support our aspirations for more sustainable cities which attract new business. We can expect cities to become significantly 'smarter' in the next few years, using population density and shared infrastructure to further increase access to high performing digital services.

**5.17** We aim to have better connected cities – better connected to each other, better connections within each of their regions – and for these transport networks to be progressively decarbonised. City regions are the hubs for the majority of our international connections. We want to make rail travel between cities quicker than by car, and to complete electrification of the railway lines between cities.

**5.18** In the short term, Phase 1 of the Edinburgh to Glasgow Improvements Programme will reduce journey times across the Central Belt. Beyond the mid-2020s, there is a clear need to further improve capacity between Edinburgh and Glasgow with consequent opportunities to reduce journey times even further and that need could be met either by proceeding with EGIP Phase 2 or by constructing a fast rail connection between Edinburgh and Glasgow as the first phase in a longer-term plan for a **High Speed Rail** connection to the rest of the UK. This will provide benefits by freeing up capacity on the wider Scottish rail network.

**5.19** The Infrastructure Investment Plan makes a commitment to improving rail services and reducing journey time between Inverness and Aberdeen, and from both Aberdeen and Inverness to the Central Belt.

**5.20** The road network has an essential role to play in connecting cities by car, public transport and active travel. Construction of the Forth Replacement Crossing (Queensferry Crossing) will be completed by 2016 and the associated public transport strategy will be implemented by the relevant partners. Further improvements will be made to the motorway network, including capacity improvements to the M8, M73 and M74. We will complete dualling of the trunk roads between cities, with dualling of the A9 from Perth to Inverness complete by 2025 and dualling of the A96 from Inverness to Aberdeen by 2030. In addition, the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan includes measures to improve the safety, capacity and performance of the strategic inter-city road network.

**5.21** Regional transport partnerships have a crucial role to play in improving active travel and transport networks and services within each of the city regions. Edinburgh Trams services are now operational. In Glasgow, we are proceeding with modernisation of the subway, and Fastlink will provide rapid bus transport between the city centre and key locations including the SECC and the new South Glasgow Hospital. By 2018, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and dualling of the A90 between Balmedie and Tipperty will significantly improve transport in and around Aberdeen. Strategic park and ride facilities will play an important role in providing public transport access to city centres. Across the country, we are improving station facilities, including a new station for Dundee and refurbishment of the main stations in Glasgow and Edinburgh.



**5.22** Many of Scotland's international gateways are located in or close to the city regions. By air, rail and sea, these gateways ensure Scotland remains an outward-looking country which is well-connected and open for business.

**5.23** Given Scotland's location in Europe and the importance of wider global markets, maintaining and enhancing air connectivity is essential. Scotland's major airports provide a gateway to Scotland and in particular to the cities network. We support enhancement of Scotland's **five main airports** as a national development. These gateways are important locations for investment – the national development includes business-related development around Glasgow and Prestwick Airports, and reconfiguration of land use around Edinburgh Airport to accommodate future expansion, relocate the Royal Highland Showground and support the creation of an International Business Gateway to the west of Edinburgh.

**5.24** Whilst we continue to support investment in our air connections, we recognise the challenge that this creates for our ongoing work to address climate change. Scotland is one of only a few countries to have included emissions from aviation into our greenhouse gas inventory. This will require wider policies and proposals to go further in reducing emissions.

**5.25** Freight transport networks are critical to our economy. Our transport plans will benefit the sector through continued investment in infrastructure. This will help to reduce congestion and encourage modal shift where this is practical and feasible. We will continue to work with industry to ensure efficiency of road movements from both a business and carbon reduction perspective. Over the long-term, wider efforts to increase the use of public transport, and promote walking and cycling for everyday journeys will help to reduce congestion arising from personal travel and benefit the freight sector.



**5.26** Rail freight and short-sea shipping have potential to reduce the carbon footprint of our freight sector. Rail freight networks are likely to become increasingly important as our export potential grows alongside our transition to a low carbon economy. There are a number of important interchanges in the Central Belt, including Grangemouth, Coatbridge and Mossend. We will work with the rail freight sector to develop a more strategic view of future development priorities for rail freight within the broader operational context of the network as a whole.

**5.27** Whilst Scotland's maritime freight-handling capacity services both the Atlantic and North Sea routes, most movement comes from the North Sea. We must ensure that we have the right infrastructure in place to support these key international connections. Our ambitions to significantly increase exports mean that we should continue to plan for development at strategically important locations. The **Grangemouth Investment Zone** is therefore designated as a national development, as is additional **Freight Capacity on the Forth** where consenting of new freight handling facilities at Rosyth is progressing. Rail freight connections to and from these facilities will be considered as an integral part of the national developments.

**5.28** Further north, Aberdeen Harbour serves as a multi-functional seaport, providing berthing and handling facilities for passengers, freight, oil and gas and other sectors. Despite the capacity constraints of the current harbour, this is one of Scotland's key gateways. Expansion of **Aberdeen Harbour**, including improved intermodal connections by road, is identified as a national development.

## Rural areas will be more accessible

**5.29** Our plans for investment in digital infrastructure will play a key role in improving competitiveness, ensuring that there is no digital divide between rural and urban Scotland. Our 'Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Programme' is delivering £410 million of public and private investment in parts of Scotland, including rural, semi-rural and suburban areas, that would not otherwise be served commercially. We are also exploring delivery models to extend mobile services to some of our hardest to reach areas.





**5.30** Reliance on the car will remain important in rural Scotland, and so providing infrastructure to facilitate greater use of low carbon fuel options, such as the ongoing installation of electric vehicle charging points across the country, will be particularly useful in reducing transport sector emissions.

**5.31** The rural south has a key role to play as a gateway to Scotland and we will continue with investment in strategic corridors to support this. Improvements to the A77 and A75 have been progressed and further targeted interventions are planned, supporting the role of Cairnryan as a key gateway whilst improving the connections between rural communities across the south west of Scotland. The Borders Railway, to be completed by 2015, will provide a new public transport route into the south east of Scotland.

**5.32** The dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness and improvements to the Highland Mainline will provide a step change in accessibility across the rural north, increase business confidence and support investment throughout the region. Improvements to the rail network and dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen, including bypasses of towns along the route, will provide opportunities to link the energy sectors in the two city regions as well as improving the quality of place within the towns. Improvements being developed for the A82 will support business and investment in the rural north and west. We will continue to ensure the A95 accommodates the needs of our flourishing whisky industry.

**5.33** To achieve a step change in active travel, walking and cycling networks will continue to develop through core path plans and local community networks, connecting where possible with the national long distance network. This network will bring together urban and rural Scotland, to promote a significant increase in active travel as well as broadening recreational access to the countryside for residents and visitors alike.

**5.34** For visitors, the journey can become an experience in its own right and we will pilot scenic route projects on the key tourist routes, exploring opportunities to build-in high quality design to infrastructure improvements. The programme is expected to be extended to other routes, including public transport corridors, in the longer term.



## We will reduce the disadvantage of distance for our coastal and island communities

**5.35** Improved digital infrastructure, both fixed and mobile, is essential to support sustainable economic growth and better connect people and communities. We have identified a **digital fibre network** linking our most peripheral communities as a national development. This will bring particular benefits in the north and west coasts and islands, given their relatively dispersed population and the potential to support population and economic growth through increased home and remote working.

**5.36** Air and ferry services will continue to play an essential role – as a lifeline service but also supporting economic activity and the delivery of public services.

**5.37** We anticipate longer-term opportunities arising from the opening up of new shipping routes across the Arctic. Several deep water assets, including at Scapa Flow, Stornoway, Shetland and in the Moray Firth, may present opportunities for new or expanded ports to take advantage of this and of wider opportunities, including for tourism development. Further south, Cairnryan remains a key gateway to Ireland.

**5.38** As with rural areas, providing infrastructure to facilitate greater use of low carbon fuel options is particularly important in more car dependent coastal and island areas. Some areas, such as Islay and the Western Isles, have used innovative approaches to stimulate this, and there are likely to be further opportunities within island communities where travel range is relatively restricted. Ferry terminals provide a useful focal point for charging infrastructure, and electric vehicle rapid charging points are already available or planned at ferry terminals in the Inner Hebrides, the Western Isles and the Pentland Firth.

**5.39** Strategic road and rail connections serve the north and west coast directly, and also the ports which connect to the islands by ferry. Commissioned improvements to the A82 and A9 will strengthen these connections, and we are working closely with Argyll and Bute Council to finalise the trunking of the the A83 between Kennacraig and Campbeltown. In the longer term, improvements to the A85, A87, A830, A835 and A828 will also help to support expected development in some of our more remote rural and coastal communities.



## 6. Delivery

### National developments – outcomes

**6.1** We have identified 14 national developments that are needed to help to deliver our spatial strategy. Whilst national development status establishes the need for a project, it does not grant development consent. Planning permission and any other necessary assessments and consents will still be required at the consenting stage. Mitigation set out in the Action Programme should inform subsequent planning processes and be applied as appropriate to avoid or reduce environmental effects and demonstrate no adverse effects on the integrity of European protected sites.

**6.2** The detailed description of the components of each national development in Annex A will assist planning and other consenting authorities in determining whether national development status applies to a particular proposal.

**6.3** National developments will be delivered by a range of public and private sector organisations, and inclusion in NPF3 does not imply funding on the part of the Scottish Government or its agencies. However, to support their delivery, priorities identified in NPF3 will be taken into account when future spending programmes are developed or reviewed.

# National Developments



## Detail key

### National Developments

- 1 Ravenscraig
- 2 Dundee Waterfront
- 3 Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Network and Thermal Generation
- 4 Pumped storage
- 5 Central Scotland Green Network
- 6 Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership
- A National Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network
- 7 High Speed Rail
- 8 Grangemouth Investment Zone
- 9 Freight on the Forth
- 10 Aberdeen Harbour
- A Digital Fibre Network



**6.4** Our strategy for a **successful, sustainable place** highlights the particular scope for the cities network to progress our economic agenda. We need to create opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, including areas which have, in the past, experienced decline. To support this, we believe there is a need for two national developments to be taken forward:

**1. Ravenscraig** is one of the largest areas of vacant and derelict land in Europe. National development status will give this project renewed impetus, within the lifetime of NPF3. Redevelopment of this site for a range of uses will make a significant contribution to addressing concentrations of vacant and derelict land in Central Scotland. A masterplanned approach provides an opportunity to build in low carbon and environmental infrastructure, including heat networks, zero carbon buildings, digital connectivity, sustainable drainage solutions and open space. We expect the outcome to be a sustainable settlement for the 21st century, with a new town centre, jobs, facilities and homes, and sustainable transport connections. This will deliver a high quality of life and access to opportunities for new residents and nearby communities alike.

**2. Dundee Waterfront** demonstrates the outcomes that city planning can achieve when it is ambitious and well executed. This development is progressing rapidly. Planning authorities across the country can look to it as an example of effective delivery. Plans for the waterfront support several of our objectives, including: regeneration, high quality placemaking, improvements to the public realm, better connections, and support for the low carbon economy. We look forward to seeing further significant progress within the lifetime of NPF3.

**6.5** Our strategy for a **low carbon place** reflects the significant opportunities for growth arising from our natural energy resources. To achieve our ambition, we need a range of infrastructure, including new developments and refurbishment or enhancement of existing facilities. Delivery will be assisted by three national developments:

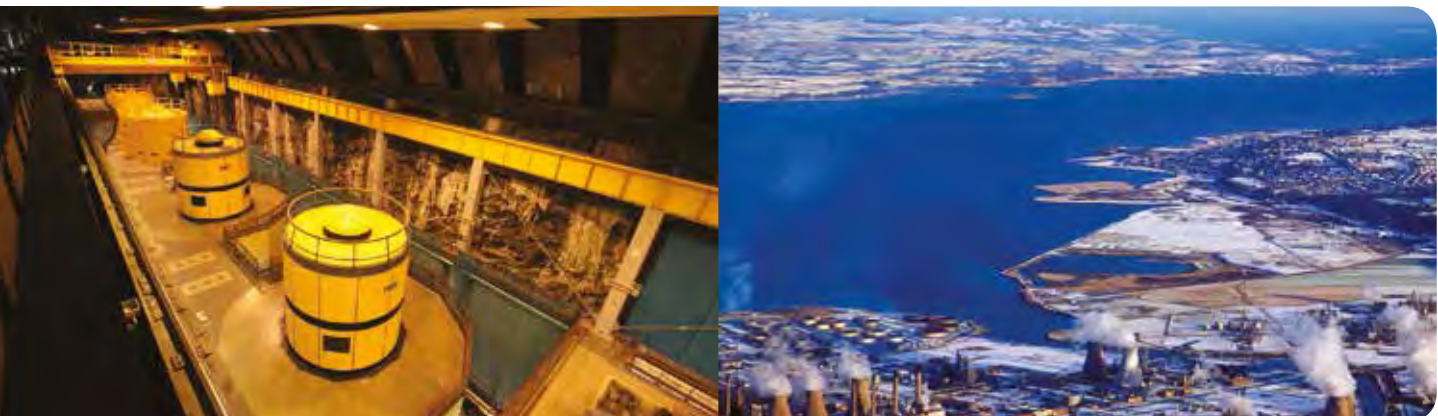


**3. A Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Network and Thermal Generation** is required to maintain the 2.5 GW of thermal generation we require, whilst also reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector. This national development reflects the opportunity to provide this at existing sites, specifically Longannet and Cockenzie. In addition, proposals for the refurbishment of a gas-fired power station at Peterhead, a new coal-fired power station with CCS at Grangemouth and extension to the existing pipeline to St. Fergus are expected to come forward within the lifetime of NPF3. This national development aims to establish Scotland as a centre of expertise in CCS technology, maintain energy security and diversify the overall energy mix.

**4. An Enhanced High Voltage Energy Transmission Network** is needed to facilitate renewable electricity development and its export. The specific projects required for this network are set out in the Electricity Networks Strategy Group, and will continue to evolve as new opportunities emerge. Key connections include links to Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, and interconnectors to emerging international grid networks. Improvements to the distribution network are also important to many remote rural areas. We support the provision of new infrastructure, whilst acknowledging that full consideration of routes and development components will be required at the consenting stage. The map of national developments provides an indicative picture of key electricity grid upgrades, although these may change in the future.

As part of this national development, we want to see planning enabling development of onshore links to support offshore renewable energy development. A strategy for the marine grid, connecting with the onshore network, will help to provide greater clarity on the offshore projects required.

**5. Pumped hydroelectric storage** at existing and new sites for hydro electricity generation is needed, to support our security of energy supplies, diversity of supplies and to reduce carbon emissions. This will help to balance electricity supply and demand when we have a much greater proportion of electricity from renewable energy technologies, providing a means to manage more intermittent electricity generation from those sources. During the lifetime of NPF3, we particularly support development at Cruachan in Argyll, a nationally important pumped storage facility with significant potential for enhanced capacity.





**6.6** Our strategy for a **natural, resilient place** aims to evolve our approach to environmental stewardship, enhance ecosystem services and adapt to the growing impact of climate change. As well as protecting existing assets, our approach emphasizes the importance of the environment for people, and the need to prioritise environmental enhancement in places where past activity has impacted on landscape and ecological quality.

**6. The Central Scotland Green Network** remains a national priority. This densely-populated area is rich in cultural, industrial and natural assets. However, in some places past land use has left a legacy of disused land, poor quality greenspace and fragmented habitats. Here, a step change in environmental quality is required to address disadvantage and attract investment, whilst sustaining and enhancing biodiversity, landscape quality and wider ecosystems. Elsewhere, the challenge is to maintain the existing quality of place whilst delivering development in areas of particular pressure. This initiative is now well established, and in the coming years we believe that the priorities for the lead organisations should include promoting active travel, addressing vacant and derelict land and focusing action in disadvantaged areas, to maximise community and health benefits. We expect work to gather further momentum during the lifetime of NPF3. A variety of developments in Central Scotland will contribute to the network. Benefits will also emerge from links with the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership, major area and canal-led regeneration projects and catchment-scale water management planning.

**7. The Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership** is a nationally significant exemplar of catchment-scale water and drainage infrastructure planning. This project is needed to better service existing communities, unlock potential development sites and to build greater resilience to long-term climate change. Further key projects will be delivered within the lifetime of NPF3, ensuring that aspirations for regeneration and growth are supported by improved infrastructure capacity.



**8. A National Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network** is needed to enhance visitor and recreation experiences, as well as ensuring that Scotland's population has better access to the outdoors for health and well-being. Making better links between existing routes will improve connections between urban and rural, and inland and coastal areas. Whilst it has significant potential as a tourism resource, we also believe that this network can support active travel and contribute to health and well-being. The development should focus on making best use of existing path networks – Scotland's Great Trails, the National Cycling Network and the Scottish Canal Network. It should seek to close key gaps, upgrade connecting routes, build on local core path networks, and link with public transport. Other proposals to strengthen this network over this period do not need planning permission to be implemented but form part of a wider strategy to help achieve the vision for the national network over a 20 year period. A coherent plan for the network will be developed by key partners, led by Scottish Natural Heritage, immediately after adoption of NPF3. The national development description shows the priority 5 year projects within the context of the wider strategy.

**6.7** Finally, our strategy for a **connected place** focuses on improving our key gateways and international transport connections, improving links within Scotland and progressively decarbonising transport networks. To complement ongoing investment programmes that support improvements to road and rail infrastructure, we believe that the following key projects are of national significance.

**9. High Speed Rail** is needed to improve our connection to the rest of the UK and Europe, and to strengthen links between our cities. We are assessing the case for bringing forward a link between Edinburgh and Glasgow in anticipation of the subsequent link to the rest of the UK. This would support economic growth by improving journey times and release wider capacity on Scotland's rail network. The routes for both elements of this project are yet to be defined, but further detail will become available during the lifetime of NPF3. The Edinburgh to Glasgow connection is programmed for delivery by the mid 2020s.

**10. Strategic Airport Enhancements** are vital to support the role of our main airports as gateways to Scotland. Lifeline air links to remote rural communities are also an essential part of our transport infrastructure. This national development includes enhancements of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Prestwick Airports. National development status also reflects the role of airports as hubs for wider investment and business development. Close to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Prestwick Airports there are significant opportunities for business development as an associated land use. We expect to see further progress on delivery of airport masterplans during the lifetime of NPF3.



**11. Grangemouth Investment Zone** is a nationally-significant site for industry and freight. There is a need for further upgrading of freight-handling facilities to enhance business activity on the site, flood defences to improve the resilience of the site and to protect its industrial use, and improve transport links to assist with logistics and minimise the impact of industrial traffic on the surrounding community. During the lifetime of NPF3 we expect proposals to progress with additional funding having been made available through Falkirk Council's Tax Incremental Financing scheme. Continued partnership working will support delivery and help to manage impacts on the local community and sensitive environment of the Forth Estuary.

**12. Additional Freight Capacity on the Forth** is needed because of the strategic importance of the Forth in relation to heavily used North Sea freight shipping routes. In the short term, we expect to see proposals at Rosyth progress through the marine consenting process. Proposals for development at other ports may come forward as economic recovery progresses.

**13. Aberdeen Harbour** is a nationally-important facility which supports the oil and gas sector, provides international and lifeline connections and makes a significant contribution to the wider economy of the north east. Expansion of the harbour is required to address current capacity constraints, and to consolidate and expand its role. We expect development proposals for this to come forward in the lifetime of NPF3, including new harbour facilities and onshore transport links.

**14. A Digital Fibre Network** will ensure that we realise our ambition for world-class connectivity across Scotland. This national development focuses on plans for a fibre network to connect our most remote rural communities. This will strengthen the resilience of these communities, and assist projects that play a key role in supporting sustainable economic growth. Opportunities for cabling to be delivered alongside other infrastructure such as the electricity grid and walking and cycling networks are encouraged.

**6.8** National development status aims to establish the need for these developments. Where national developments are not locationally specific, site selection will be needed. All developments will require the appropriate level of environmental assessment and public consultation, and will need to demonstrate that environmental impacts can be avoided, or mitigated to an acceptable level at the consenting stage. National development designations do not remove existing permitted development rights from a type of development or location.

**6.9** Annex A provides the technical descriptions of the statements of need as required by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, and identifies those developments to be processed as national developments within the planning system and other consenting regimes where applications for consent are required.

## Further key actions

**6.10** We expect to see significant progress over the next five years, and recognise that action is needed now to ensure that we also achieve our longer-term goals. As well as delivering the suite of national developments, there are many other actions that need to be taken forward to deliver the aims of the spatial strategy in NPF3. The Action Programme for NPF3, which will be updated as delivery progresses, identifies the following 30 Actions which will ensure that the delivery of priorities is co-ordinated with other strategies and targets for the Scottish Government and its agencies.

### A sustainable, successful place:

1. We will work with planning authorities to maintain an up-to-date, easily accessible national protocol for **Enterprise Areas**.
2. The Scottish Cities Alliance and local authorities will take forward the priorities set out in the **City Investment Plans**.
3. The Scottish Cities Alliance will bring the City Investment Plans together into a **shared investment portfolio brochure**, communicating a consistent investment message across the cities network.
4. As an early priority, we will examine current planning authority approaches to **aligning planning and infrastructure investment** to inform whether further advice on this is required.
5. We will continue to implement and embed the regeneration outcomes as articulated in our Regeneration Strategy. As a priority, we will implement the Town Centre Action Plan, and take forward a series of demonstration projects including a programme of **town centre charrettes**.
6. We will work with housing providers and the development sector to **support housing development** and encourage innovative approaches to affordable housing.
7. In anticipation of longer-term change, we wish to see planning authorities anticipate the likely need for new housing, infrastructure and services resulting from **investment in coastal and rural areas** through a joined-up approach to marine and terrestrial planning.
8. We will support the sustainable growth of the **aquaculture sector**, including through the continuing work of the Ministerial Group for Sustainable Aquaculture.

### A low carbon place:

9. We will continue to take action to help generate the equivalent of 100% of Scotland's gross annual electricity consumption from **renewable sources** by 2020, with an interim target of 50% by 2015.
10. We will apply building standards to improve the **energy efficiency** of existing and new buildings.
11. We will work with local authorities to build national and local authority **heat maps** into development plans.
12. We will build on progress to date to deliver our target of 500 MW of **community and locally-owned renewable energy** and promote greater benefits from renewable energy generation.
13. Working with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, we will implement the **National Renewables Infrastructure Plan** with planning enabling development across the locations it identifies.
14. We will take forward a study to explore the potential role, technology options, and impacts on the energy system of an increase in **energy storage capacity**.
15. The Highland Council, and Dumfries and Galloway Council will continue to work with partners and communities to develop planning frameworks associated with the **decommissioning of nuclear power stations** at Dounreay and Chapelcross.
16. We will finalise the National Marine Plan, including our plans for **offshore wind, wave and tidal energy**, in 2014 and commence development of a strategy for the **marine grid**.
17. We will support a co-ordinated approach to planning for energy-related and other key development in the five **areas of co-ordinated action**: Peterhead, Cockenzie, Grangemouth, Hunterston and the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters. We believe that these locations have a nationally-significant role to play in delivering our spatial strategy.

### A natural, resilient place:

18. We will take forward the provisions of the **Cycling Action Plan** and the **National Walking Strategy**.
19. We will implement the **Scottish Biodiversity Strategy**, including completing the suite of protected places and improving their connectivity through a national ecological network centred on these sites.
20. We will help planning authorities to take a more co-ordinated approach to planning for environmental and habitat improvements for the **Forth Estuary**.
21. We will increase **new woodland creation** to an average of 10,000 hectares per year from 2015, and take action towards delivering the proposal in Low Carbon Scotland (RPP2) to increase the rate of **peatland restoration** to 22,000 hectares per year.



- 22. SEPA will publish the second round of **River Basin Management Plans** in 2015. National and local flood risk management plans will be published in 2016.
- 23. We will take action based on the outcome from our consultation on **Opencast Coal Restoration: Effective Regulation**.
- 24. Planning authorities will support VisitScotland's **Tourism Development Framework** in their development plans.
- 25. We will take forward the actions in the **Climate Change Adaptation** programme.

#### A connected place:

- 26. We will work with the Cities Alliance to progress **Smart Cities** initiatives.
- 27. We will deliver the strategic transport projects in the **Infrastructure Investment Plan** and work with the freight sector to identify priority developments for inclusion in NPF4.
- 28. We will work with industry to take forward the Step Change Programme to provide the capacity to deliver **next generation broadband** to 95% of premises by 2017-18, and a significant uplift in speeds for the remaining areas.
- 29. We will continue to provide funding for the installation of domestic, workplace and en-route **charging points**, as set out in 'Switched On Scotland: A Roadmap to Widespread Adoption of Plug-in Vehicles'.
- 30. We will continue to progress the **Scotland's Scenic Routes** initiative.

**6.11** We expect strategic and local development plans to take into account the strategy, actions and developments set out in NPF3. We will use the actions and outcomes identified in the Action Programme to monitor progress over the next five years.



# Annex A – national developments

## Statements of need and technical descriptions

### 1. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Ravenscraig

**1 – Location:** Former Ravenscraig steelworks and new transport and communication connections to it.

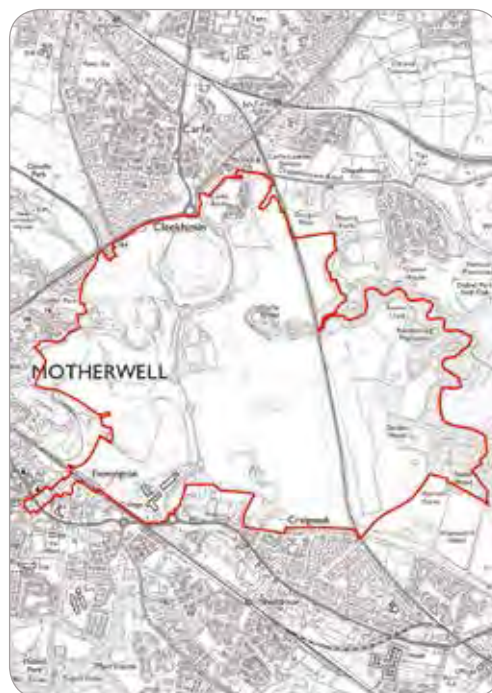
**2 – Description of Classes of Development:**

Development situated at the location consisting of:

- a. construction of buildings for business, general industrial or storage and distribution use where the gross floor space is or exceeds 10,000 square metres or with a site area which is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- b. construction of residential buildings where the area of the development site is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- c. construction of new road(s) or fibre-optic cable(s) to the location where the length of the infrastructure exceeds 8 kilometres.
- d. development of a new town centre.

**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (d) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development within the location are needed to support the delivery of large-scale proposals as required in the regeneration of Ravenscraig, currently one of the largest areas of vacant and derelict land in Europe. Its redevelopment for a range of uses makes a significant contribution to addressing concentrations of vacant and derelict land in Central Scotland. It provides an opportunity to build in low carbon and environmental infrastructure.



## 2. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Dundee Waterfront

**1 – Location:** Dundee waterfront and new transport and communications to it.

**2 – Description of Classes of Development:** Development at the location consisting of:

- a. construction of buildings for business, general industrial or storage and distribution use where the gross floor space is or exceeds 10,000 square metres or with a site area which is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- b. construction of residential buildings where the area of the development site is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- c. construction of new road(s), railway track(s) or fibre-optic cable(s) to the location where the length of the infrastructure exceeds 8 kilometres.



**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (c) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development within the location are needed to support the delivery of large-scale proposals required for the transformation Dundee. This national development supports key economic growth sectors for the city, and will improve quality of place in one of Scotland's cities.

### 3. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Carbon Capture and Storage Network and Thermal Generation

**1 – Location:** Carbon Capture and Storage Network Infrastructure, throughout Scotland. Thermal generation at Peterhead (Boddam), Longannet, Grangemouth and Cockenzie.

#### 2 – Description of Classes of Development:

Development at the locations consisting of:

- a. construction of new or refurbishment of existing pipeline(s) exceeding 8 kilometres in length to provide for the transportation of captured carbon dioxide, including change of use from transporting existing substances.
- b. construction of pumping and/or compression equipment required for a carbon dioxide transportation pipeline(s) exceeding 8 kilometres in length.
- c. construction of buildings or structures for carbon capture, transportation and/or storage plant and facilities where the gross floor area is or exceeds 10,000 square metres or the site area is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- d. construction of new or refurbishments to thermal generation power stations with a generating capacity of over 50 megawatts where that development includes on site carbon capture plant to a level as required in the Electricity Generation Policy Statement, carbon transportation infrastructure and/or storage facilities.
- e. construction of new or refurbishments to existing onshore gas pipelines to the thermal generation locations where the generation fuel is to be gas.
- f. onshore and offshore carbon dioxide storage sites.



**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (f) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development are needed to support the delivery of a carbon capture and storage network to establish Scotland as a centre of expertise in this technology. In line with the Scottish Government's Electricity Generation Policy Statement, these classes of development also support the achievement of a minimum of 2.5 gigawatts of thermal generation progressively fitted with carbon capture and storage technology. The aim is to demonstrate that carbon capture and storage is feasible at a commercial scale by 2020, with full retrofit across conventional fossil fuel power stations by 2025-30.

#### 4. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – High Voltage Electricity Transmission Network

**1 – Location:** Throughout Scotland.

**2 – Description of Classes of Development:** Development consisting of:

- a. new and/or upgraded onshore electricity transmission cabling of or in excess of 132 kilovolts, and supporting pylons.
- b. new and/or upgraded onshore sub stations directly linked to electricity transmission cabling of or in excess of 132 kilovolts.
- c. new and/or upgraded onshore converter stations directly linked to onshore and/or offshore electricity transmission cable(s) of or in excess of 132 kilovolts.
- d. new and/or upgraded offshore electricity transmission cabling of or exceeding 132 kilovolts.

**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (d) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development are needed to support the delivery of an enhanced high voltage electricity transmission grid which is vital in meeting national targets for electricity generation, statutory climate change targets, and security of energy supplies.

#### 5. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Pumped Hydroelectric Storage

**1 – Location:** Throughout Scotland.

**2 – Description of Classes of Development:** Development for pumped hydroelectric storage which would be or exceed 50 megawatts consisting of:

- a. new and/or expanded and/or refurbished water holding reservoir and dam.
- b. new and/or refurbished electricity generating plant structures or buildings.
- c. new and/or expanded and/or refurbished pump plant structures or buildings.
- d. new and/or expanded and/or refurbished water inlet and outlet pipework.
- e. new and/or refurbished substations and/or transformers directly required for the pumped hydroelectric schemes which fall within the description.
- f. new and/or replacement transmission cables directly linked to the pumped hydroelectric schemes which fall within the description.

**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (f) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development are needed to support the strategic role of pumped hydroelectric storage within our electricity network by increasing the capacity through new or expanded sites. This promotes security of electricity supplies and will help to balance electricity demand with intermittency of some types of generation.

## 6. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Central Scotland Green Network

**1 – Location:** Local authorities throughout Central Scotland within the boundary identified by the Central Scotland Green Network Partnership.

**2 – Description of Classes of Development:** The project supports a wide range of environmental enhancement measures, including activities and initiatives that do not require development consent. In addition, the following development categories within the above locations are also included within the national development:

- a. development of or exceeding 2 hectares on vacant and derelict land for sustainable drainage systems or allotments.
- b. construction of new walking and cycling routes exceeding 8 kilometres.

**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) and (b) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development support the delivery of a step change in the quality, accessibility, biodiversity and adaptability of the Central Scotland environment. Active travel projects will provide added value where they integrate with the national walking and cycling network and local authority core paths.



## 7. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership

**1 – Location:** The areas of: East Dunbartonshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Glasgow City Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Renfrewshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council.

**2 – Description of Class of Development:** Development for surface water management within the locations consisting of:

- a. works, structures, buildings and pipelines where the site area is or exceeds 2 hectares.

**3 – Designation:** A development within the Class of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** This class of development will contribute to the delivery of infrastructure required for water resource and drainage management on a broad scale within the Glasgow city region. The project will play a key role in adaptation to climate change, and provide an exemplar of catchment-scale planning and management.



## 8. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – National Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network

**1 – Location:** Throughout Scotland.

**2 – Description of Class of Development:** The network will include enhancements to a number of routes which do not require planning consent. These are set out in the NPF3 action programme. In addition the following specific proposals are included within the national development.

**a. New and improved routes and links for walking and cycling which are likely to need planning permission:**

### Cycleways

Route 73 (north) of the National Cycle Network – Brodick to Corrie

Route 753 of the National Cycle Network – Gourock-Ardrossan: Largs to Inverkip (up to 15km new traffic free & on road route) In and around Fairlie (up to 10km of new traffic free route)

Route 76 of the National Cycle Network – Manor Powis Roundabout (2km of new traffic free route to avoid major roundabout on A91/A905)

Route 765 of the National Cycle Network – Stirling to Callander: Doune-Burn of Cambus (5km of new traffic free route + 2 bridges)

Southern Upland Cycle Way: Stranraer to Portpatrick (10km of new traffic routes at various locations, road crossings and traffic calming)

### Long Distance Routes

Clyde Walkway extension: New Lanark to Biggar (20km of path creation and improvements)

Crook of Devon to Kinross (10km of path creation and improvements)

Cross-Scotland Pilgrim Way: Tyndrum to Crieff section; Glen Ogle to Tyndrum (40km of path creation and improvements)

Darvel – Muirkirk (20km of path creation and improvements)

John Muir Way: Strathblane to Glasgow spur (15km of path creation and improvements)

North Solway Coastal Route: Drummole to Portpatrick (20km of path improvements)

Speyside Way Extension: Aviemore to Newtonmore: (8km of path creation and 1 bridge)

**3 – Designation:** A development within the Class of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** This class of development will help deliver a strategic national network of walking and cycling routes. The routes included above have been identified for the initial phase of the network, and will make best use of existing path infrastructure. The network will significantly improve visitor experiences and increase tourism within Scotland. It will be a key asset for increasing physical activity and will support active travel. The network will be supported by and will support core path plans and community path networks, transport hubs and strategic tourism and recreation destinations in Scotland as well as settlements.



**4 – Need:** The classes of development support the development of a high speed rail network to Scotland. This aims to provide a more efficient, lower carbon travel option to connect Scotland with London. A link between Edinburgh and Glasgow as an initial phase would realise early benefits from the project, and aims to release capacity on the existing rail network serving cities north of the Central Belt.

- any extension of the site boundary of the airport for airport operational uses as identified in a current airport masterplan that is supported by the development plan for the area.
- new and/or expanded terminal buildings where the gross floor space exceeds 10,000 square metres or the development is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- construction of buildings for business, general industrial or storage and distribution use requiring a near airport location where the gross floor space is or exceeds 10,000 square metres or the development is or exceeds 2 hectares in the area identified for associated business development at Edinburgh, Glasgow and Prestwick Airports.
- new National Showground facilities south of the A8 where the gross floor space is or exceeds 10,000 square metres or the development is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- construction of new walking and cycling routes exceeding 8 kilometres.
- construction of surface water management schemes where the area of development would exceed 2 hectares.





**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (f) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These strategic airports act as national gateways to and from Scotland. These classes of development support the key gateway and hub function of the airports. All the airports identified have published masterplans for their development – development proposals vary between the airports. Areas adjacent to Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports have been identified for commercial and mixed uses supporting the economic development opportunities which are particularly suited to these locations. At Edinburgh provision is also made for the re-location of the Royal Highland Showground, and ensuring that the major land users in the area continue to have a co-ordinated approach to development.

## 11. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Grangemouth Investment Zone

**1 – Location:** The Port of Grangemouth, the adjacent chemicals business area identified by the Development Plan for Falkirk and access routes to the area.

**2 – Description of Classes of Development:** Development consisting of:

- a. construction of a new freight handling facilities where resultant building or structure is or exceeds 10,000 square metres, or the area of development is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- b. construction of a new building or structure for business and/or general industrial uses where the resultant building or structure is or exceeds 10,000 square metres, or the site area is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- c. construction of flood defence structures and/or the undertaking of works for flood defence within the location where the area of development is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- d. the construction of new and/or replacement roads to provide an improved road connection and junction between the location and the M9 motorway where the resultant roads, including motorway junctions exceed 8 kilometres.
- e. the construction of new and/or replacement roads to provide an improved road connection and junction between the location and the M8 motorway where the resultant roads, including motorway junctions exceed 8 kilometres.
- f. the construction of new/and or replacement railway track to and within the location to provide an enhanced railhead for freight handling purposes.



**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (f) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** The classes of development are needed to support the key infrastructure and industry at the Grangemouth Investment Zone, strengthening its nationally important role in freight handling, providing energy-related infrastructure and facilitating wider economic activity. There is a continuing need for a co-ordinated approach to development in this area to minimise impacts on the community and environment.



## 12. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Freight Handling Capacity on the Forth

**1 – Location:** Existing and disused ports and harbours on the Forth Estuary and transport access to them.

**2 – Description of Classes of Development:** Development consisting of:

- a. the construction of new and/or expanded multi-modal container freight handling facilities where the resultant building or structure is or exceeds 10,000 square metres, or the area of development is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- b. the construction of new and/or replacement road infrastructure exceeding 8 kilometres connecting existing road networks to the freight handling facility.
- c. the construction of new and/or upgraded railway track exceeding 8 kilometres connecting existing networks to the freight handling facility.

**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (c) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development are required to support continued demand for freight handling facilities to service North Sea freight shipping routes. Potential sites around the Firth of Forth are in close proximity to a large share of Scotland's population, and are accessible from transport routes to allow for onward transport of freight.

## 13. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – Aberdeen Harbour

**1 – Location:** Nigg Bay.

**2 – Description of Classes of Development:**

Development at the location for:

- a. the construction of new and/or replacement harbour facilities where the resultant building or structure is or exceeds 10,000 square metres, or the area of development is or exceeds 2 hectares.
- b. the construction of new and/or replacement road infrastructure from existing networks.
- c. the provision of water supply and related infrastructure directly for new harbor facilities.

**3 – Designation:** A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) to (c) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development support the expansion of Aberdeen Harbour. Current constraints will increasingly limit the ability of the harbour to provide crucial services and limit opportunities for business growth at this nationally important facility. Nigg Bay has been identified as the preferred development option, due to the constraints of the existing sites.



#### 14. STATEMENT OF NEED AND DESCRIPTION – National Digital Fibre Network

**1 – Location:** Throughout Scotland.

**2 – Description of Class of Development:** Development which consists of:

- a. the construction of new broadband cabling where the length of the cabling exceeds 8 kilometres.

**3 – Designation:** A development within the Class of Development described in paragraph (2) (a) is designated a national development.

**4 – Need:** These classes of development support the delivery of enhanced digital infrastructure in Scotland which is vital for continued sustainable economic growth. The Highlands and Islands Area will form a focus for development.

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- Year of Homecoming
- National Marine Plan
- National Conservation Centre Forthside
- Sectoral Marine Plans for renewable energy
- Scotland Heat Map and local heat datasets
- Heat Generation Policy Statement
- Marine Protected Areas
- National Peatland Plan
- Edinburgh Trams operational

2014

2015

2016

2017

- NPF3 Monitoring Report
- 30,000 affordable homes delivered 2011-2016
- V&A at Dundee
- City of Glasgow College
- Ayrshire College
- National Performance Centre for Sport Heriot Watt
- Acute Mental Health and North Ayrshire Community Hospital
- Climate Change – 3rd Report on Policies and Proposals (RPP3)
- 2nd Land Use Strategy
- Local Flood Risk Management Plans
- Well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas
- Queensferry Crossing complete
- Edinburgh-Glasgow via Falkirk rail electrification

- South Glasgow Hospitals
- Inverness College
- Equivalent of 50% of electricity consumption from renewable energy
- Energy Generation Policy Statement
- DECC Carbon Capture and Storage Commercialisation Project final investment decision
- 2nd round of River Basin Management Plans
- National Flood Risk Management Strategies
- 85% of properties to have next generation broadband (2015/16)
- Borders Railway
- Glasgow Fastlink

- Narrow the gap in economic participation between best and worst performing regions
- Grow exports by 50%
- Royal Hospital for Sick Children/ Department of Clinical Neurosciences Edinburgh
- 95% of premises to have access to next generation broadband (2017/18)
- M8/M73/M74 improvements complete

- Scotland's Schools for the Future Investment Programme complete
- NHS Dumfries and Galloway Royal Acute Services
- Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
- A90 Balmedie to Tipperty dualling
- Dunblane-Stirling-Alloa rail electrification

2018

- NPF4
- Glasgow Subway modernisation complete
- Edinburgh-Glasgow Rail Improvements (EGIP) Phase 1 complete

2019

- 500 MW of renewable energy locally or community-owned
- Marine finfish production at 210,000 tonnes p.a.
- Shellfish production from aquaculture at 13,000 tonnes p.a.
- 12% reduction in energy consumption
- 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- Equivalent of 100% of electricity consumption from renewables
- 30% of overall energy demand from renewables
- 11% of heat demand from renewables
- 10% of transport fuels from renewables
- At least 70% of waste to be recycled
- Scotland fully contributing to meeting UN Aichi goals and targets for biodiversity
- Begin development of 3rd round of River Basin Management Plans
- World class digital infrastructure established across all of Scotland

2020

- Step change in energy efficiency of homes (2030)
- Largely decarbonised electricity sector (2030)
- Significant progress to decarbonise heat sector in Scotland (2030)
- 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (2050)
- Largely decarbonised heat sector in Scotland (2050)
- 90% of water bodies at good ecological status (2027)
- A9 Perth to Inverness dualling complete (2025)
- Highland Main Line Rail Improvements Project scheduled completion (2025)
- Significant progress in decarbonising transport sector (2030)
- Aberdeen to Central Belt rail improvements complete (2030)
- A96 Aberdeen to Inverness dualling complete (2030)
- Aberdeen to Inverness rail improvements complete (2030)
- High Speed Rail to London complete (post 2032)
- Vehicle emissions largely eliminated (2050)



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w w w . s c o t l a n d . g o v . u k

highland-wide

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

AM PLANA LEASACHAIDH

air feadh na Gàidhealtachd



april  
an giblean 2012



# Highland-wide Local Development Plan - April 2012

## Am Plana Leasachaidh Air Feadh na Gàidhealtachd - An Giblean 2012

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## 1. **Accompanying Documents** **Sgrìobhainnean Ceangailte**

1.1 Several other documents have been produced in parallel with the Plan including the following:

- The Strategic Environmental Assessment documents, which are required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 can be inspected at Highland Council Headquarters Inverness or browsed at our web-site [www.highland.gov.uk/developmentplans](http://www.highland.gov.uk/developmentplans).
- The Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the Local Development Plan, which includes Appropriate Assessment, can be inspected at Highland Council Headquarters Inverness or browsed at our web-site.
- The Equalities Impact Assessment can be inspected at Highland Council Headquarters Inverness or browsed at our web-site.

## 2. Foreword

### Facal-toisich

- 2.1 I am pleased to present the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. This is the land-use Plan which the Council will employ to guide development and investment in the area over the next twenty years. It is important to emphasise that this is very much a Plan for the Highland Council Area as a whole.



The Plan will accommodate significant population growth and enable communities to grow sustainably and meet future needs. Successful communities with a growing population require homes, jobs, services and facilities and the Plan seeks to meet these needs in a fully effective manner. Developments which provide affordable housing and improved design quality will be key features of the successful delivery of this Plan. Greater detail on how these outcomes can be delivered at a more local level will be brought forward in the three Area Local Development Plans.

Meanwhile, the area's important assets - natural, built and cultural - will be safeguarded. The conservation and retention of the richness of the area is important to its future prosperity.

Through the implementation of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, the Council can make significant progress in creating opportunities and addressing the wider needs of the Highland Council area. However, it is recognised that the achievement of many aims set out in the Plan will require many other organisations, communities and individuals to play a full and effective part.

We drew up the policies and proposals following detailed consideration of the many comments received from the public and other interested parties during stages in the preparation of the plan. We have also made changes to the policies and proposals following examination of the plan by Scottish Ministers.

We would like to thank everyone who has taken part in the production of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, your comments and inputs have helped to shape the planning policy which will guide development right across Highland.

Cllr. W. J. (Ian) Ross



### 3. Introduction & Context

#### Ro-ràdh & Co-theacsa

- 3.1 Scottish Government expects local development plans to:
- have a sharp focus on land and infrastructure;
  - concentrate on what will happen, where and why;
  - make more use of maps and plans to explain and justify the long term settlement strategy, and;
  - contain policies and proposals that will achieve predictable outcomes.
- 3.2 On 5 April 2012 the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (referred to as “the Plan”) was adopted by the Council and was constituted as the local development plan in law. It sets out the overarching spatial planning policy for the whole of the Highland Council area, except the area covered by the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan.
- 3.3 The Plan sets out a vision statement and spatial strategy for the area, taking on board the outcomes of consultation undertaken during preparation of the plan. The Plan replaces The Highland Structure Plan (2001) and the policies, recommendations and proposals contained within. The Plan also supersedes the General Policies and other elements, of the following Local Plans. A detailed list of retained elements is contained within Appendix 7: Retention Schedule:
- Inverness Local Plan (Adopted: 2 March 2006)
  - Nairnshire Local Plan (Adopted: 21 December 2000)
  - Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (Adopted: 8 February 2007)
  - Sutherland Local Plan 2010 (Adopted: 24 June 2010)
  - Caithness Local Plan (Adopted: 12 September 2002)
  - West Highland and Islands Local Plan (Adopted: 9 September 2010)
  - Wester Ross Local Plan (Adopted: 29 June 2006)
  - Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (Adopted: 11 September 1997)
- 3.4 The land allocations in the above Local Plans will remain in place (unless an updated site allocation is given in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan), until the time that one of the Council’s three new area local development plans is adopted. The Plan also sets the wider context for these emerging area local development plans. They will consolidate and replace the existing local plans.
- 3.5 The preparation of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan has been supported by a number of pieces of work, including the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and an Inverness and A96 Corridor Transport Study. These documents are available to view on our [website](#).
- 3.6 The Cairngorms National Park Authority are responsible for the preparation of Local Development Plans in the National Park area. This Local Development Plan will therefore not have any weight in decision making on planning applications in the National Park other than as an adjacent authority that may be affected by the impact of any development. For information on planning in the National Park, please see [www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk).

### 3.7 How to Read and Use the Plan

#### Mar a bu Chòir am Plana seo a Leughadh is a Chleachdadh

- 3.7.1 The Plan is made up of maps and text. If you are interested in finding out what the Plan means for your particular area then you need to read both. The easiest way to find your community is by using the large Proposals Map which shows the whole area covered by the Plan. The Proposals Map also shows areas which are designated as nationally/regionally/locally important in terms of their heritage. For more information on each of these features please refer to Policy 57 and Appendix 2 of this Plan. The main Plan document contains more detailed mapping for strategic growth areas.
- 3.7.2 To get the complete picture, you also need to read the Plan's "General Policies" which are listed in Section 18 and onwards below and the relevant local plan/local development plan. All proposals will also need to take account of the Plan's Spatial Strategy and Vision. All development proposals will be assessed for the extent to which they contribute to the achievement of the plan objectives. Any proposal may also be affected by policy or legislation at national and European level. Links to further reading are given in the following section. A glossary of some commonly used land use planning terms is provided in Appendix 1.
- 3.7.3 The following sections outline the Highland Council's Vision and Spatial Strategies for the Highland area as a whole and for the three areas which will be the subject of future Local Development Plans. The Visions are not policies as such; rather they are an expression of what the Highland area could be like in 2030. Where reference has been made to individual projects, these are either dealt with in more detail within the body of this plan, or will be considered within the forthcoming Local Development Plan for the relevant area. In all cases, these projects will be subject to the necessary assessments, including Habitats Regulations Appraisals where appropriate.
- 3.7.4 Planning applications will be assessed against all the policies and legislation relevant to the particular proposal and location. Conformity with a single policy or element of the Vision and Spatial Strategy does not necessarily indicate that a proposed development would be acceptable.

### 3.8 Other Factors

#### Nithean Eile

3.8.1 In preparing this Local Development Plan and in making decisions on planning applications, The Council must also take into account other factors, such as:

- national planning policy and guidance which is prepared by the Scottish Government and includes the National Planning Framework 2, Scottish Planning Policy, Circulars and Planning Advice Notes; this Plan does not attempt to name all of the documents that might be relevant to a particular case and it is therefore advisable to check for available and current documents on the [Scottish Government's website](#);
- other Highland-wide policies such as Supplementary Guidance and Development Briefs, a full list is available via [The Council's website](#);
- other plans, programmes and strategies of The Highland Council including [Strengthening the Highlands 2009-2012](#) and [Single Outcome Agreement 2](#);
- the strategies and plans of other public agencies like Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Environment Protection Agency; and
- National, UK and European legislation such as the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, which places a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan will affect the environment (available via [www.oqps.gov.uk](http://www.oqps.gov.uk)).

## 4. Spatial Strategy

### Ro-innleachd Farsaingeachd

- 4.1 This plan sets out a balanced strategy to support the growth of all communities across Highland. However, it is important to ensure that development is, in the first instance, directed to places with sufficient existing or planned infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable development. The Proposals Map identifies a hierarchy of settlements. New development will be directed to each settlement in proportion to its existing/planned capacity.
- 4.2 The national context is one of support for sustainable economic growth. Scottish Government policy is to increase the number of houses built and it has set an aspirational national target. Scottish Government expects planning authorities to identify a generous supply of land for future housing, which will allow any backlog of unmet demand/need to be met, and will allow for higher growth rates than we have seen historically. Scottish Government is also committed to delivering growth to alleviate the current downturn.
- 4.3 Therefore, The Council is preparing a Plan which meets Government's aspirations. It is based on a [Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#) which has been assessed by them as robust and credible. The Highland Council has also agreed, through Single Outcome Agreement 2, to provide more housing.
- 4.4 In assessing what a generous supply of land means in Highland, we have taken account of the target agreed between the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to grow the HIE area population to 500,000 people over the next 20 years. The HIE area covers Western Isles, Argyll and Bute, Orkney and Shetland as well as Highland. The Highland Council area accommodates nearly 50% of the existing population of the HIE area. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan seeks to contribute towards the HIE strategy through providing opportunity for growth within Highland and aspires to increase the population to 250,710 by 2031. This growth rate reflects support for a number of economic growth areas such as: the transition of UHI to full University status; business growth at Inverness Airport; reuse of the Nigg fabrication yard; expansion of activities at Highland Deephaven; and development of wave and tidal energy in the Pentland Firth.
- 4.5 Given the above, the Plan uses the high migration scenario as the basis for planning (including an allowance to address the current backlog of need for affordable housing). An overall housing land requirement is set out in Table 1 below.

	2011-21	2021-31
<b>Caithness</b>	672	138
<b>Inverness</b>	9,177	6,664
<b>Lochaber</b>	1,551	783
<b>Nairn</b>	1,562	938
<b>East Ross</b>	2,077	1,206
<b>Mid Ross</b>	2,126	1,404
<b>West Ross</b>	906	561
<b>Skye &amp; Lochalsh</b>	1,333	886
<b>Sutherland</b>	914	348
<b>Highland (Excluding Badenoch &amp; Strathspey)</b>	<b>20,319*</b>	<b>12,929*</b>

\*Totals subject to rounding

Table 1: Housing Land Requirement (expressed as numbers of dwellings)

- 4.6 Part of these requirements can be met through allocations of land within existing local plans. However, an updated strategy is required in terms of the Inner Moray Firth and Caithness where development pressure is greatest and/or the existing policy frameworks are most dated.

## 5. Vision Lèirsinn

5.1 **By 2030, Highland will be one of Europe's leading regions. We will have created sustainable communities, balancing population growth, economic development and the safeguarding of the environment across the area, and have built a fairer and healthier Highlands.**

5.2 In land use planning terms this means:

5.2.1 **We will have enabled Sustainable Highland Communities by:**

- increasing the population of the Highlands to achieve a balanced age range and by providing opportunities for market housing and affordable housing both within settlements and within the Highland countryside;
- providing for developments which cater for Highland's ageing population; and
- ensuring the effective delivery of the plan strategy through efficient and transparent use of developer contributions and linking in to Council and partner agency development programmes.

5.2.2 **We will have safeguarded our Environment by:**

- ensuring that development of renewable energy resources are managed effectively with clear guidance on where renewable energy developments should and should not be located;
- ensuring that the special quality of the natural, built and cultural environment in Highland is protected and enhanced;
- taking a lead in reducing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the air, adapted to the effects of climate change and limited the amount of non-renewable resources development uses; and
- leading the way in the delivery of sustainable waste management set out in the Council's waste strategy and those brought forward by the private sector.

5.2.3 **We will have supported a Competitive, Sustainable and Adaptable Highland Economy by:**

- providing opportunities which encourage economic development and create new employment across the area focusing on the key sectors of life sciences, energy, tourism, food and drink, higher education, inward investment, financial and business services, creative industries, aquaculture and renewable energy, whilst at the same time improving the strategic infrastructure necessary to allow the economy to grow over the long term;
- helping to deliver, in partnership with Transport Scotland and other transport bodies, transport infrastructure improvements across the area in line with the Council's Local Transport Strategy and the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review;
- promoting a positive and innovative approach to masterplanning new developments that contribute towards reducing the need to travel and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport;
- promoting the development of tourism, whether in terms of additional accommodation or new facilities;
- promoting the delivery of a twenty first century telecommunications network which allows all areas across the Highlands to better access the opportunities in the wider global economy; and



- ensuring that the planning guidance for mineral development, coastal developments, forestry, agriculture, aquaculture and croft land is clear and consistent and that key resources are protected where appropriate.

5.2.4 **We will have achieved a Healthier Highlands by:**

- providing for the development of places that contribute to increasing healthy lifestyles, opportunities for quality open space provision and access to enjoy the outdoors; and
- protecting and enhancing the green network within and around settlements leading to a cohesive and fit for purpose network of greenspaces and opportunities for active travel.

5.2.5 **We will have provided better opportunities for all and a fairer Highland by:**

- promoting opportunities that allow for investment in services and infrastructure, and opportunities for investment and diversification in the economy, in our deprived areas and areas at risk of long term unemployment as a result of changes in the wider economy.

## 6. Caithness and Sutherland Gallaibh agus Cataibh

6.1 The counties of Caithness and Sutherland are facing many challenges and opportunities. It is important these opportunities help to meet the challenges of regeneration in the area, providing local employment and sustainable economic growth.

6.2 **By 2030, Caithness and Sutherland will:**

- **be a regenerating place with a network of strong communities** – through the promotion of attractive and thriving town centres, with the main centres having enhanced positions as service centres along with improved economic prospects of ports and harbours in the area.
- **be a competitive place connected to the global economy** – the exceptional environment, along with thriving local communities will provide an incentive to business location. The main east coast settlements complement each other, and there will be strong economic ties between the two counties and with the Inner Moray Firth area enabled by improved telecommunications networks and broadband coverage. Locally UHI will provide courses meeting local and international needs.
- **be a connected and accessible place** – A9 improvement schemes, including Berriedale Braes, will be delivered, as well as there being a significant increase in rail freight consolidating Lairg and Georgemas as distribution ‘hubs’ along with strategically located sidings with loading facilities. Developments will promote increased passenger numbers on the Far North rail line through a full peak time return Invernet commuter service extending to Lairg, Ardgay and Bonar Bridge. The case for twin-tracking locally important roads, which are currently single track, will be maintained. Residents will have adequate water and waste-water networks.
- **be a place of outstanding heritage: safe in the custody of local people** – by the protection and enhancement of the outstanding natural assets, including landscapes, geology, habitats and species of national and international importance. Economic opportunities will be realised associated with the Sutherland Geo-park, and the marketing of the ‘Green Firth’ around the Dornoch Firth. The Flow Country will have been inscribed on the World Heritage Site list and enjoys the support of local communities, land managers and visitors alike. The high quality of life will be helping to increase and maintain population levels.
- **be a centre of excellence for energy and engineering** – Dounreay’s current 2,000 strong workforce will have found alternative sources of employment both on and off site in terms of decommissioning and throughout Caithness and North Sutherland where a more flexible approach to business and housing development has provided a fertile context for growth in jobs particularly in the new engineering and energy sectors where employers make good use of their transferred skills.
- **have become an international centre of excellence for marine renewables** – the Pentland Firth will be the location for marine renewables; related facilities and industries will be available locally. UHI through North Highland College will develop centres of excellence in marine engineering and environmental management. The spatial strategy supports the growth of this sector and will demonstrate that by effective cross-agency working an

updated planning framework will be put in place to ensure opportunities are grasped as and when they present themselves.

- **have a high quality tourist industry** – tourists attracted by the outstanding natural heritage, outdoor activities and key tourist destinations providing high quality facilities e.g. John O'Groats, Wick. Developments at UHI Dornoch campus and elsewhere will support the sector.
- **have a more diverse economy** - other enterprises will have been attracted by a more flexible planning regime throughout Caithness. This will have reduced the area's former dependence on the nuclear industry although decommissioning will still provide some employment opportunities in the early years of this Plan. All sectors are now represented and welcomed.

6.3 The Council's Sutherland and Caithness Local Plans and the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership: Vision for Caithness and North Sutherland, all give further details on these aspirations and how they can be achieved. The successor area local development plan will carry forward this vision for Caithness and Sutherland. However, Section 17 below gives further details of particular initiatives within Caithness that require more immediate policy support and coverage.

## Vision and Spatial Strategy Caithness and Sutherland



6.4 Figure 1: Caithness and Sutherland Vision and Spatial Strategy

## 7. West Highland & Islands

### A' Ghàidhealtachd an Iar & Na h-Eileanan

7.1 The west coast's particular, peripheral and fragile nature also requires a tailored and positive vision.

7.2 **By 2030, the West Highland and Islands area will:**

- **be better connected** - residents, visitors and employers will have faster, more reliable, safer and more frequent connections. Trunk road (particularly the A82) and urban link road improvements at Fort William and Portree will have relieved local and regional economic constraints. Similarly, better facilities for ferry, rail, inter-modal freight transfer (particularly at Corpach), Caledonian Canal freight movements and marine access will have helped economic growth.. Scheduled air travel will have been re-introduced via a seaplane connection to Loch Linnhe and an airstrip at Broadford. Residents will also have better active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport access to greenspace and schools. All will have better access to local waste recycling and to adequate water, sewerage, broadband and electricity networks.
- **have more efficient public service provision** - services will be provided in better facilities in more accessible locations - for example, new health care facilities will have been provided at Blàr Mòr in Fort William and at Broadford.
- **have more affordable housing** - particularly social rented accommodation - via creative, multi-agency delivery methods similar to that progressed at Home Farm, Portree. Also, surplus, publicly owned land and buildings whether forestry plantations or redundant schools, will have provided cheaper and available sites.
- **have a more diverse economy** - particularly via renewable energy developments that deliver genuine and proportionate benefits to local communities. New opportunities associated with marine renewables will have been delivered in locations such as Kishorn in Wester Ross and west coast ports and harbours will also see supply side developments that enhance the local economy. Flexibility in the level of developer contributions sought will have attracted inward investment from more pressurised areas.
- **have rationalised but protected its lifeline services** - the larger villages within the remoter areas, for example Gairloch and Lochcarron, will have grown sufficiently to hold on to amalgamated services.
- **be re-connected with its land and natural resources** - “working the land” will once again be a respectful balance between the limits of natural resources and the economic needs of local communities. New crofts, forest crofts, native woodland management, allotments and more effective husbandry of wider natural resources and heritage, will have all helped restore this balance.
- **have a greater and more diverse age profile of population than currently projected** - underpinned by better employment, housing and further education opportunities for younger people, for example at Baile Chlann Domhnaill: A' Chill Bheag (the new Kilbeg Village) on Skye. Sabhal Mor Ostaig, Lochaber and Skye and Wester Ross colleges will bring new residents to the area.

- **be a place of outstanding natural and cultural heritage** - heritage assets including the landscape and wildlife will have been safeguarded and enhanced. The high quality of life and economic opportunities associated with these assets will be helping to increase and maintain population levels.
- **have re-established and promoted its unique identity** - as a centre for Gaelic culture and language and as having a high quality tourism product providing high quality facilities, service and exceptional cuisine based on high quality local produce. The area will be recognised and promoted as an all year round building on the current and ongoing branding associated with the Outdoor Capital of the UK, an internationally renowned “outdoor” destination and event/trail outdoor activity with a wide range of activities including skiing, mountain biking, sailing climbing etc. based draw for tourists attracted by the area’s outstanding natural and cultural heritage.

7.3 The Council’s existing West Highland and Islands and Wester Ross Local Plans give further detail on these aspirations and how they can be achieved. No further detail is given within this Plan as an up to date policy framework already exists. The successor area local development plan will carry forward this Vision for the West Highland and Islands area.





7.4 Figure 2: West Highland and Islands Vision and Spatial Strategy

## 8. Inner Moray Firth Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh

8.1 The pressure for development within the Inner Moray Firth requires a tailored Vision on how best to harness this demand within the constraints that exist and to ensure that its benefits are dispersed across Highland. This vision is illustrated by Figure 3.

8.2 **By 2030, the Inner Moray Firth will:**

- **have increased the number of jobs, people and facilities** - the Inner Moray Firth will be a larger and more efficient “engine” for the wider Highland economy. Growth of jobs and population, especially to the A96 and Easter Ross Corridors will have continued the latter being underpinned by the competitive and sustainability advantage of its improved rail route connections. New and better facilities will have followed this growth in demand. Service centres such as Dingwall, Nairn and Tain will have grown to support the delivery of the facilities required
- **have a growing City** – building on the growth and opportunities of its role as the major service and administrative centre, Inverness will have developed in a way that promotes the key aspirations of the updated City vision, focuses development where infrastructure exists or can be provided in the most efficient way and maintains a thriving City centre as the focus for services and retail provision
- **have safeguarded and enhanced its special places** - the firths around which the settlements and economic activity are located have retained their quality, support an abundance of internationally and nationally important wildlife and provide a special place for residents and visitors alike. The environmental limits of the area will have been respected, particularly in the countryside around its towns and along its coast, where the effect of sea level rising from climate change has been allowed for in the location of new development.
- **have made it easy for people and wildlife to move about through a green network** – large scale and small scale habitat corridors have been protected and enhanced so that species can move about within and around development, including species that are affected by climate change. People will have better access to high quality places using a network of paths for walking and cycling, which contributes to quality of life, health and inward investment. Effective masterplanning will have ensured that linkage to the green network, accessible civic and greenspaces and enhanced access will have accompanied development.
- **have more efficient forms of travel** – the area will have seen substantial improvements to the existing transport network through improvements to the road network, seeing an increase in the numbers of people walking, cycling as a result of the green network, and taking the urban rail/bus networks and delivery of better connections for local road freight to and from longer haul Caledonian canal, rail, sea and air routes. As part of these improvements, a new railway station will have been provided at Dalcross.
- **have resolved its infrastructure constraints** - an effective partnership of all funding bodies will have removed the barriers to growth. As well as improvements to the A9 trunk road, the West Link, A96 upgrade, the Nairn By-pass and a new station at Dalcross will have been delivered. Broadband,

electricity grid networks and drainage infrastructure will no longer restrict the economic potential of the area.

- **have diversified its economy** - there will be more, different jobs. A new education campus accommodating a range of educational institutions, including a base for the University of the Highlands and Islands and Inverness College UHI, space for commercial spin-off companies and a regional sports facility, will have expanded educational opportunities and generated employment, helping stem the loss of young people from the region. Other ports and harbours, including Inverness and Invergordon will have supported the growth of tourist and renewables related economic development. More all weather tourist facilities related to the environment will have bolstered the role of the area as a tourist hub and gateway to the wider Highlands. The airport and its related business park will have expanded to accommodate increased national and international trade. The UHI will have developed a thriving City campus contributing to academic excellence in fields such as bio-technology and life sciences based on the Centre for Health Science. More traditional local industrial enterprises will also have been accommodated in a new location east of Inverness.
- **be regenerated and renewed** – brownfield land and buildings in the City and other settlements across the area will have been brought back into more productive use. This will range from buildings in our City and town centres and major regeneration areas such as the Longman landfill site, the Longman Industrial Estate core area and the Invergordon Tank Farm.

8.3 Whilst the Council's existing Inverness, Nairnshire and Ross and Cromarty East Local Plans give further detail on these aspirations and how they can be achieved, there is a need for the spatial strategy set out in the Highland wide Local Development Plan to provide further detail on some of the key development areas in the Inner Moray Firth. This will be the updated context that will be in place until such time as the Inner Moray Firth area Local Development Plan is prepared.



## Vision and Spatial Strategy Inner Moray Firth



8.4 Figure 3: Inner Moray Firth Vision and Spatial Strategy

## 9. Consolidating the City A' Daingneachadh a' Chathair-bhaile

- 9.1 The City of Inverness has a major role to play in delivering the Vision for the Inner Moray Firth. The expansion areas around the City, at Ness Castle, Culduthel-Slackbuie, Inshes and Milton of Leys remain the main focus for development over the 2011 to 2016 period. These developments will be accompanied by improvements to infrastructure and service provision throughout the City as part of the developer funded infrastructure in place with the planning permissions already granted and through improvements to infrastructure brought forward by the Council's Capital Programme. These improvements include contributions towards education provision, contributions towards the southern distributor road and to open space and active travel. This approach reflects the outcomes of the assessment of transport and education provision in the City, and will allow a targeting of capital investment to the areas which are likely to be under pressure from these developments.
- 9.2 The focus for growth is therefore very much related to a build out of the existing expansion areas around the City to 2016. There are also a number of brownfield or regeneration opportunities, and the spatial strategy sets out clear updated policy support for early redevelopment of locations such as the City Centre and Longman Core, the former Longman landfill site, the Inshes/Raigmore and Muirtown/South Kessock area. The spatial strategy seeks to balance out the supply of land in these locations alongside some further Greenfield releases around the City and in the A96 Corridor.
- 9.3 The development of the City and the wider Inverness Housing Market Area requires the continued delivery of effective land for development. To meet the identified gross housing land requirement for the Inverness Housing Market Area as identified in the Highland Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), further land allocations have been brought forward to offer choice and flexibility in the land supply. These allocations taken together with land currently allocated in the Inverness Local Plan have the capacity to meet housing land requirements. Table 2 demonstrates the potential distribution of effective housing land to meet the land requirement as identified through the HNDA.

	Years 1-10			Years 11-20		
	2011-2016	2016-2021	2011-2021	2021-2026	2026-2031	2021-2031
<b>Existing Local Plan (Inverness City &amp; A96) + major sites*</b>	2180	2362	4542	560	-	560
<b>Wider Inverness HMA &amp; windfall</b>	1000	1000	2000	1000	1000	2000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3180</b>	<b>3362</b>	<b>6542</b>	<b>1560</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>2560</b>
<b>A96 - Inverness East</b>	300	450	750	875	875	1750
<b>A96 - Tornagrain Ph 1 &amp; 2</b>	304	540	844	780	885	1665
<b>A96 - Whiteness Head</b>	400	410	810	200	205	405
<b>A96 - Small Settlements inc. Croy, Culloden Moor, Ardersier</b>	50	80	130	50	50	100
<b>A96 Sub-total</b>	<b>1054</b>	<b>1480</b>	<b>2534</b>	<b>1905</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>3920</b>
<b>Total - Inverness HMA</b>	<b>4234</b>	<b>4842</b>	<b>9076</b>	<b>3465</b>	<b>3015</b>	<b>6480</b>

\* Includes major sites outwith A96 corridor

Table 2: Potential distribution of development to meet the Housing Land Requirement in the Inverness Housing Market Area (HMA) (expressed as house units)



Figure 4: City of Inverness Spatial Strategy

### Policy 1 Completing the Unconstrained City Expansion Areas

The Council will support the ongoing development of the expansion areas identified within the Inverness Local Plan at Ness Castle, Culduthel-Slackbuie, Inshes and Milton of Leys as the main development sites to be delivered over the period to 2016. These developments will continue to provide contributions towards the enhancement of infrastructure and services in these areas in line with the adopted local plan and supplementary guidance.

An updated [Inverness City Vision](#) is being prepared which highlights the key long term aims for development around the city. The City Vision will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance to this Plan and development proposals which seek to promote and deliver the key aspirations set out within it will be supported.

### Policy 2 Inverness City Vision

The Council will support proposals which deliver development in line with the strategy set out in the [Inverness City Vision](#).

The main themes and principles being followed during its preparation are:

- to put the economy at the heart of everything;
- to strengthen the city centre;
- to create a better connected Inverness;
- to create a city for all ages;
- to build on our assets;
- to think tourism;
- to enhance culture, pride and identity; and
- to enable health and wellbeing.



- 9.6.2 The five Inverness City regeneration/action areas have been identified as their development is a vital part of the sub-regional vision and strategy of consolidating the City ahead of significant expansion elsewhere (see Figure 4). It is intended that the detail for each of these sites be augmented through supplementary guidance, in the form of a development brief and the forthcoming Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.
- 9.6.3 Appendix 3 of the Plan contains a standard description for each and every listed piece of supplementary guidance, including those which will be brought forward in the form of a development brief.

## 9.7 City Centre

- 9.7.1 The continued development of the City Centre (as indicated on Map 1) remains a very important part of our spatial strategy and City Vision, in terms of continued opportunity for commercial and residential development, transport and streetscape improvements.

### 9.8 Policy 3 City Centre Development

- 9.8.1 The Council will support development proposals for the city centre which maintain and strengthen its vitality and viability. Supplementary guidance will be prepared by the Council to highlight specific opportunities for redevelopment and enhancement.

The main principles of the guidance are:

- to identify key redevelopment sites and underutilised buildings;
- to consider the opportunities to develop a clear civic hub and enhance the heritage of the city;
- to identify improvements to public transport linkages;
- to provide guidance for retail frontages;
- to identify further opportunities to improve streetscape appearance; and
- to integrate with the wider green network.

## 9.9 Longman Core

9.9.1 Similarly, the Longman Core area has the potential to deliver development which complements and supports the City centre. With the relocation of Inverness College to the site at Beechwood, there will be potential for a wide range of different retail, commercial, business and office opportunities to be attracted to the area. These development proposals will be assessed for the benefits that they bring in terms of providing linkages and supporting the City Centre, reusing vacant sites, delivering transport improvements to this important gateway to Inverness and supporting the broad aim of regeneration.

9.10

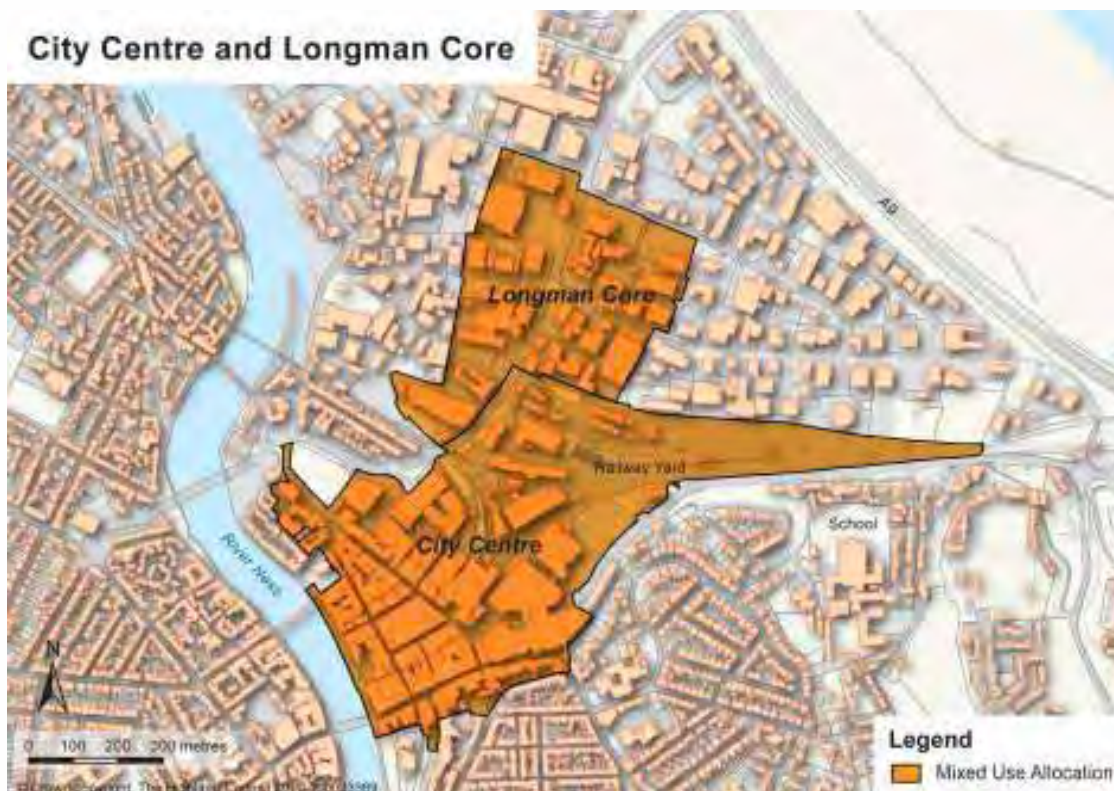
### Policy 4 Longman Core Development

9.10.1

The Council will support the development of office, leisure, service and retail uses in the Longman Core, as indicated on Map 1. Supplementary guidance will be prepared, within which there will be an updated development brief or masterplan. The objective of this supplementary guidance will be to coordinate redevelopment of land and property at the “core” of the Longman estate, and set the context for development in this key urban transport corridor, examining the contribution that this location can make. Any proposal in this area must be accompanied by a transport appraisal.

The main principles of the guidance will be to:

- provide improved linkages to the city centre;
- guide the enhancement of design in this important gateway to the city;
- provide for transport improvements on the A82; and
- develop effective facilities for pedestrian and cyclist movement throughout the area.



9.11 Map 1: Inverness City Centre and Longman Core Development Area

## 9.12 Former Longman Landfill site

- 9.12.1 The former landfill site and adjoining land comprises a strategic landholding and links Inverness to the coast. Land there is underused and will become more developable over time. The Council is undertaking feasibility work to test the viability and suitability of this land for development.

9.13

### Policy 5 Former Longman Landfill Site

9.13.1

Land at the former Longman Landfill site (as indicated on Map 2) is allocated for mixed use development. The Council's final decision on the optimum mix of uses will require further, ongoing feasibility work. This will include consideration of landfill gas risks, contamination, and strategic road capacity.

The Council currently favours a range of uses including:

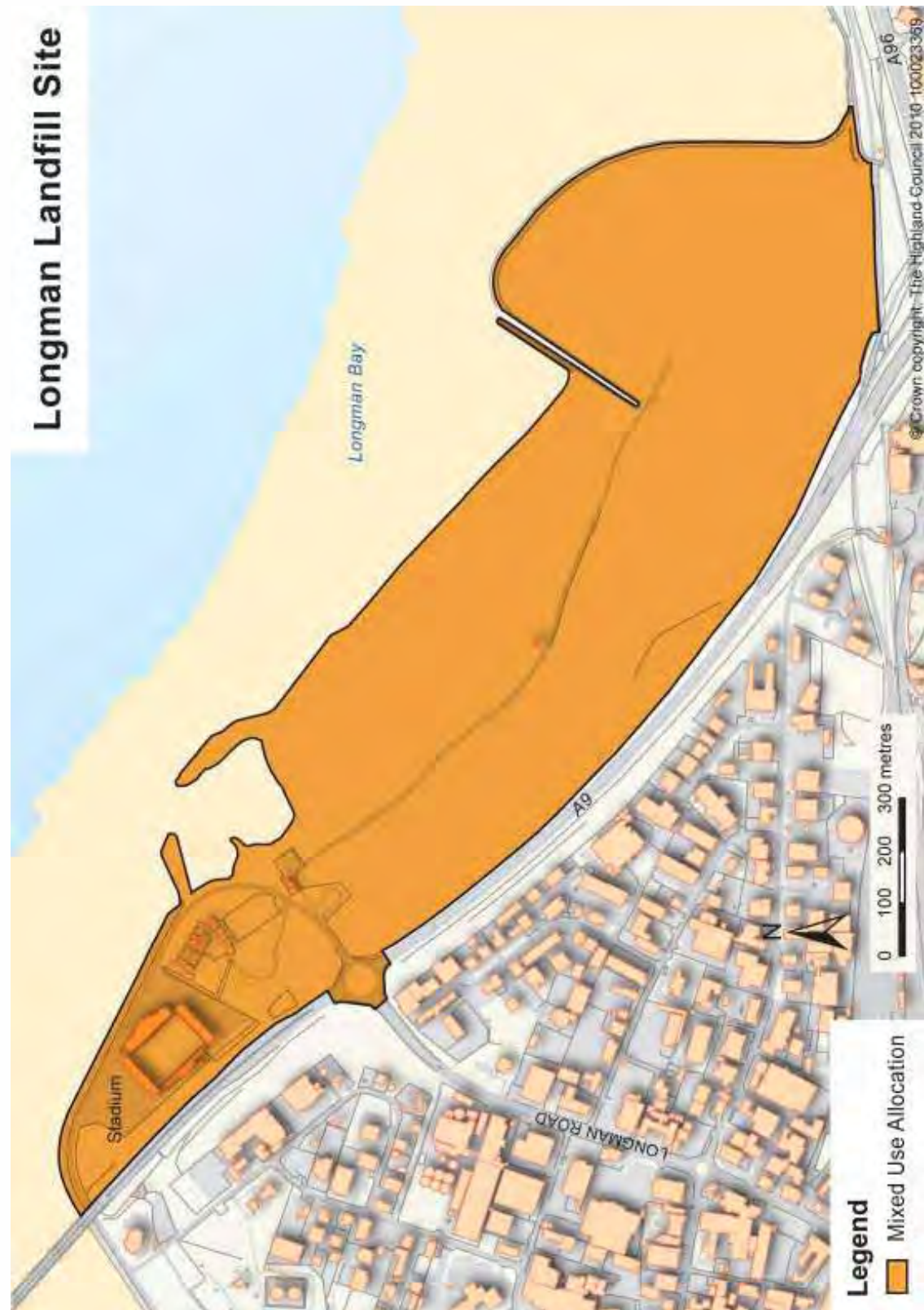
- waste management and other renewable uses including energy from waste;
- commercial and industrial uses; and
- community/public open space.

The potential for other uses including retail and residential will also be examined as well as the potential environmental impact of proposals, particularly to ensure that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar site.

If and when the site proves suitable for development supplementary guidance will be prepared to indicate the Council's updated policy on the optimum mix, arrangement, design and servicing of future land uses. The guiding principles for such Guidance will be the need:

- to minimise landfill gas and other risks;
- to tackle any problems of contamination;
- to provide a 30 metre undeveloped corridor to safeguard the high pressure gas pipeline;
- to not compromise strategic road network capacity;
- to safeguard adjacent natural heritage interests; and to deliver an effective development site.





9.14 Map 2: Former Longman Landfill Site

## 9.15 Muirtown and South Kessock

- 9.15.1 The delivery of development in South Kessock and around the Muirtown Basin remains an important part of the development strategy for Inverness. The Council will support a masterplan led approach to the delivery of opportunities here (as indicated on Map 3).

9.16

### **Policy 6 Muirtown and South Kessock**

9.16.1

The Council will support masterplan led development proposals for the Muirtown/South Kessock area (as indicated on Map 3) in the short term which fit with the provisions of the existing Inverness Local Plan for the development of the area, whilst seeking to ensure that they deliver improvements to the transport network, including improvements at the Telford Street Retail Park roundabout, and do not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC.

The Council intends to adopt as supplementary guidance a future developer led master plan or produce its own development brief for part or all of the area. This master plan or brief will be guided by the following principles and objectives:

- net improvement of the local transport network including the junction at Telford Street Retail Park;
- maximum employment potential from commercial use of the waterfront frontage at the Muirtown Basin;
- safeguarding and if possible enhancement of navigation, water based recreation facilities, heritage features, and public pedestrian access, including the avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC; and
- greater diversification of housing tenure and renewal of housing stock within the area.



## Muirtown – South Kessock



9.17 Map 3: Muirtown and South Kessock



## 9.18 Inshes and Raigmore

- 9.18.1 The delivery of a solution to the transport bottlenecks associated with the Inshes roundabout is one of the most immediate priorities for the Council to enable development in the City to proceed. It will require a joined-up land use and transport related approach. Therefore, it is essential that an updated development framework for this area is prepared in tandem with the possible transport improvement options.

9.19

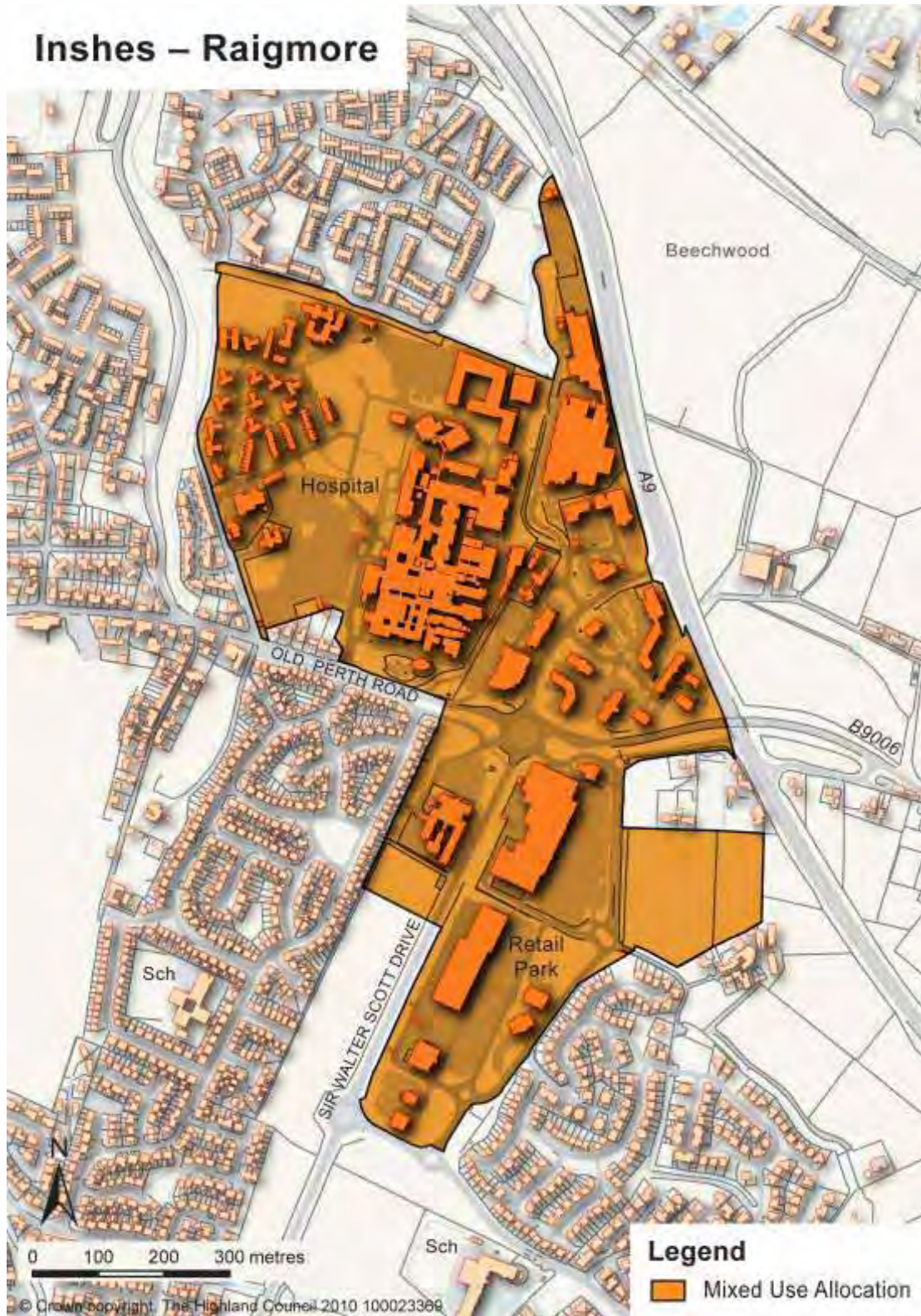
### Policy 7 Inshes and Raigmore

9.19.1

The Council will produce a development framework for the Inshes and Raigmore area (as identified on Map 4), which will be brought forward as supplementary guidance. The guiding principles for such guidance will be:

- to promote, co-ordinate and best utilise improvements to strategic road capacity;
- to build consensus with the community and stakeholders;
- to achieve no net detriment to the existing surface water drainage regime and attendant flood risk;
- the reconfiguration of the Raigmore Medical Campus to allow better public transport and active travel connectivity and to assess the potential for additional primary care facilities in place of staff accommodation;
- the southern expansion of the Police Headquarters;
- the reconfiguration and potential expansion of Inshes Retail Park provided that expansion helps deliver improvements in strategic road capacity; and
- provision for mitigation measures in relation to any identified environmental issues.

## Inshes – Raigmore



9.20

Map 4: Inshes and Raigmore

## 9.21 Ness-side and Charleston - Future Consolidation of the City

- 9.21.1 The areas identified in Policy 1 will be largely built out over the period to 2016. There is a need to begin the process of enabling a greater release of housing land elsewhere in the City and the A96 Corridor. In the City itself, this release of housing land will focus firstly on the areas of land currently allocated for development at Ness-side and Charleston. These sites are currently constrained by the lack of a river and canal crossing. It is a Council priority to unlock these areas of land through acceptable solutions to cross the river and canal, and work is progressing to enable that to happen. It is proposed that as part of this project and in line with the need to open this land up in the period to 2021 that revised masterplans are prepared in partnership with the community and with the developers in these areas to ensure that benefits to the City are maximised. As part of the environmental considerations of this project, the passage of salmon along the river to and from the River Moriston Special Area of Conservation must be safeguarded.

9.22

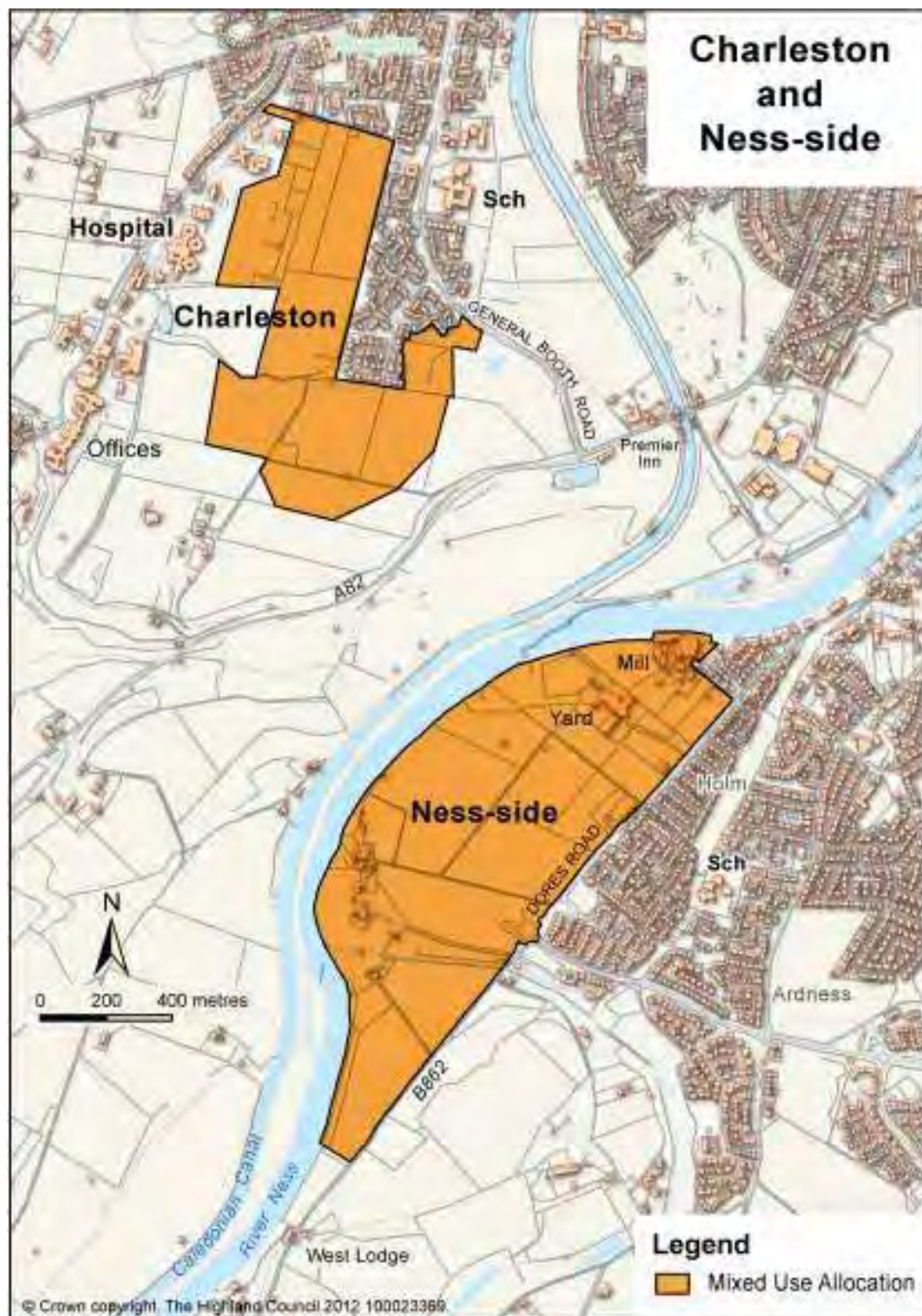
### **Policy 8 Ness-side and Charleston**

9.22.1

The Council will support the master planning of land allocated at Ness-side and Charleston in tandem with the work carried out to identify options for the river and canal crossings that do not adversely affect the integrity of the River Moriston SAC. The Council will produce a development framework for land at Ness-side and Charleston (as identified on Map 5), which will be brought forward as supplementary guidance. The guiding principles for such guidance will be:

- to provide a land use context for the current assessment of transport solutions for this part of the City, taking into account the need to protect the River Moriston SAC;
- to determine the best mix, arrangement, design and servicing of future land uses compatible with whichever alignment and type of river and canal crossings are confirmed;
- to include within this mix:
  - retention and completion of the district retail and community centre at Dores Road;
  - retention and expansion of the district employment centre at Holm Mills;
  - retention and enhancement of a riverside green corridor at Ness-side including land within the confirmed flood plain;
  - a distributor road connection between Leachkin and General Booth Roads at Charleston; and
  - completion of residential neighbourhoods at Ness-side and Charleston.





9.23 Map 5: Ness-side and Charleston

## 10. The A96 Corridor - Phasing and Infrastructure

### Trannsa an A96 - Ceumannan agus Bunstructair



10.1 Figure 5: A96 Corridor Strategy

10.2 The Council's strategy is that the majority of the City's growth in the medium and long term (2016-2031) should be directed to the corridor between Inverness and Nairn. This is in line with the growth strategy set out in the A96 Corridor Development Framework which was approved as non-statutory supplementary planning guidance 10.3 Whilst the delivery of development in the A96 Corridor is in this medium to longer term the following policies set out the Council's strategy in terms of phasing and parallel contributions to the key pieces of infrastructure (transport, education, water and wastewater treatment and other community facilities). The spatial strategy reflects the need for the City growth to be consolidated in a sustainable manner as set out in the section above, whilst enabling some development to progress in other parts of the A96 Corridor to meet the backlog of housing provision (particularly affordable housing provision) and projected needs looking forward to 2031.

10.3 This approach to the development of the A96 Corridor has been informed by a transport study of Inverness and the A96 Corridor, which was prepared in partnership with Transport Scotland. This background report sets out the key transport improvements which must be delivered in order to support the A96 Corridor developments. Later phases of development in the A96 Corridor will be dependent on major infrastructure upgrade, particularly transport and education facilities.

10.4 Similarly, water supply and wastewater treatment improvements are being brought forward by Scottish Water and these improvements are supported by the spatial strategy. The strategy must also ensure that designated sites for the natural, built and cultural heritage and protected species are safeguarded and enhanced. In particular, the impacts on Loch Ashie SPA, Moray Firth SAC, River Moriston SAC



and Urquhart Bay Wood SAC will need to be assessed by Scottish Water as part of an appropriate assessment for the provision of additional water supply and waste-water treatment facilities for the A96 Corridor. A green network will be delivered in the A96 Corridor, and further information is provided in Supplementary Guidance.

- 10.5 The Council recognises that infrastructure capacity needs to be increased to accommodate new development and accordingly the policy framework will resist developments beyond the first phases as set out in this spatial strategy until long-term transport and other improvements have been designed and a means of funding these has been agreed. This will be achieved via a revised A96 Developer Contributions Protocol which will be prepared and adopted as Supplementary Guidance.

10.6

#### **Policy 9 A96 Corridor - Phasing and Infrastructure**

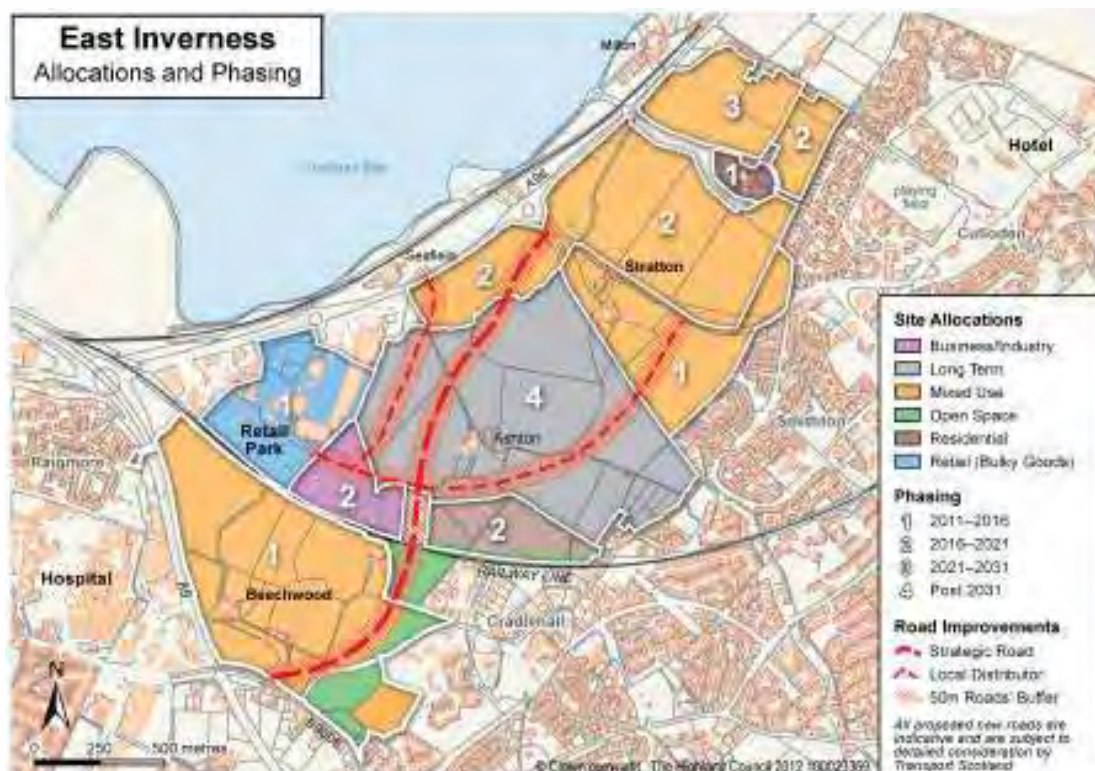
10.6.1

Developments set out in the early period of this Local Development Plan (2011-2016) will only be supported subject to the provision of interim infrastructure improvements as set out in the Plan. In respect of water supply and waste water treatment, the infrastructure improvements for development provided for in this plan should not adversely affect the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC, Loch Ashie SPA, River Moriston SAC and Urquhart Bay Wood SAC either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. When planning applications are being determined for these early phases they will be assessed against the policies set out in this Plan and identified developer contributions. Conditions and/or legal agreements will be attached to any permission to determine phasing. For larger mixed use sites, the Council will require that each site is masterplanned and each phase of development will need to show its relationship to this initial masterplan and demonstrate how the required developer funded infrastructure can be delivered. Where there are anticipated increases which create a need for new or improved services, facilities or infrastructure resulting from a development in this area, the principles of Policy 31 — Developer Contributions will be applied.



## 11. East Inverness Inbhir Nis an Ear

- 11.1 Following the delivery of sites within Inverness, the medium and long term expansion of the City will be directed towards its eastern margins. Development of this area will offer a further opportunity to consolidate the City close to its centre and deliver vital infrastructure to facilitate its economic growth. The key developments sites to the east of the City in the 2011-2031 periods are shown in Map 6. All developments in this area will be considered in terms of their cumulative impacts with other developments in the area.
- 11.2 The majority of development in these areas will be in the longer term, and the development potential will be dependent on the provision of major upgrades to transport infrastructure and significant capital investment in schools and other community facilities.
- 11.3 There are three key elements of the spatial strategy for the period 2011-2031 in the East Inverness area:
- Beechwood Campus
  - Inverness Retail and Business Park
  - Stratton Farm and surrounding areas
- 11.4 Smaller scale development at other sites identified on Map 6 may also be identified through the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan, which will also identify further detail of these allocations.



11.5 Map 6: East Inverness

## 11.6 Beechwood Campus

- 11.6.1 The development of this area for the relocation of Inverness College and as a Campus for the University of the Highlands and Islands will deliver significant benefits to the City of Inverness and the wider Highlands and Islands. The main benefit is as an enabler of sustainable economic growth, although there will be spin off benefits including creating a more vibrant City, and helping the Highlands become a leader in world class research.
- 11.6.2 The site at Beechwood gives the opportunity for the location of a wide range of campus users including educational, recreation, research and institutional residential opportunities. The site is of a considerable size and offers potential for expansion of facilities, while remaining predominantly a green site. The location of this site also offers a valuable opportunity to link the existing City to the expansion areas further east. A bridge is proposed linking this development into the Raigmore area of the City, along with new or enhanced accesses across the railway linking the Inverness Retail and Business Park, the second phase of the campus development and the long term developments at Ashton and Stratton Farms.
- 11.6.3 The delivery of phase 2 of the Beechwood Campus will be an important addition to the land supply for business land in Inverness. Similarly it may also offer potential for other public projects of national or regional significance, and in this respect development proposals which come forward will be supported by the Council in line with Policy 10.

11.7

### **Policy 10 Beechwood Campus**

11.7.1

The Council supports the development of the first phase of Beechwood Campus during the period 2011-2016 and the second phase after 2016.

Any development at this location for the second phase will be supported by a detailed masterplan for campus related uses to the west of the railway and for business and commercial to the east of the railway line. The masterplan should also make provision for a public transport interchange, with consideration being given to the opening of a new rail halt and park and ride facility.

The development of the first phase will be accompanied by the following developer requirements:

#### **Transport**

- Pedestrian and cycle bridge links towards Inverness city centre, Inverness retail and business park, and the later phases of the campus site;
- Two vehicular accesses with an entrance from Culloden Road and an exit point on Caulfield Road North;
- Delivery of recreational access to the site;
- Reservation of land for the potential route of the A96-A9 Trunk Road;
- Provide active travel linkages to Inverness City Centre and Inverness Retail and Business Park;
- Contribution towards the improvement of Inshes roundabout;
- Contribution towards public transport improvements;
- Contribution towards improved active travel in the area including cycle lane at Milburn Road;
- A Green Travel Plan will be required;
- Accesses should be provided to the edge of allocation and no ransom strips should be created;
- Local and trunk road improvements will be required subject to discussion with the relevant body;

- Car parking should be designed to be safe for all users;

#### **Waste**

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council's requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

#### **Green Networks & Open Space**

- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution towards strategic access improvements;
- Open space should be delivered in line with the requirements of Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance;

#### **Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage**

- Consideration should be given to the treatment of monuments and events identified in the Historic Environment Record;
- Ashton Farm SAM should be carefully considered and appropriate mitigation put in place;
- Safeguarding of habitats for protected species;
- A badger survey and protection plan will be required; surveys for other protected species and mitigation plans as required should also be carried out;
- No culverting of water courses will be permitted;
- Landscape Framework is required;
- Avoidance of any adverse effects on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar site;

#### **Design**

- A design framework will be required to ensure development fits with the landscape character of the area;

#### **Education**

- Any residential development on this site may be required to provide developer contributions towards education provision in line with Education and New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance;

#### **Housing**

- Any residential development on this site will be required to deliver a minimum of 25% affordable housing;

#### **Miscellaneous**

- Specific drainage strategy and Flood Risk Assessment to demonstrate safeguarding of watercourses and flood plain;
- Limited use of street lighting.

As well as those set out above, development of the second phase will also require to meet the following developer requirements:

#### **Transport**

- Contribution towards the A9-A96 Link road (or alternatives arising from the design work being carried out);
- Contribution in line with an amended A96 Protocol towards strategic infrastructure;
- Contribution toward local road improvements;

#### **Green Networks & Open Space**

- Contributions toward the A96 Green Network as set out in Highland Green Network: Supplementary Guidance.

## 11.8 Inverness Retail and Business Park

- 11.8.1 There is potential at the Inverness Retail and Business Park for additional bulky goods retailing, to complement Inverness City Centre and provide for the needs of a growing population of the City and in The A96 Corridor. This spatial strategy supports that further expansion, subject to improvements being brought forward at the A96 Trunk road junction and to the internal road layout of the retail park itself that are necessary to accommodate the increased traffic generated by the new development. Further development will only be supported where unfettered access is provided to the land to the east of the retail park, where a distributor link road which will connect with the second phase of the Campus development and the development at Stratton Farm forms part of the long term strategy. Development of the site should also allow for access to the development at Stoneyfield Business Park to ensure a free flow of pedestrian and cycling access throughout the area.

11.9

### **Policy 11 Inverness Retail and Business Park**

11.9.1

The Council will support the development of additional bulky goods retailing in the period from 2011-2016 at Inverness Retail and Business Park on the site allocated on the East Inverness map) subject to the following developer requirements:

#### **Transport**

- Improvements to the A96 Trunk Road roundabout including enlargement and signalisation and any other improvements required by Transport Scotland;
- Improvements to the internal road layout within the Retail and Business Park;
- Provision of unfettered access to the land adjacent to the Retail and Business Park in the interests of enabling future developments in east Inverness; and
- Provision of access to the development at Stoneyfield Business Park to ensure a free flow of pedestrian and cycling access throughout the area;
- A contribution will be required to identified trunk and local road improvements required associated with this development;
- Provide active travel linkages to & from the site, including to Beechwood Business Park and Campus;
- Car parking should be designed to be safe for all users;

#### **Waste**

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council's requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

#### **Green Networks & Open Space**

- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution towards strategic access improvements;

#### **Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage**

- Safeguarding of habitats for protected species;
- Consideration should be given to the treatment of monuments and events identified in the Historic Environment Record;
- A badger survey and protection plan will be required; surveys for other protected species and mitigation plans as required should also be carried out;
- Due consideration should be given to making the best use of the site taking into account existing and planned adjacent uses and the topography of the site;
- No culverting of water courses will be permitted;



### **Design**

- High quality design will be a key consideration;

### **Miscellaneous**

- A sustainable drainage system plan will be required;
- Protection of natural watercourses, including flood plain;
- Limited use of street lighting;
- All development on the site will be strictly limited to bulky goods retailing.

## **11.10 Stratton**

- 11.10.1 The delivery of the first phase of the Stratton area in the period from 2011-2016 has the potential to deliver wider benefits in terms of transport improvements, including the upgrade of the A96 between Inverness Retail and Business Park and the Smithton roundabout, active and sustainable travel opportunities including a Park and Ride site, an essential addition to the housing land supply and a contribution towards the upgrade of education provision in the area.
- 11.10.2 Although the entire development site at Stratton is allocated for development in this spatial strategy, there will be a strict control of the rate at which development can proceed to ensure that the later phases (post 2016) will not be developed until such time as the A96-A9 link (or alternatives arising from design work being carried out) is brought forward in partnership with Transport Scotland. It is anticipated that the Phase 1 will be restricted largely to the land to the west of Barn Church Road (see Map 6) to protect any land required for the delivery of the strategic road improvements. Later phases of development in this area will be expected to contribute towards the provision of these improvements and to other educational and recreational access improvements through an amended developer contribution protocol which will be brought forward as Supplementary Guidance.

**Policy 12 Stratton**

The Council will support the long term development at Stratton in East Inverness subject to the following phasing of development. Only that development outlined in the table below will be supported in the 2011-2016 period, subject to the developer requirements set out below.

	2011-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026	2026-2031
<b>Residential (units)</b>	300	450	875	875
<b>Food Retail (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	8000	0	0	0
<b>Non-Food Retail (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	1350	1000	1000	0
<b>Office Accommodation (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	2100	2000	1000	0
<b>Health Centre (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	1900	0	0	0
<b>Church (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	1000	0	0	0
<b>Community Building (including Library) (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	1700	0	0	0
<b>Restaurant/Café (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	375	0	0	0
<b>Primary School (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	1300	1300	0
<b>Park and Ride</b>	500 Spaces	0	0	0
<b>Hotel</b>	80 bed	0	80 bed	0
<b>Commercial/Business (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	9500		0

A detailed masterplan is to be produced for each phase of development. The development of this area to 2016 (Phase 1) will require the following:

**Transport**

- Dualling of the A96 between the Smithton and Inverness Retail and Business Park roundabouts;
- Developer Contributions to Milburn Road cycle lane;
- Provision of local distributor roads developed to the boundaries of the site which will provide unfettered access for later phases of development in East Inverness;
- Provision of a Park and Ride site;
- Car parking should be designed to be safe for all users;
- Contributions towards local road improvements arising from the impacts of this development at Inshes roundabout;
- Improvements to Smithton Roundabout;
- Signalise all arms and changing lanes markings at Raigmore Interchange;
- Lane markings will be required on the B865 approaches to Millburn roundabout;
- Signalisation and lane improvements at Longman roundabout;
- Improvements to West Seafeld roundabout;
- Provision of a right turn lane at the signalised junction between Barn Church Road and Tower Road;
- Provide active travel linkages to key community facilities;
- Provide active travel linkages within and out with the site;
- Developer contributions will be sought towards public transport improvements;
- Developer contributions will be sought towards transport infrastructure interventions;
- Upgrade of Barn Church Road;



**Waste**

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council's requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

**Green Networks & Open Space**

- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution to the Inverness-Nairn Coastal and Landward trails;
- Open space should be delivered in line with the requirements of Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance;

**Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage**

- Landscape Framework is required;
- Consideration should be given to the treatment of monuments and events identified in the Historic Environment Record;
- Avoidance of any adverse effects on the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar site and Longman and Castle Stuart Bays SSSI;
- A badger survey and protection plan will be required; surveys for other protected species and mitigation plans as required should also be carried out;
- Recreation Management Plan will be required;

**Design**

- Homezone principles will need to be applied;

**Education**

- Developer contributions will be required towards education provision in line with Education and New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance;

**Housing**

- A minimum of 25% of the development should be delivered as affordable housing;

**Miscellaneous**

- Limited use of street lighting;
- Specific drainage strategy and Flood Risk Assessment to demonstrate safeguarding of natural watercourses and flood plain;
- Developer Contributions towards education provision in the area at both primary and secondary school levels.

In addition to contributions associated with the issues raised above, development of the later phases of Stratton will also require to meet the following developer requirements:

- Contribution towards the A9-A96 Link road (or alternatives arising from the design work being carried out);
- Contribution in line with an amended A96 Protocol towards strategic infrastructure;
- Contribution towards education provision including primary schools and secondary school; and
- Contribution toward local road improvements.

## 12. Tornagrain Tòrr na Grèine

- 12.1 The Tornagrain new town has been selected as one of Scottish Government's Sustainable Community Initiative Proposals due its potential to contribute to the retention and creation of green spaces and deliver homes, employment, services and community facilities within a compact and sustainable new town.
- 12.2 Tornagrain is proposed as a new settlement in the centre of the A96 Corridor (Map 7) with the potential to deliver 4,960 new homes, shops, schools and community facilities over a series of phases during the next 30 - 50 years. The development of Tornagrain will allow for a greater choice of locations within the A96 Corridor and provide a range of new housing, a quarter of which will be affordable. It will also help to reduce the development pressures on Inverness and Nairn as well as other areas, such as the smaller settlements within the A96 Corridor. Tornagrain can play a major role in meeting Highland's [housing need and demand](#) in the medium to longer term, particularly in conjunction with increased employment opportunities at Inverness Airport Business Park.
- 12.3 The delivery of a development of this scale clearly requires effective long term planning and this spatial strategy supports the early development of Tornagrain based on localised improvements to the transport network on the A96 and to the east of Inverness and public waste water and water supply networks. The masterplanning work already undertaken has demonstrated that this development, which offers a very different approach to design and delivery can be brought forward in these self-contained phases, with accompanying community, education and infrastructure improvements being borne largely by the developer.

### Policy 13 Tornagrain

The Council supports the development of Tornagrain as an essential component of the settlement strategy to meet the long term housing needs of the area. Development will be supported in self-contained phases, subject to infrastructure and services being provided to support the growth of the town.

This spatial strategy supports the delivery of phases 1 and 2 of Tornagrain in the 2011-2021 period based on the developer requirements identified below. The long term phasing proposals will be subject to major infrastructure upgrades to be determined in discussion with the Council, Scottish Water and Transport Scotland.

	2011-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026	2026-2031
<b>Residential (units)</b>	304	540	780	885
<b>Residential Institutions (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	1000	1000	1000
<b>Non-Residential Institutions (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	1418	0	2131	10759
<b>Retail (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	1500	0	9000	4500
<b>Business (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	500		2500	1750
<b>General Industry (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	0	500	300
<b>Storage &amp; Distribution (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	0	500	300
<b>Health Centre (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	400	0	0	0
<b>Church (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	0	650	0
<b>Primary School (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	1418	0	0	1418
<b>Secondary School (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	0	0	8522
<b>Hotel (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	0	2500	1500
<b>Emergency Services (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	0	600	0
<b>Leisure (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Open Space (ha)</b>	10.90	7.48	3.14	3.23
<b>Other (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0	0	0	750

The development of this area to 2016 (Phase 1) will require the following:

#### Transport

- Improvements to Mid Coul Roundabout;
- Improvements to Local Roads to be agreed with TEC Services;
- Improvements to bus services;
- Provision of active travel linkages to key community facilities;
- Improvements to the active travel infrastructure of the area will be required;
- Developer Contributions will be required to the improvement of the public transport system;
- Discussion to take place with Network Rail and the Council with the aim of finding a long term solution to the safety issues associated with the Dalcross level crossing on the Inverness-Aberdeen railway line;
- Contributions towards wider strategic improvements to the trunk road network in line with early improvements required to the network by 2016;

#### Waste

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council's requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

#### Green Networks & Open Space

- Contribution to the green network will be required;

- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution towards strategic access improvements;
- Open space should be delivered in line with the requirements of Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance;

#### **Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage**

- Consideration should be given to the treatment of monuments and events identified in the Historic Environment Record;
- Any off site road/junction improvements must take account of Scheduled Monument located to the west of the site's boundary;
- Avoidance of any adverse effects on the integrity of Loch Flemington SPA, including from cumulative recreational disturbance;
- Appropriate mitigation measures with regard to Area of Long Established Woodland located to the south of the site;
- Due consideration should be given to the Grade C listed building on the western edge of the allocation;
- Appropriate mitigation measures with regard to the Kildrummie Kames SSSI which runs along the South Eastern edge of the site, to avoid any adverse impact on the site;
- No culverting of water courses will be permitted;

#### **Design**

- A detailed overall masterplan and detailed masterplans for each phase;
- Homezone principles should be considered;
- Proximity to Inverness Airport should be considered and this will affect building height which can be permitted on the allocation;
- A design framework will be required to ensure development fits with the landscape character of the area;

#### **Education**

- Developer contributions may be required towards education provision in line with Education and New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance;

#### **Housing**

- A minimum of 25% of the development should be delivered as affordable housing;

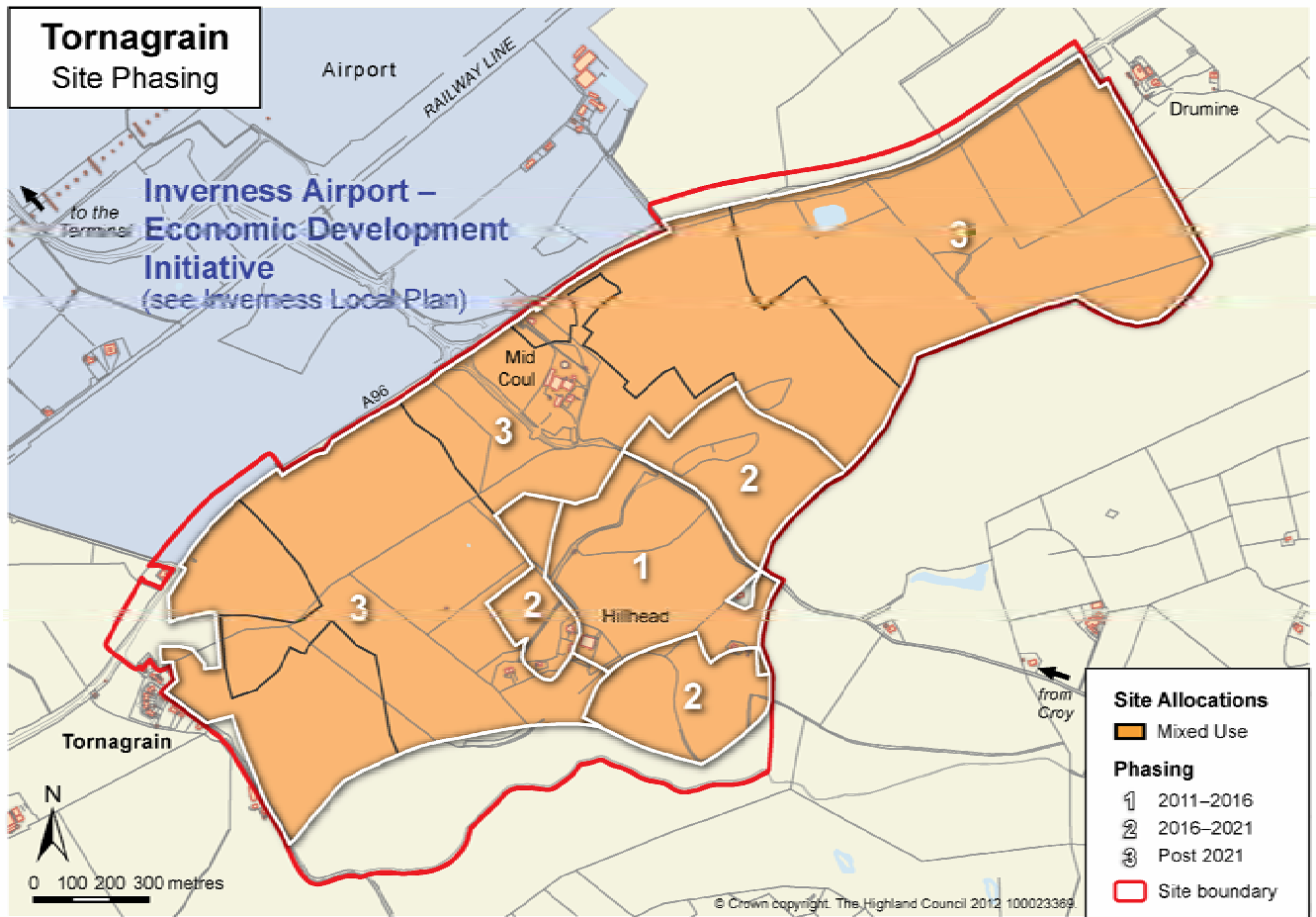
#### **Miscellaneous**

- Limited use of street lighting;
- A sustainable drainage system plan will be required;
- Developer contributions towards primary and secondary school shortfalls arising from this development;
- Safeguarding of natural watercourses, wetlands and flood plain through implementation of site specific drainage and flood risk strategy.

In addition to the issues raised above, development of the later phases of Tornagrain will also require to meet the following developer requirements:

- Contribution towards the provision of primary and secondary school education facilities;
- Contributions towards provisions of strategic infrastructure in line with an amended A96 Corridor Protocol.

The development of the later phases of Tornagrain will not be supported in advance of significant improvements to the strategic transport network to the east of Inverness, and a full assessment of other services and infrastructure required.



12.5 Map 7: Tornagrain



### 13. **Whiteness**

#### **Rubha na h-Innse Mòire**

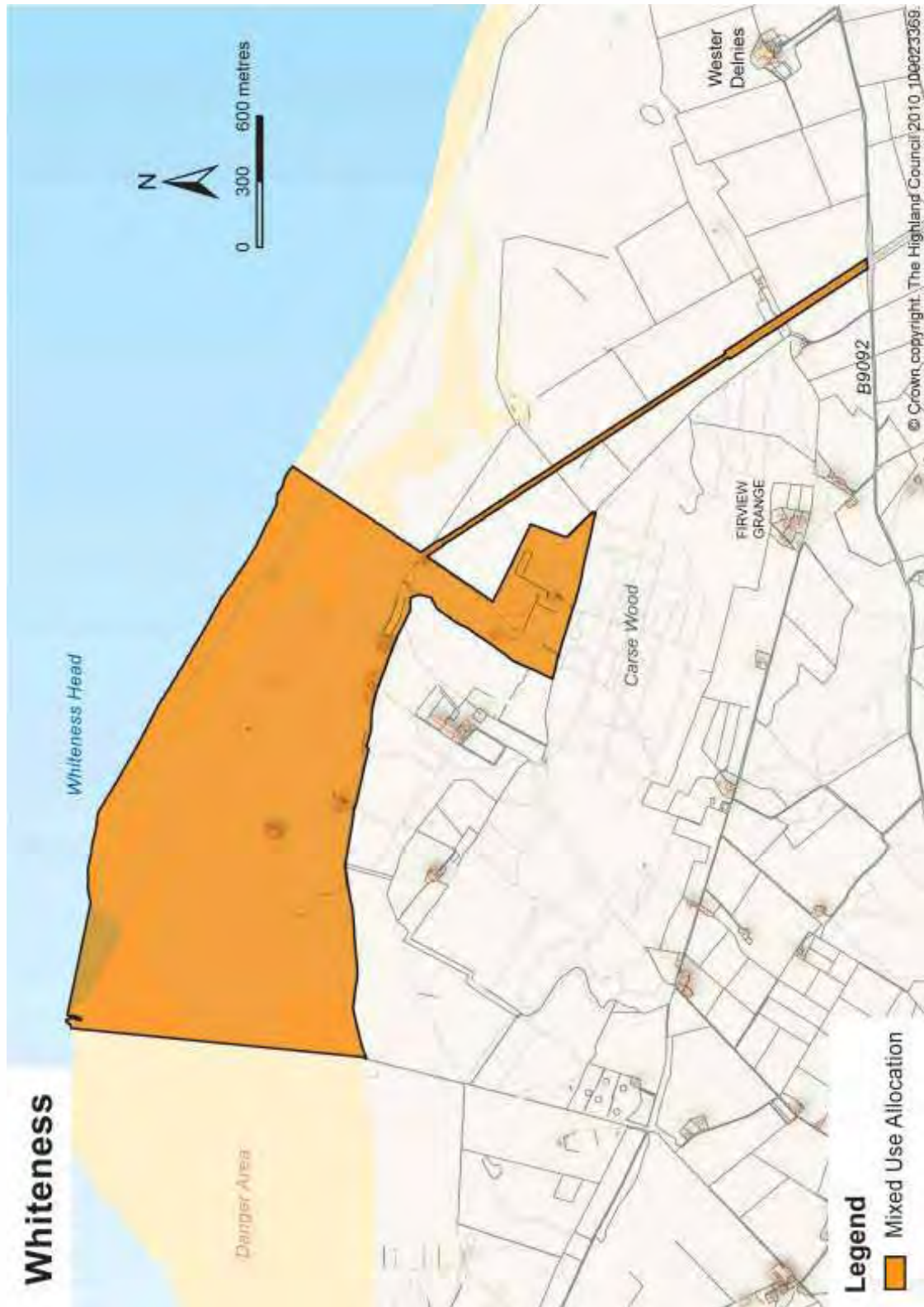
- 13.1 The Whiteness development on the former Ardersier fabrication yard remains an important strategic development site. It has outline planning permission for 1,950 houses, will be subject to a Section 75 Agreement and an Access Management Plan and in terms of our spatial strategy remains capable of meeting some of the projected housing need over the period to 2031 (Map 8). There has been interest in the site in respect of other uses, particularly relating to its potential to deliver as part of the Scottish Government's National Renewables Infrastructure Plan and that potential will be supported by the Council should housing development not come forward for the site. For the purposes of the housing land supply, the effective land supply coming forward from Whiteness is set at 50% - on the basis that the balance will be geared more toward the tourism and leisure element of the housing market.

13.2

#### **Policy 14 Whiteness**

13.2.1

The Council will support the development at Whiteness as part of the strategy to provide a long term housing land supply in the area. Detailed masterplans will accompany each phase of development in line with the current planning permission, including provision in line with the already agreed upgrades to the A96. The Council will also support the reuse of the site for renewables related development, should the housing element not come forward. Renewables-related development will be subject to the production of a masterplan which should ensure that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC and Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar site.



13.3 Map 8: Whiteness

## 14. Nairn

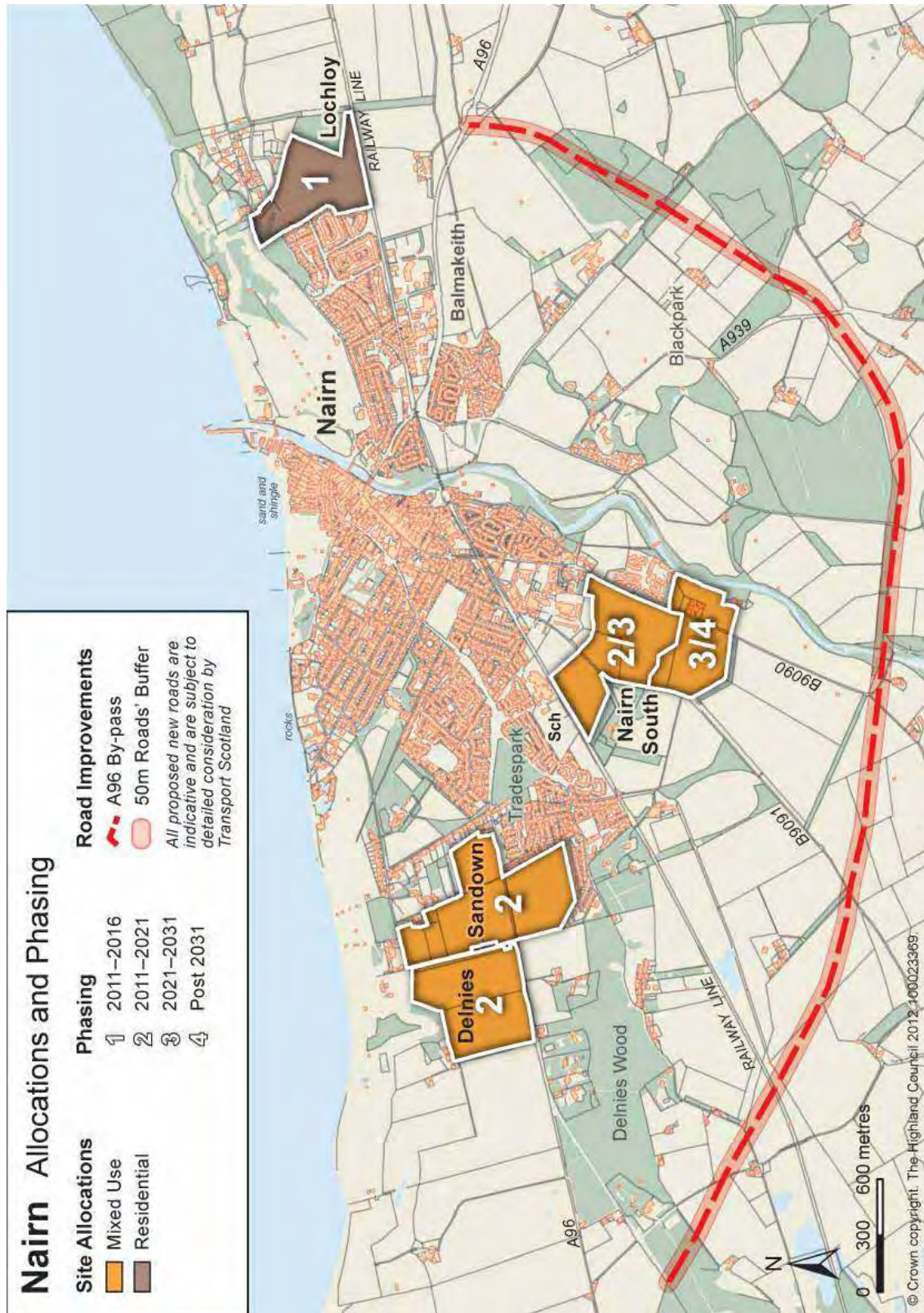
### Inbhir Narann

- 14.1 At present there is only one major site under development in Nairn and this acts as a constraint on the operation of the housing market. Inclusion of further releases of housing land to serve the Nairn Housing Market Area will assist in providing choice and stimulate the housing market (Map 9). The Council's [Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#) demonstrates this requirement.
- 14.2 The intention set out in this spatial strategy is to focus short term development at Lochloy, Sandown and initial phases at Delnies and Nairn South. Nairn South may have the potential to serve much of the longer term housing requirements for Nairn subject to transport infrastructure improvements being put in place.
- 14.3 The development of Nairn must be seen in the context of long term aspirations for a bypass and the Council will continue to lobby Scottish Government for the funding and design work to be progressed.
- 14.4 To meet the identified gross housing land requirement for the Nairn area, land allocations have been brought forward to offer choice and flexibility in the land supply. Taken together the land now identified in the Nairn area has the capacity to meet the following housing requirements across all sites.

	Years 1-10			Years 11-20		
	2011-2016	2016-2021	2011-2021	2021-2026	2026-2031	2021-2031
<b>Nairn Local Plan (Town) + major sites</b>	380	186	566	0	0	0
<b>Wider Nairn HMA &amp; windfall</b>	121	121	242	121	121	242
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>A96 - Nairn Delnies</b>	140	160	300	0	0	0
<b>A96 - Nairn South</b>	120	210	330	300	300	600
<b>A96 - Cawdor</b>	85	70	155	65	65	130
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>730</b>
<b>Total - Nairn HMA</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>1593</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>972</b>

Table 3: Potential distribution of development to meet Housing Land Requirement in the Nairn Housing Market Area (HMA) (expressed as house units)





14.5

Map 9: Nairn

## 14.6 Lochloy

- 14.6.1 Lochloy is subject to existing planning permissions. A large part of the site is allocated for residential development in the adopted Nairnshire Local Plan. The allocation shown on Map 9 extends the residential area towards a watercourse near the Kingsteps side of the site. Any flooding issue that might arise will be addressed in terms of Policy 64: Flood Risk.

14.7

### **Policy 15 Lochloy**

14.7.1

The Council will support the completion of presently allocated land at Lochloy in the short term.

## 14.8 Sandown

- 14.8.1 Development of Sandown in the short to medium-term will be supported. The Council will prepare a Sandown Development Brief based on the principles of:

- an appropriate housing density including an adequate level of affordable housing provision;
- seeking to attract employment-generating uses to the site;
- a co-ordinated phasing strategy;
- consideration of the location and context of the site; and
- provision of appropriate access solutions, including setting out linkages to and shared arrangements with the adjoining land at Delnies.

- 14.8.2 A detailed masterplan is to be prepared and adopted as supplementary guidance. The allocation of development to Sandown and the adjoining Delnies site amounts to a major extension of Nairn at one of the main entrances to the town. It is essential that the combined development shows a harmony of design that enhances the town.

14.9

### **Policy 16 Sandown**

14.9.1

The Council will support development at Sandown (as shown on Map 9) in the short term subject to a suitable development masterplan, to be adopted as supplementary guidance, and a Recreational Access Management Plan which should ensure that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar site.

Issues addressed by the masterplan will include:

- site layout;
- design of buildings and open areas;
- housing density;
- provision of affordable housing;
- provision of employment-generating uses;
- phasing;
- flood risk;
- an access solution that provides unfettered links to the Delnies development area to the west and shared arrangements wherever possible;
- infrastructure provision; and
- delivery of the development.

The recreational access management plan will contain provisions that ensure that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar site.



The design for development of Sandown shall be based on the masterplan and the recreational access management plan. The design for development of Sandown and Delnies shall be progressed side-by-side and shall:

- show an overall coherence, attractiveness and local character;
- be efficient in terms of movement of people and vehicles; and
- enhance the town.

In preparing proposals for the site, consideration must be given to the extent to which tourism-related development and business development might be attracted to the site. If potential, either in the short term or in the longer term, is identified for one or both of these kinds of development, land must be reserved accordingly.

Connections to the public water and waste water systems will be required.

## 14.10 Delnies

- 14.10.1 Delnies could deliver 300 houses over the next 10 years and longer term opportunities for small scale leisure and hotel development including a new golf course. In the interests of co-ordinated planning to the west of Nairn, it is essential that development at Delnies is phased in conjunction with development at Sandown and the expansion of both sites will be considered in parallel.

14.11

### Policy 17 Delnies

14.11.1

The land at Delnies (as indicated on Map 9) is supported as a means of meeting housing demands in Nairn over the period 2011-2021. The overall development of the site will be restricted to 300 houses. The delivery of the site must be phased in a co-ordinated way with the Sandown site to ensure an effective approach to planning at the west end of Nairn.

Development will be subject to the following requirements:

#### Harmony with Sandown

- Development of Delnies shall not proceed until a development brief for Sandown has been completed. Thereafter, designs for development of Delnies and for Sandown shall be progressed side-by-side and shall:
  - show an overall coherence, attractiveness and local character;
  - be efficient in terms of movement of people and vehicles; and
  - enhance the town;

#### Westward extension

- This policy contains no commitment to built development on land to the west of the Delnies site shown on Map 9. The possibility of such development cannot be ruled out and should be taken into account in design for development of Delnies;

#### Phasing

- Development at Delnies will only be permitted in line with a co-ordinated phasing strategy for Sandown;

#### Transport

- Satisfactory means of access from the A96 Trunk Road, ideally utilising a shared access with any development brought forward on the Sandown site;
- Contribution will be required to the provision of improved active travel linkages;
- Contribution will be required to an improved public transport network;

- Improvement to local road infrastructure through effective linkages to development in the east would be required;
- Potential contribution towards strategic road infrastructure;

#### **Waste**

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council's requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

#### **Green Networks & Open Space**

- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution towards strategic access improvements;
- Contribution will be sought to the consolidation of the Green Network;
- Open space should be delivered in line with the requirements of Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance;

#### **Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage**

- Consideration should be given to the treatment of monuments and events identified in the Historic Environment Record on the edge of the site;
- Provision of protected species surveys and, if necessary, mitigation;
- Protection of the nearby Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar and Whiteness Head SSSI, including through the approval of a Recreational Access Management Plan;
- A Recreation Access Management Plan will be required;

#### **Design**

- Homezone principles will need to be applied;
- Preparation of a detailed high quality masterplan setting out the delivery of affordable housing, open space and community facilities;
- The development will need to meet the requirements of the designing for sustainability guidance;

#### **Education**

- Developer contributions may be required towards education provision in line with Education and New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance;

#### **Housing**

- A minimum of 25% of the development should be delivered as affordable housing;

#### **Tourism-related and Business Development**

- In preparing proposals for the site, consideration must be given to the extent to which tourism-related development and business development might be attracted to the site. If potential, either in the short term or in the longer term, is identified for one or both of these kinds of development, land must be reserved accordingly;

#### **Miscellaneous**

- Limited use of street lighting;
- A sustainable drainage system plan will be required;
- Reservation of land for the possible future expansion of Nairn Golf Club;
- Subject to further discussion with the Education Culture and Sport Service, contributions towards primary and secondary school shortfalls caused as a result of the development, including the reservation of a primary school site;
- Connection to the public water and waste water system will be required.

## 14.12 Nairn South

- 14.12.1 A limited release of land in this location would supplement the land supply in Nairn, and offer a further degree of choice in the market. It is essential that the delivery of the first phase of housing in this area – subject to a detailed masterplan will demonstrate that the current pinch points associated with the existing railway bridge and the junctions on to the A96 in the centre of Nairn can be sufficiently improved to enable this development.
- 14.12.2 Phase 1 will be mainly residential with localised employment opportunities as part of a mixed use masterplan for the area. Key to any development in Nairn South is the need to protect the existing timber yard and to ensure that its possible expansion in the future is not compromised. A buffer area will be maintained as part of that allocation in the Plan.

14.13

### **Policy 18 Nairn South**

14.13.1

The Council will support the allocation of land at Nairn South for mixed-use development. The principal use will be residential. Provision for employment opportunities must also be made as part of development proposals that are submitted to the Council for approval.

This allocation is subject to further assessment of the transport and infrastructure requirements that are necessary to enable development to progress.

The northern boundary of the allocation adjoins an area of land extending to 5.1 hectares. This land is reserved in the Nairnshire Local Plan (adopted December 2000) for expansion of timber processing and other uses. It is the intention of the Council that this reservation will continue in force. The possibility that the existing sawmill on Balblair Road may expand on to this reservation must be taken in to account in the design of proposals for development in Nairn South.

In the 2011-2016 period, the commencement of a first phase will be subject to the following requirements:

#### **Phasing**

- The limit to the development of the first phase of Nairn South will be determined by a co-ordinated masterplanning exercise to be carried out for the area outlined in Map 9. In advance of the masterplan being prepared, and subject to the requirements (including transport appraisal) below being met, the residential component of the first phase will be strictly limited to 250 houses;

#### **Transport**

- Links to the town centre must be strengthened with good connectivity between the development and the existing fabric of the town. In particular the current pinch points at the railway bridge and the junctions with the A96 through Nairn must form part of a solution to open up development in phase 1;
- Improvements to the B909 Cawdor Road connection particularly for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Improvements to the B9091/B9090 junction will have to be identified and addressed as it is an unsatisfactory junction with poor visibility;
- Consideration must be given to provision of a distributor-type link road between Balblair Road and Cawdor Road, to reduce reliance on Balblair Road as a link between Nairn South and the town centre;

- Consideration must be given to provision of a footbridge over the railway in the vicinity of Duncan Drive, to facilitate walking and cycling journeys between Nairn South and schools, the town centre and other parts of the town;
- Construction of the A96 By-pass is a long term solution to divert through traffic away from the centre of Nairn and, subject to further discussions with Transport Scotland, the developer will be required to contribute to its provision;
- The scale of any development which can proceed ahead of the bypass will depend in the adequacy of the alternative links referred to and the developer should demonstrate how these can be achieved;
- The impact on existing residential areas from “through traffic” should be considered in detail;
- Contributions will be sought to the improvement of active travel linkages into the town centre;
- Contributions will be sought to improved public transport linkages to and from the allocation;
- Contributions to the improvement of the local road network and connections with the strategic road network will be required;

#### **Waste**

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council’s requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

#### **Green Networks & Open Space**

- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution towards strategic access improvements;
- Contribution will be sought to the consolidation of the Green Network;
- Open space should be delivered in line with the requirements of Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance;

#### **Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage**

- Provision of protected species surveys and, if necessary, mitigation;
- Development should not adversely affect the natural heritage value of the riparian corridor, should retain access to the corridor and should protect trees;
- Protection of the nearby Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar and Whiteness Head SSSI, including through the approval of a Recreational Access Management Plan;

#### **Design**

- A detailed masterplan is to be produced for each phase of development;
- The development must demonstrate the highest standard of urban design in keeping with the historic traditions of Nairn;
- A buffer area shall be provided within the boundary of the Nairn South allocation. The buffer area shall be designed to ensure that the amenity of occupiers in Nairn South is not affected to an unacceptable degree by noise, dust, fumes or smells likely to arise from use of the 5.1 hectares sawmill expansion site for sawmill purposes;
- Homezone principles will need to be applied;
- The development will need to meet the requirements of the designing for sustainability guidance;

**Education**

- Developer contributions may be required towards education provision in line with Education and New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance;

**Housing**

- A minimum of 25% of the development should be delivered as affordable housing;

**Tourism-related and Business Development**

- In preparing proposals for the site, consideration must be given to the extent to which tourism-related development and business development might be attracted to the site. If potential, either in the short term or in the longer term, is identified for one or both of these kinds of development, land must be reserved accordingly;

**Miscellaneous**

- Subject to further discussion with the Education Culture and Sport Service, contributions towards primary and secondary school shortfalls caused as a result of the development;
- Safeguarding of natural watercourses and flood plain through implementation of site specific drainage strategy and Flood Risk Assessment;
- Masterplanning of the site should take into consideration of the findings of the Flood Risk assessment and avoid development at the edge of the functional flood plain;
- Connections to the public water and waste water systems will be required.

In addition to the issues raised above, development of the later phases of Nairn South will also require to meet the following developer requirements:

- Contribution towards the strategic transport improvements to be identified in consultation with Transport Scotland;
- Contribution in line with an amended A96 Protocol towards strategic infrastructure;
- Contribution towards education provision including primary schools and secondary school; and
- Contribution toward local road improvements.



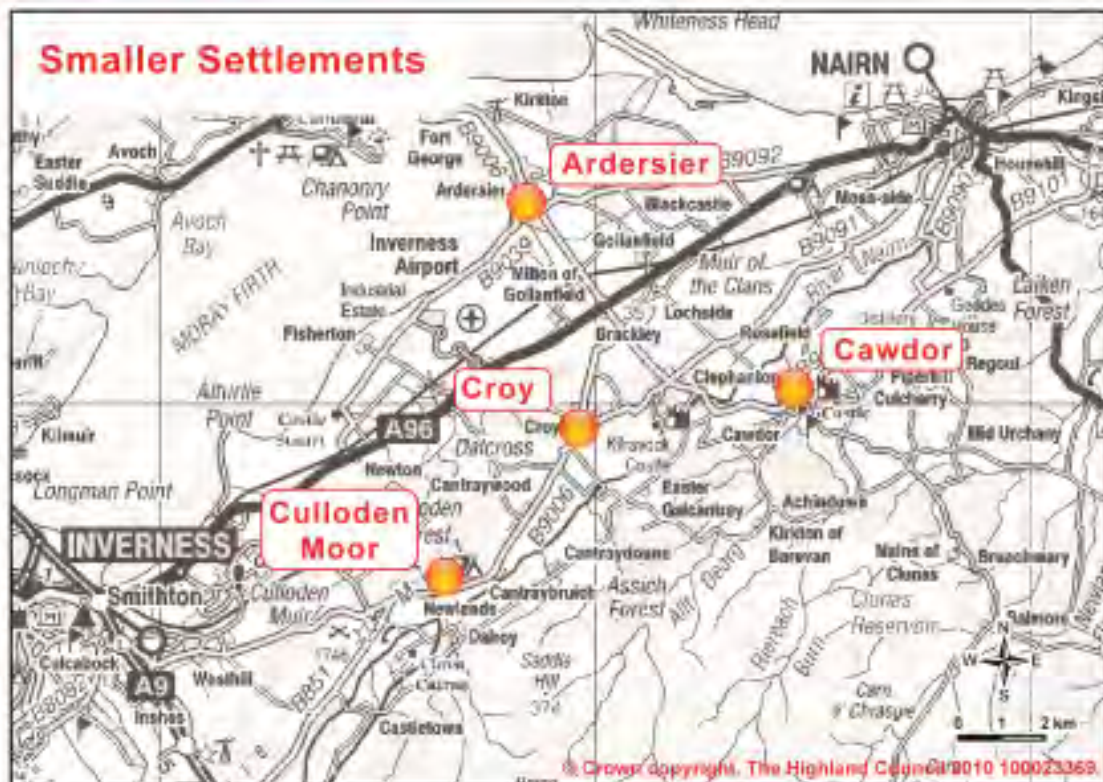
## 15. Smaller Settlements in the A96 Corridor

### Tuineachaidhean nas Lugha ann an Trannsa an A96

15.1 The Council's A96 Framework identified the potential for the smaller settlements in the A96 Corridor to contribute towards the overall housing land supply in the area. This Plan reaffirms that spatial strategy and supports the growth of the smaller settlements identified in Figure 6. Allocations for development at Ardersier, Croy and Culloden Moor were previously contained in the Inverness Local Plan. An allocation at Cawdor is made following consideration of responses to the Main Issues Report.

#### 15.2 Policy 19 Smaller Settlements in the A96 Corridor

15.2.1 The Council will support the re-allocation and early completion of expansion sites identified within the adopted Nairnshire and Inverness Local Plans. The Council will also support the development of the areas identified in the adopted Inverness Local Plan for longer term growth at Ardersier, Croy and Culloden Moor subject to a masterplanning process which will address issues including: extensive community consultation; servicing; phasing and landscape impact, and the site specific factors listed in the policies below.



15.3 Figure 6: Smaller Settlements in the A96 Corridor

## 15.4 Croy

15.5

15.5.1

### Policy 20 Croy Expansion

The Council will support mixed-use development of the Croy expansion site shown on Map 10. The chief use will be residential. Provision for employment opportunities must also be made as part of development proposals that are submitted to the Council for approval. The following phasing and development requirements will apply.

	2011-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026	2026-2031
<b>Residential (units)</b>	50	50	25	25

#### Phasing

- Development will require to meet the phasing strategy set out above;
- Later phases of development (2021-2031) will be informed by future Local Development Plan reviews;

#### Transport

- Sustainable travel linkages must be promoted between the key facilities within and outwith the settlement. Proposals to encourage and facilitate non-car travel between Croy and employment opportunities at and beside Inverness Airport must be brought forward as part of the development;
- Developer contributions will be required towards public transport infrastructure;
- A distributor road should be provided;
- A Transport Statement will be required identifying potential impact on the Mid Coul roundabout, trunk road junction;
- A transport assessment will be required. In the assessment, matters taken into consideration must include the following: impact of construction traffic; traffic effects of development on all allocated development sites in Croy; and traffic effects of proposed development at Tornagrain. Mitigation measures identified in the assessment must be carried out by the developer;

#### Waste

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council's requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

#### Green Networks & Open Space

- Open Space should be delivered in line with the requirements of Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance;
- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution towards strategic access improvements;

#### Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage

- Consideration should be given to the treatment of monuments and events identified in the Historic Environment Record;
- A badger survey and protection plan will be required; surveys for other protected species and mitigation plans as required should also be carried out;
- The Site should be designed with the local landscape and landscape mitigation will be required around any distributor road;
- Avoidance of any adverse effects on the integrity of the Loch Flemington SPA and Kildrummie Kames SSSI;

- Proposals for development must be accompanied by an archaeological study. The study must assess how likely it is that material of archaeological value is present in or under the site and must advise on how best to identify, record and conserve any such material;

#### **Design**

- Homezone principles will need to be applied;
- Due consideration should be given to the requirements of the designing for sustainability guidance;

#### **Education**

- Developer contributions will be required towards education provision in line with Education in New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance;

#### **Housing**

- A minimum of 25% of the development should be delivered as affordable housing;

#### **Miscellaneous**

- Limited use of street lighting;
- A flood risk assessment will be required in relation to any proposal for development on or in the vicinity of the low-lying, wet part of the site. No built development shall take place on any part of the site which is identified in the assessment as being functional flood plain;
- A Sustainable Drainage Systems Plan and a Drainage Impact Assessment will be required;
- A landscape and visual impact will be required;
- Connection to the public water and waste water systems will be required;
- A spoil management plan will be required;
- The developer must ascertain whether any part of the site is within the consultation distance associated with any hazardous installation or pipeline and, if it is, what precautions are advised by the Health and Safety Executive. (See also Policy 30.)





15.6

Map 10: Croy Expansion

## 15.7 Ardersier

15.8

15.8.1

### Policy 21 Ardersier Expansion

The Council will support development of the Milton of Connage site shown on Map 11: Ardersier subject to the following developer requirements and phasing:

	2011-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026	2026-2031
<b>Residential (units)</b>	25	30	0	0

This phasing may be reviewed if there are changes in housing market conditions.

#### Transport

- Contribution to off-site road safety improvements will be required;
- Provision of a safer route to school and other improvements to sustainable travel in the area would be required;
- A suitable access needs to be identified;

#### Waste

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council's requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

#### Green Networks & Open Space

- Open space should be delivered in line with the requirements of Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance;
- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution towards strategic access improvements;

#### Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage

- Due consideration should be given to the potential impact on the Moray Firth SAC;
- The local landscape should be considered in relation to the identification of the site;
- A badger survey and protection plan will be required; surveys for other protected species and mitigation plans as required should also be carried out;

#### Design

- The allocation should use opportunities to make best use of the site;
- Design of the site should give due consideration of the proximity of Ardersier Village Conservation Area;
- Homezone principles will need to be applied;
- Due consideration should be given to the requirements of the designing for sustainability guidance;

#### Education

- Developer contributions may be required towards education provision in line with Education in New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance;

#### Housing

- A minimum of 25% of the development should be delivered as affordable housing;

#### Miscellaneous

- Limited use of street lighting;
- Due consideration should be given to the requirements of the designing for sustainability guidance, this will encourage the use of micro-renewables on site;
- A Sustainable Drainage Systems Plan will be required;
- Connection to the public water and sewerage system will be required.





15.9 Map 11: Ardersier Expansion

## 15.10 Cawdor

- 15.10.1 In addition to the above, one new village expansion site has been identified at Cawdor. Cawdor is a settlement where there is a demand for housing and significant spare capacity in important infrastructure including waste water treatment and Cawdor Primary School. Moreover, the adopted local plan does not contain any significant, unimplemented housing allocations and therefore an updated policy framework is required.
- 15.10.2 The Plan allocates a village expansion area to encourage the sustainable growth of the settlement. Through a masterplanning process it should be possible, with significant community input, to create an acceptable framework for a mixed use development of the village including new homes, local jobs, community services and facilities. The context is very sensitive. Any development in Cawdor will reflect the distinctive character and unique identity of the existing village.

15.11

### Policy 22 Cawdor Expansion

15.11.1

The Council will support preparation of a masterplan for the expansion of Cawdor village. The expansion will consist of mixed-use development, including dwellings, provision for the creation of new employment, and other community services and facilities. The area to be studied for the masterplan is shown on Map 12. The masterplan will give consideration to development over a period extending from 2011 to 2031. It will identify phases showing the order in which the expansion is to proceed.

The following requirements will need to be met by the developer:

	2011-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026	2026-2031
<b>Residential (units)</b>	85	70	65	65

The above are key outcomes of the masterplan and to achieve these the following requirements will need to be met by the developer:

#### Employment creation

- Each phase of the housing element of the mixed use expansion must be accompanied by provision for employment-creating development;
- Apart from the first phase, no other phases of the housing element shall proceed until the new employment opportunities associated with the preceding phase have been established;

#### Transport

- Local road improvements as part of the proposals for Phase 1. Later phases will only be supported where there are contributions to wider strategic transport improvements as set out in an updated Developer Contributions Protocol;
- A transport assessment of the expansion proposals as a whole, or separate assessments of each phase of the expansion. The assessment(s) will identify all transport network improvements that are necessary to make development acceptable. The assessment(s) will take into account the provisions of any Developer Contributions Protocol that is in force at the time;
- Implementation of improvements to the transport network, either local to Cawdor or further afield, that have been identified as necessary to make development acceptable;
- Re-configuration of the B9090 in the interests of road safety;

**Waste**

- Any development at this allocation will be expected to meet the Council's requirements within Managing Waste in New Residential Developments;

**Green Networks & Open Space**

- Linkage to the green network both within the site and linking to the wider green network of adjacent sites, including contribution to the Inverness-Nairn Landward trail;
- Open space should be delivered in line with the requirements of Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance;

**Natural, Cultural & Built Heritage**

- Provision of protected species surveys and, if necessary, mitigation;
- Masterplanning must take full consideration of built heritage features;
- Archaeological investigations take place to establish the extent of the records identified through the Historic Environment Record;
- Recreational Access Management Plan to be prepared in order that any adverse effects on the integrity of the Cawdor Wood SAC are avoided;

**Design**

- A design framework will be required to ensure development fits with the landscape character and special qualities of the area;
- Proposals for development must be designed with particular care to ensure that they embody a particularly high standard of design which enhances the character and appearance of the village as a whole, bearing in mind the "outstanding" status of Cawdor conservation area;

**Education**

- Developer contributions may be required towards education provision in line with Education and New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance;

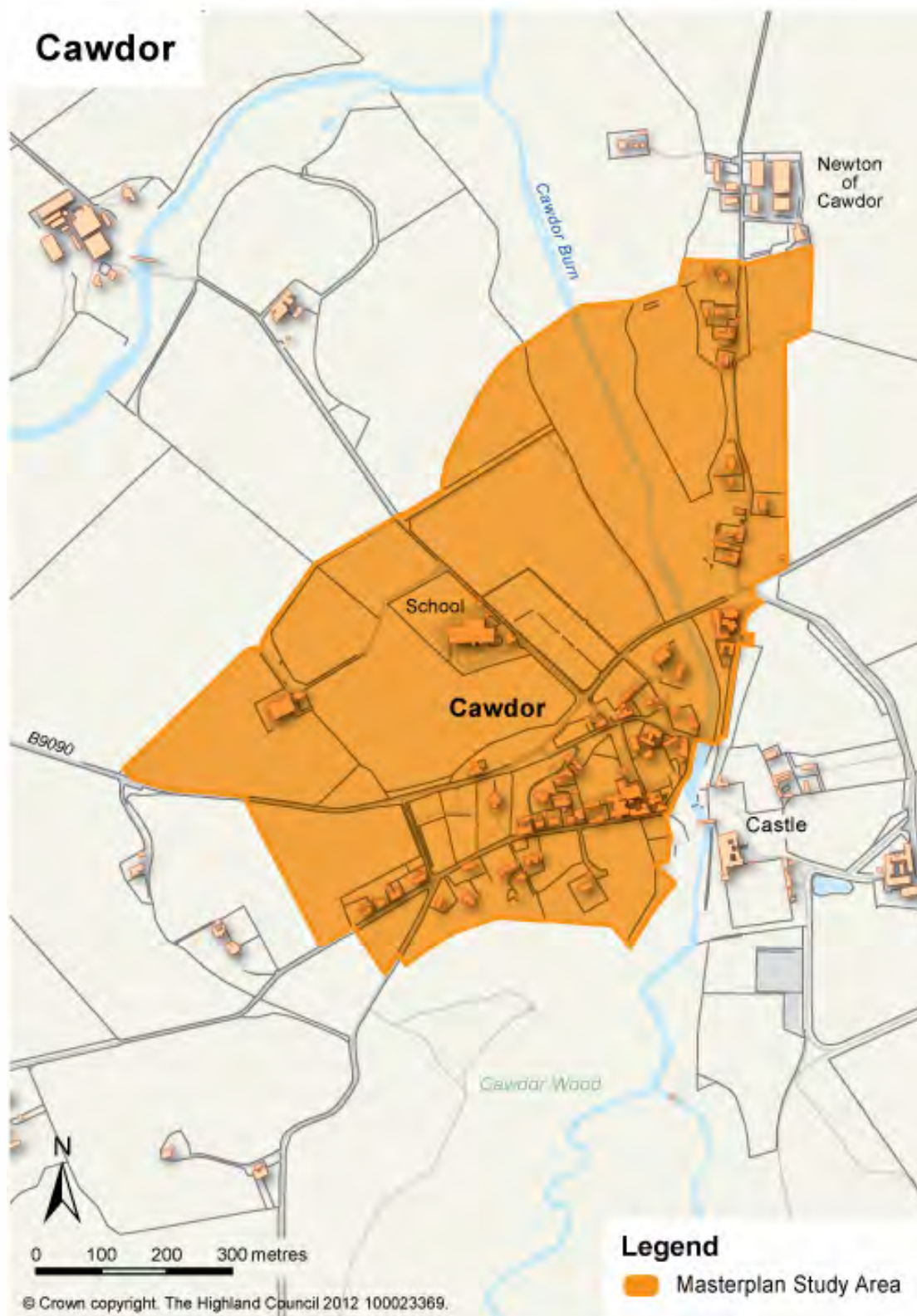
**Housing**

- A minimum of 25% of the development should be delivered as affordable housing;

**Miscellaneous**

- Bring previously used land up to the standard required for its potential use;
- Sustainable Drainage System Plan is required;
- Limited use of street lighting;
- Subject to further discussion with the Education, Culture and Sport Service, contributions towards primary and secondary school shortfalls caused as a result of the development;
- Flood Risk Assessment demonstrating development complies with SPP;
- Sustainable Drainage System Plan;
- No culverting or realigning of the Cawdor Burn or other natural watercourses.





15.12 Map 12: Cawdor Expansion

## 16. Nigg Neig

- 16.1 The Council's existing local plan, the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (adopted in February 2007) provides an up to date policy context for Mid and Easter Ross. It already allocates enough land to meet this Plan's Vision for that area in terms of a corridor of employment and housing growth. The details of these allocations will be reviewed through the forthcoming Inner Moray Firth area Local Development Plan.
- 16.2 However, an update is required in terms of the strategic significance of Nigg Yard and its potential for diversification. Put simply, the site may now have better redevelopment and therefore employment prospects for non oil related uses. In 2008 the Council, in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise commissioned the preparation of [The Nigg Development Masterplan](#) to clearly identify the scope for future activities on the Nigg Yard site and the proximal lands and the potential land requirement to properly undertake these. The area covered by the masterplan is indicated on Map 13.
- 16.3 The masterplan considers the activities appropriate for the Nigg Yard and proximal lands developing two principal options for the site. Development option 1 offers the potential development of a multi use site developing a variety of activities across the site as indicated below:
- Renewables;
  - Rig IRM and rig refit;
  - Decommissioning;
  - Module and subsea fabrications.
- 16.4 This option provides a high degree of flexibility for the development of the site while continuing to focus primarily on oil related activities while also incorporating renewable energy development.
- 16.5 Development option 2 focuses on developing a "Green Energy Park" , this option looks to utilise the entire identified site for inter-related renewable activities:
- Manufacture of renewables components;
  - Fabrication and assembly;
  - Finishing and quality processes.
- 16.6 This option will utilise the existing Yard for manufacturing and fabrication activities with adjacent land primarily being utilised for the laying down and storage of components and fabrications sections.
- 16.7 The Health and Safety Executive identifies the presence of a major hazard site at Nigg. This will be taken into account in the Nigg Development Master Plan. Developers should also note the terms of policy 30: Physical Constraints.

16.8

### **Policy 23 Nigg**

16.8.1

The Council will support the development of the Nigg Yard and proximal lands in line with its approved Masterplan (outlined above). The Council intends to adopt [The Nigg Development Masterplan](#) as Supplementary Guidance.





16.9 Map 13: Nigg Development Masterplan Area

## 17. Caithness Gallaibh

- 17.1 Although the Sutherland Local Plan is up to date, some elements of the Vision and Spatial Strategy that centre on Caithness, require to be addressed in the short term within this Plan. Below, as part of the detailed spatial strategy for Caithness, a number of development opportunities are promoted to ensure that there is an effective framework in place in the period between now and when the Caithness and Sutherland area Local Development Plan is prepared.

### 17.2 Dounreay

- 17.2.1 Dounreay, the UK's centre of fast reactor research and development from 1955 until 1994, is now Scotland's largest nuclear clean-up and demolition project. This involves construction, demolition and waste management, designed to deliver the agreed Site End State with progressive hazard removal and reduction of risk. It should be noted that further site remediation may be necessary and sought, to a level dependent upon the type of any future use proposed on the site. Government policy 'The Decommissioning of UK's Nuclear Facilities' states that 'decommissioning operations should be carried out as soon as reasonably practicable taking all relevant factors into account'. These include safety, risk, security, environmental protection, funding, resources, waste management, stakeholder views, skills, socio-economics and sustainability.
- 17.2.2 Decommissioning Dounreay is recognised internationally as one of the most complex nuclear clean-up challenges in the world and is fostering skills and enterprise amongst the companies involved, growing expertise that is recognised in National Planning Framework 2.
- 17.2.3 The site (as shown on Map 14) therefore remains a hive of activity and the development activities that are required as part of decommissioning require careful planning. A Dounreay Planning Framework was prepared and approved as supplementary planning guidance in 2006. It set out three phases for the decommissioning and restoration programmes, together covering the period 2005 to 2036. Phasing enables the land use implications and environmental effects of the proposed activities to be identified, and helps to achieve the necessary planning permissions one stage at a time.
- 17.2.4 Considerable progress has been made on the first phase of decommissioning works and the timescale for the remaining two phases reassessed. The scheduling of work, including the declared end date of 2025, is being reviewed to comply with a cap on annual funding announced by the NDA.

17.3

## Policy 24 Dounreay

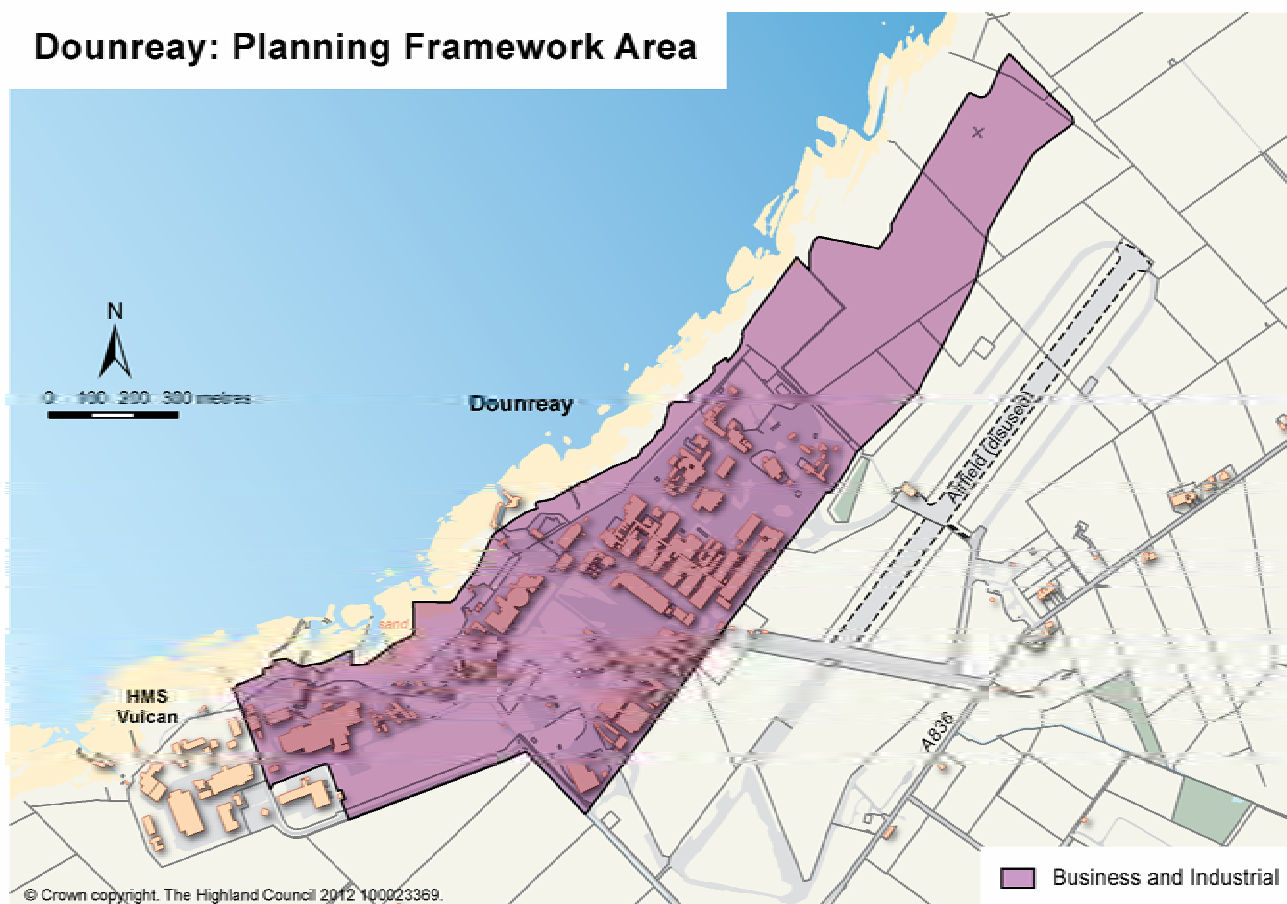
17.3.1

The Council will support proposals which meet the requirements of the updated Planning Framework for Dounreay. This document is being prepared by the Council in partnership with Dounreay Site Restoration Limited and will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance to this Plan.

The main principles of the Dounreay Planning Framework will be:

- the timely, safe and environmentally acceptable decommissioning, restoration and after-use of the Dounreay site;
- phasing through to the interim end point, setting out the developments required for decommissioning and restoration towards achieving the site end state, including new build, adaptation, demolition and remediation;
- sufficient flexibility to respond to changing constraints whilst not placing undue restrictions on the site operator;
- indication of potential new interim uses and end uses for parts of the site in support of economic regeneration of the area;
- and developer requirements as set out in Appendix 5 of the Revised Environmental Report of the plan, relating to Policy 24: Dounreay. The Council will work with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority towards the early identification of opportunities for the economic reuse of existing Dounreay facilities and land.

### Dounreay: Planning Framework Area



17.4

Map 14: Dounreay

## 17.5 John O' Groats

- 17.5.1 John O' Groats is a placename known around the world but the visitor experience can fall short of expectation due to the need for a fuller range and better quality of facilities and environmental improvement.
- 17.5.2 Highlands and Islands Enterprise has therefore prepared a vision of how the famous visitor destination of John O' Groats could be developed to revitalise it and bring economic growth, support regeneration of Caithness, and enable the place to meet its potential. The core area covered by the masterplan is indicated on Map 15.
- 17.5.3 [The John O' Groats Masterplan](#), which has been subject of extensive consultations, offers various design options. They all feature the creation of a destination focal point, drawing 'end to enders' to a main square near the harbour. The ultimate option adds a market street and square, with car parking on the periphery. The consultants highlight the need for good quality building design from locally sourced natural materials and recommend a build sensitive to the landscape and reminiscent of a typical Scottish coastal village. The masterplan will include guidance for the community and the coastal areas beyond the core area.
- 17.5.4 This Plan supports in principle the revitalisation of John O' Groats through significant development and the masterplan can provide a more detailed framework against which to measure the merits of proposals.

17.6

### **Policy 25 John O'Groats**

17.6.1

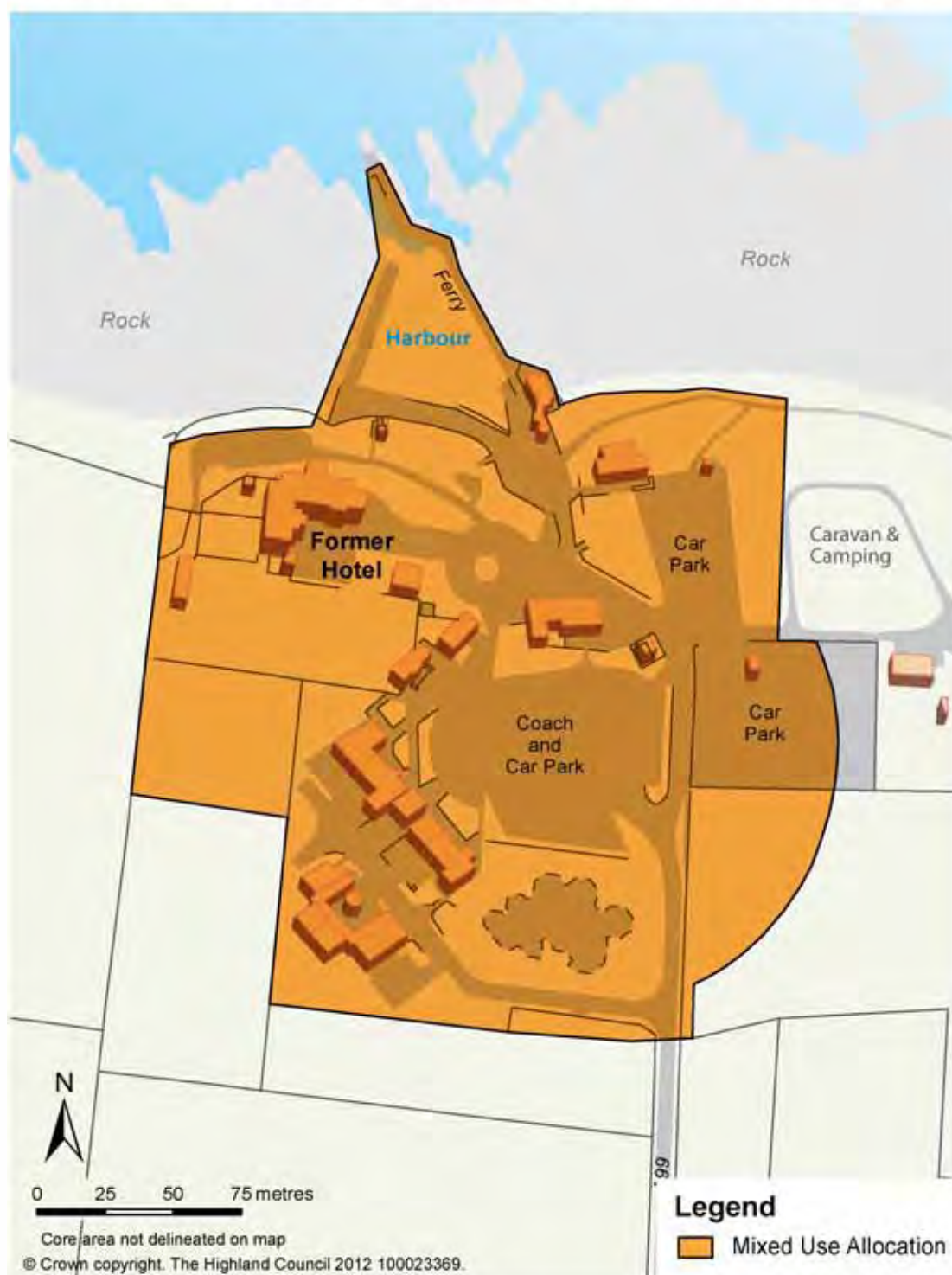
The Council will support the development in line with [The John O' Groats Masterplan](#). The Council intends to adopt the draft masterplan (as outlined above) following consultation and possible amendment as Supplementary Guidance to this Plan.

The main principles of the masterplan will be:

- good quality building design;
- identification of the focal destination point;
- regeneration of the existing hotel site, supplemented by additional accommodation;
- retention of valued assets;
- provision of a visitor centre and space for enhanced food and drink facilities;
- car parking around the periphery of the core harbour-side area;
- interconnection and improvement of the coastal paths;
- maximising the attraction of the natural flora, fauna and landscape assets;
- physical improvements to public parts of the harbour area;
- setting out phasing as a guide to growth, taking into account deliverability and key components for a first phase;
- developer requirements as set out in Appendix 5 to the Revised Environmental Report with respect to Policy 25: John O'Groats.



## John O'Groats: Core Area covered by Masterplan



17.7 Map 15: John O'Groats: Core Area covered by Masterplan



## 17.8 Castletown

17.8.1 The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment carried out an Enquiry by Design process for the area of Castletown and Castlehill. This resulted in a masterplan and a heritage and regeneration action plan in 2008. The masterplan comprises an overall plan for the area together with (in more detail) options for the Harbour, the Mill and the Church together with a plan of improvements for Main Street and Traill Street. Affordability and sustainability are part of the strategies and some phasing is set out.

17.8.2 This Plan aims to provide for sustainable growth of key settlements in Caithness in support of regenerating the area. This demands a design-led approach with effective community engagement and the Masterplan for Castletown (as shown on Map 16) will provide a framework for considering proposals in advance of the new Area Local Development Plan being prepared.

17.9

### Policy 26 Castletown

17.9.1

The Council will support the delivery of the Castletown masterplan in line with the guidance prepared. The Council intends to adopt the guidance (as outlined above) following consultation and possible amendment as supplementary guidance to this plan.

The main principles of the masterplan will be:

- protecting and enhancing the character of the village;
- establishing a stronger connection between Castletown and Castlehill;
- setting out phasing as a guide to growth and providing a clear steer on the direction(s) and emphasis for long term growth proposals;
- reusing and adapting redundant building stock;
- rejuvenating the harbour area and improving key streets;
- providing opportunities for jobs and facilities for local people;
- providing opportunities for affordable housing;
- avoidance of adverse effects on Dunnet Links SSSI;
- fulfilment of developer requirements set out in the Revised Environmental Report on the Strategic Environmental Assessment of Policy 26: Castletown, including a protected species survey and mitigation plan;
- ensuring that the Burn of Garth is protected from any adverse impacts on the water environment.



17.10 Map 16: Castletown Masterplan Area

## 17.11 Other Masterplanned Proposals in Caithness

- 17.11.1 In addition to these larger developments, a design-led approach to planning for growth of smaller settlements can help identify appropriate sustainable growth opportunities, where it fits with the aims and principles of this Plan. It can assist in bringing forward development ideas and provide for some growth in advance of the new Area Local Development Plan, particularly given that the adopted Caithness Local Plan is becoming out of date.
- 17.11.2 For Staxigoe and Papigoe near Wick, architects acting for a local landowner have prepared a framework plan in support of proposals for development and the Council commends the broad principle of such an approach as a means of exploring development options.

17.12

### **Policy 27 Masterplanned Proposals in Caithness**

17.12.1

The Council will consider expansion proposals for smaller settlements in the Caithness area in advance of the review of the area Local Development Plan subject to the developer following a masterplanning process. This process must include effective public consultation, the input of the planning authority, the input of other agencies as appropriate and application of sustainable design principles (see Policy 28).

## 18. Spatial Strategy - General Policies

### Ro-innleachd Farsaingeachd - Poileasaidhean Coitcheann

- 18.1 The fundamental objective of this Plan strategy is to direct the right sorts of development to the right places, thereby **making better places**. The Plan sets out below a range of policies to achieve this.
- 18.2 It is very important that users of this Plan note that each planning application will be assessed against all policies and legislation relevant to the particular proposal and location. Conformity with a single policy will not necessarily indicate that a proposed development is acceptable.
- 18.3 In this chapter we will set out the General Policies which will be applied consistently across Highland as well as some more detailed policies on particular issues.

## 18.4 Sustainable Design

- 18.4.1 Scottish Planning Policy makes it clear that the planning system should link principles and actions to enable sustainable development. This is reinforced under the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, which requires the planning authority to exercise its development planning function with the objective of contributing to sustainable development.
- 18.4.2 Section 72 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 says that planning authorities must include in local development plans policies requiring all developments to be designed to ensure that all new buildings avoid a specified and rising proportion of the projected greenhouse gas emissions from their use, through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon generating technologies.
- 18.4.3 Policy 28 sets out the requirement for all development to be designed in the context of sustainable development and climate change. The Council's Sustainable Design Guide will include provisions that fulfil the requirements of section 72 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and will also, for example, require investigation of the use of grey water and micro renewable energy systems. The Sustainable Design Guide will be adopted as supplementary guidance. Compliance with the Guide is required in terms of Policy 28.

18.5

#### **Policy 28 Sustainable Design**

18.5.1

The Council will support developments which promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the people of Highland.

Proposed developments will be assessed on the extent to which they:

- are compatible with public service provision (water and sewerage, drainage, roads, schools, electricity);
- are accessible by public transport, cycling and walking as well as car;
- maximise energy efficiency in terms of location, layout and design, including the utilisation of renewable sources of energy and heat;
- are affected by physical constraints described in Physical Constraints on Development: Supplementary Guidance;
- make use of brownfield sites, existing buildings and recycled materials;
- demonstrate that they have sought to minimise the generation of waste during the construction and operational phases. (This can be submitted through a Site Waste Management Plan);

- impact on individual and community residential amenity;
- impact on non-renewable resources such as mineral deposits of potential commercial value, prime quality agricultural land, or approved routes for road and rail links;
- impact on the following resources, including pollution and discharges, particularly within designated areas:
  - habitats
  - freshwater systems
  - species
  - marine systems
  - landscape
  - cultural heritage
  - scenery
  - air quality;
- demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design in keeping with local character and historic and natural environment and in making use of appropriate materials;
- promote varied, lively and well-used environments which will enhance community safety and security and reduce any fear of crime;
- accommodate the needs of all sectors of the community, including people with disabilities or other special needs and disadvantaged groups; and
- contribute to the economic and social development of the community.

Developments which are judged to be significantly detrimental in terms of the above criteria will not accord with this Local Development Plan. All development proposals must demonstrate compatibility with the Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance, which requires that all developments should:

- conserve and enhance the character of the Highland area;
- use resources efficiently;
- minimise the environmental impact of development;
- enhance the viability of Highland communities.

Compatibility should be demonstrated through the submission of a Sustainable Design Statement where required to do so by the Guidance.

All developments must comply with the greenhouse gas emissions requirements of the Sustainable Design Guide.

In the relatively rare situation of assessing development proposals where the potential impacts are uncertain, but where there are scientific grounds for believing that severe damage could occur either to the environment or the wellbeing of communities, the Council will apply the precautionary principle.

Where environmental and/or socio-economic impacts of a proposed development are likely to be significant by virtue of nature, size or location, The Council will require the preparation by developers of appropriate impact assessments. Developments that will have significant adverse effects will only be supported if no reasonable alternatives exist, if there is demonstrable over-riding strategic benefit or if satisfactory overall mitigating measures are incorporated.



## 18.6 Design Quality and Place-Making

- 18.6.1 This policy seeks a high quality of design in development within both urban and rural parts of the plan area and the creation of high quality environments in which people can live and work. It responds to the place-making agenda by reflecting the drive of a wide range of Scottish Government policy and guidance which is usefully referenced in the 'easy-read' guide "Design Snapshot" (2007) and includes, for example PAN67 "Housing Quality", PAN68 "Design Statements", "Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland" and other key documents. More specific guidance on visual aspects of wind farm developments may be found in Scottish Planning Policy and government advice documents.
- 18.6.2 The Council intends to produce supplementary guidance on residential layout and a public art strategy for the Highlands to provide more detailed guidance on how developments can help create new and better places; places that are distinctive and reflect the Highland context.
- 18.6.3 The Council's residential layout guidance will draw heavily from the Scottish Government's key policy statements on design and place-making – Designing Places, and Designing Streets – and will require that proposals consider and address the six qualities of successful places to produce new developments that are:
1. distinctive
  2. safe and pleasant
  3. easy to get around
  4. welcoming
  5. adaptable
  6. resource-efficient.
- 18.6.4 In addition, the Council's public art strategy for the Highlands will seek the inclusion of public art in new developments to help produce well-designed, locally distinctive built environments, with a clear sense of identity and place. Developer contributions may be sought to fund public art where it is considered that a site would benefit from public art being included as an intrinsic element of the development proposal – see Policy 31: Developer Contributions.

18.7

### **Policy 29 Design Quality and Place-Making**

18.7.1

New development should be designed to make a positive contribution to the architectural and visual quality of the place in which it is located, where appropriate, and should consider the incorporation of public art as a means of creating a distinct sense of place and identity in line with the Council's Public Art Strategy for the Highlands. Applicants should demonstrate sensitivity and respect towards the local distinctiveness of the landscape, architecture, design and layouts in their proposals.

The design and layout of new residential development proposals should focus on the quality of places and living environments for pedestrians rather than movement of vehicles, and should incorporate all of the six qualities of successful places. Further guidance on this policy topic will be provided in the Council's Residential Layout: Supplementary Guidance.

Where relevant, the Council will judge proposals in terms of their contribution to place-making. Proposals should have regard to the historic pattern of development and landscape in the locality and should, where relevant, be an integral part of the settlement. The Council will examine proposals to ensure that people of all abilities can move safely and conveniently within the development and, where appropriate, to facilities in other parts of the settlement.

## 18.8 Physical Constraints

- 18.8.1 Various physical and technical factors, including those that affect public health and safety, need to be assessed when considering development proposals. These will be listed and (where practicable) mapped in the [Physical Constraints Supplementary Guidance](#) and will cover sites, installations, infrastructure and other areas.

18.9

### **Policy 30 Physical Constraints**

18.9.1

Developers must consider whether their proposals would be located within areas of constraints as set out in Physical Constraints: Supplementary Guidance. The main principles of the guidance are:

- to provide developers with up to date information regarding physical constraints to development in Highland; and
- to ensure proposed developments do not adversely affect human health and safety or pose risk to safeguarded sites.

Where a proposed development is affected by any of the constraints detailed within the guidance, developers must demonstrate compatibility with the constraint or outline appropriate mitigation measures to be provided.

## 18.10 Developer Contributions

- 18.10.1 All development has an impact and the Council will seek measures and if necessary, contributions from developers to offset that impact. Existing deficiencies in public services, facilities or infrastructure can be made worse by new building and new deficiencies created. The principle of proportionate developer contributions is underpinned by the policy below and may be secured through a Section 75 Agreement where necessary. In negotiations between the Council and the developer, account will be taken of the implications for the financial viability of the proposed development, and any agreement reached will be consistent with government policy set out in Circular No. 1/2010.
- 18.10.2 Applicants are encouraged to discuss matters with the Council prior to submission of applications for specific development proposals. The Council's approach to developer contributions will be outlined in [Developer Contributions: Supplementary Guidance](#). For areas where major infrastructure is required to facilitate the delivery of development we will produce specific supplementary guidance.

- 18.10.3 The following are examples of where developer contributions may be sought (this is not an exhaustive list) and a broad indication of how need will be assessed:

<b>Potential Developer Contributions</b>	
Education and library provision	The effect of the development on secondary, primary and nursery school capacity and public library provision.
Healthcare facilities	Whether a development will have an effect on the relevant NHS trusts facilities considered to be 'under pressure' by the NHS.
Recycling facilities & waste management	The effect of the development on existing municipal and commercial waste recycling facilities.
Transportation	The effect of the development on transport and infrastructure assessed against the relevant Local Transport Strategy.
Infrastructure	The need for improvement of road, rail, water and sewerage infrastructure.
Community facilities including Care in the Community	The effect of the development on existing community facilities and whether the development will increase the burden on care services.
Strategic landscaping, open space, green networks and outdoor access	The need for new or enhanced strategic landscaping, open space (including play areas) enhancements to the green network or outdoor access nearby taking account of the Core Path Plan (and any associated aspirational community routes).
Sports facilities	The effect of the development on demand for facilities and the unmet demand in the settlements nearby.
Public Art	Whether a development of a site would benefit from public art being an intrinsic element of the development proposal, and where the delivery of the Public Art Strategy will be enabled.

**Policy 31 Developer Contributions**

For development proposals which create a need for new or improved public services, facilities or infrastructure, the Council will seek from the developer a fair and reasonable contribution in cash or kind towards these additional costs or requirements. Such contributions will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and may be secured through a Section 75 obligation or other legal agreement as necessary. Other potential adverse impacts of any development proposal will normally be addressed by planning condition but may also require a contribution secured by agreement.

The principles that guide the preparation of the Developer Contributions: Supplementary Guidance are:

- Fair and proportionate developer contributions for all developments on sites allocated in either the Highland wide Local Development Plan or one of the area local development plans or in terms of windfall development;
- Developer contributions will be sought where a need for new or improved services, facilities or infrastructure has been identified that relates directly to the proposed development;
- Flexibility in approach to ensure that development can be brought forward in difficult economic circumstances while ensuring that the development has no net detriment;
- Facilitate informed decision making by those involved in the development process, allowing potential financial implications to be factored into development appraisals prior to commercial decisions and actions being undertaken.

## 19. Sustainable Highland Communities Coimhearsnachdan Gàidhealach Seasmhach

### 19.1 Affordable Housing

19.1.1 The Council's [Highland Housing Strategy](#) identifies the unmet housing need in the Plan area seeks to increase the supply of both affordable rented housing and low cost affordable houses. To help meet need for affordable homes, this Plan will ensure that new housing development makes a contribution towards the supply of affordable housing. This applies to development on both allocated and unallocated sites. The Council will revise its existing supplementary guidance on affordable housing. The revised guidance will:

- a) provide guidance on where and when affordable housing contributions will be sought;
- b) specify those locations or circumstances where contributions of more than 25% will be sought, including what level of contribution will be sought and giving justification for the higher level;
- c) define acceptable forms of affordable housing contribution;
- d) give consideration to delivery of affordable housing by means of innovative methods;
- e) provide further guidance on mechanisms for securing affordable housing;
- f) provide advice on the type, design and layout of affordable housing; and
- g) indicate mechanisms for retention of affordable housing stock.

The revised guidance will be adopted as supplementary guidance for the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. The [Highland Housing Strategy](#) will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance to the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

19.1.2 The Highland Housing Strategy indicates the tenure of affordable housing required to best meet needs.

#### 19.2 **Policy 32 Affordable Housing**

19.2.1 In accordance with the Council's [Highland Housing Strategy](#) and the [Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#) the Council will expect developers to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing. Further guidance on the delivery of these contributions will be contained in the revised supplementary guidance on affordable housing.

On sites allocated for housing with an indicative overall capacity of four or more houses, the Council will expect to either negotiate a Section 75 Agreement with the landowner(s) and other interested parties, or utilise other mechanisms to provide for a contribution towards affordable housing (as defined in the Guidance), such contribution being generally no less than 25%. Negotiations will be subject to market and site conditions, and the final percentage contribution will reflect this, taking into account the financial viability of the proposal and other financial obligations.

On sites allocated for four or more houses, where an application is made for less than the Council's indicative capacity or for only part of the site, developers will still be expected to provide generally no less than 25% contribution in proportion to the allocated capacity, and a Section 75 agreement (or other mechanisms) will be required to ensure that any further development on the site will include an appropriate proportion of affordable housing.



This policy will also apply to all proposals for four or more houses on sites not allocated for housing.

Proposals which include affordable housing should be carefully designed to fully integrate the affordable housing plots as part of the overall development of the site and the affordable homes should be indistinguishable from the general market homes in terms of design, quality and appearance.

Outwith Settlement Development Areas, a contribution towards affordable homes attributed against the primary landholding, will apply in respect of every fourth dwelling granted planning permission, within that same landownership. This part of the policy applies to dwellings granted planning permission on or after the date on which this local development plan is adopted. Details of how this part of the policy will be applied and enforced will be included in the supplementary guidance on affordable housing.

### 19.3 Houses in Multiple Occupation

19.3.1 It is recognised that the private rented housing market, which includes Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), is an important element of the areas housing stock. It provides affordable accommodation for those working and studying in the Highlands, who are unable to buy their own property. It is also recognised that this form of housing is helping to support economic growth of the area that HMO are in ready supply.

19.3.2 The Council has prepared [Houses in Multiple Occupation: Supplementary Guidance](#) which will be as Supplementary Guidance to this Local Development Plan. This gives guidance on the interface between planning and licensing on the issue of HMO and further guidance on this topic.

19.4

#### **Policy 33 Houses in Multiple Occupation**

19.4.1

Planning Permission may be required for the occupation of a house by six or more people and occupation of a flat by three or more people, if it is deemed a material change of use.

Planning applications for HMO, outwith Inverness City Centre, that would result in the proportion of licensed HMO in any single census output area becoming excessive (as defined in [Houses in Multiple Occupation: Supplementary Guidance](#)) will not be supported unless there are clear material considerations which would justify permission being granted.

The preparation of the supplementary guidance will be guided by the following principles:

- Ensure the provision of high quality Houses in Multiple Occupation across Highland;
- Manage the provision and potential amenity impacts of Houses in Multiple Occupation; and
- Promote a partnership approach to dealing with the wider issues related to Houses in Multiple Occupation.

## 19.5 Settlement Development Areas

- 19.5.1 The Plan highlights the importance of supporting existing communities. As a result, we have defined Settlement Development Areas (SDAs) in the most recent Local Plans and we will continue to do so in the emerging area local development plans. These are the preferred areas for most types of development, including housing. We hope to meet the majority of the future housing requirement within these SDAs. This makes best use of existing infrastructure and services and protects the character of the surrounding countryside. When defining Settlement Development Areas we have taken account of a number of things, including but not limited to:
- the quality of neighbouring croft or agricultural land;
  - the type of land;
  - the ability of the landscape to allow for development;
  - the pattern of existing settlements; and
  - the availability of infrastructure.
- 19.5.2 The SDAs aim to allow enough room for future development (including infill development) while recognising the physical limits due to the landscape and ground conditions of each settlement. As a result, where possible we have drawn the boundaries of the settlement development areas relatively widely around the existing built-up areas. We have and will continue to have regard to local landscape character assessments in preparing and amending the Plan. Where appropriate, the landscape character assessment for the area will also be referred to as a material consideration when examining individual development proposals.
- 19.5.3 For each of the SDAs, the area local development plans will set out a number of objectives which will include development factors and developer requirements which will need to be taken into account in that particular area. This will include for example, important views which should be retained or other improvements required.

19.6

### **Policy 34 Settlement Development Areas**

19.6.1

We will support proposals within Settlement Development Areas (as defined in the existing local plans and future area local development plans) if they meet the requirements of Policy 28: Sustainable Design and all other relevant policies of the plan.

We will also judge proposals in terms of how compatible they are with the existing pattern of development and landscape character, how they conform with existing and approved adjacent land uses, and the effect on any natural, built and cultural heritage feature (see Policy 57, Appendix 2, the Proposals Map and background maps within the relevant (area) local development plan(s)).

Developments which are judged to be significantly detrimental in terms of the above criteria will not be supported unless there are clear material considerations which would justify permission being granted.

## 19.7 Housing in the Countryside

- 19.7.1 It is recognised given the rural nature of much of the Plan area that there will continue to be demand for development outwith settlements.
- 19.7.2 The Council maintains a two tier approach towards identifying the potential for housing development proposals within the countryside. Within the hinterlands around towns (as defined on the Proposals Map) Policy 35 Housing in the Countryside (Hinterland Areas) will apply to proposals for housing development. The hinterland area around towns has

been identified as where pressure for commuter based housing development is greatest. A more managed approach to housing development is required in the hinterland to prevent the suburbanisation of the countryside and the breaching of service network capacities. However, this approach does acknowledge that there is still potential for small scale housing development in the countryside based on existing groups, renovation and redevelopment opportunities and housing linked to rural businesses.

19.7.3 In considering proposals, the various landscape character assessments produced through Scottish Natural Heritage covering Highland broadly classify the types of landscape character present and provide advice on assessing proposals. Where particular housing groups are identified as being under pressure, Housing Group Capacity Studies will be produced on an as-required basis to assess the ability of these housing groups to accommodate additional development.

19.7.4 Housing development proposals outwith the hinterlands around towns will be determined in accordance with Policy 36 – Wider Countryside. Development within all countryside areas will also have to accord with the [Housing in the Countryside / Siting and Design: Supplementary Guidance](#).

19.7.5 The extent of the hinterland around towns will be reviewed through the preparation of area local development plans.

19.8

### **Policy 35 Housing in the Countryside (Hinterland areas)**

19.8.1

The Council will presume against housing in the open countryside of the hinterlands around towns as defined on the Proposals Map. Exceptions to this policy (as detailed in Supplementary Guidance) will only be made where at least one of the following applies:

- A house is essential for land management or family purposes related to the management of the land;
- The dwelling is for a retiring farmer and their spouses; or for a person retiring from other rural businesses on land managed by them for at least the previous ten years, where their previous accommodation is required for the new main operator of the farm, or rural business;
- Affordable housing is required to meet a demonstrable local affordable housing need;
- Housing is essential in association with an existing or new rural business;
- The house proposed is a replacement of an existing dwelling which does not meet the requirements for modern living and where the costs of upgrading are not justified on economic or environmental grounds (subject to the existing dwellings being demolished);
- The proposal involves conversion or reuse of traditional buildings or the redevelopment of derelict land; development of “brownfield” sites will be supported where a return to a natural state is not readily achievable and where a wider environmental benefit can be achieved through development;
- The proposal meets the Council’s criteria for acceptable expansion of a housing group or development within garden ground (as detailed in the relevant [supplementary guidance](#));
- The potential for new housing related to crofting is restricted; wider public benefit must be clearly demonstrated and meet the criteria set out in New/Extended Crofting Township Policy 48. Single house proposals on crofts must comply with the criteria in the Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design Supplementary Guidance and/or Policy 47: Safeguarding Inbye/Appportioned Croftland.

Where exceptions are justified, all proposals should still accord with the general policies of the Plan and the [Housing in the Countryside / Siting and Design: Supplementary Guidance](#).

The Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design: Supplementary Guidance will identify the main principles for housing proposals in all countryside areas. In particular, it will:

- identify wider development factors to be considered;
- provide advice on the identification of development opportunities;
- define exceptions to the policy;
- provide advice in relation to location, siting and design;
- highlight environmental and landscape issues.

Housing development proposals outwith the hinterlands around towns will be determined in accordance with Policy 36 – Development in the Wider Countryside.

## 19.9 Wider Countryside

19.9.1 The Council continues to support the development of rural areas, which comprise much of Highland because this will help maintain population, infrastructure and services. There are in particular many crofting and other 'townships' in the Plan area, not defined by Settlement Development Areas but where there is significant settlement within a locality and which is identifiable loosely as an established rural community.

19.9.2 However, development can have a significant impact upon the character of the landscape. Proposals should be sympathetic to this and landscape is a key consideration. The various landscape character assessments produced through [Scottish Natural Heritage](#) covering Highland broadly classify the types of landscape character present and provides advice about assessing proposals. Where appropriate, these will be applicable when examining proposals. So too will be the Council's forthcoming Siting and Design Guidance which will provide further advice on housing proposals

19.9.3 Development proposals within the wider countryside will be assessed against Policy 36: Wider Countryside. Exceptions to this are: development proposals for housing within hinterlands around towns, to be determined in accordance with Policy 35: Housing in the Countryside (Hinterland Areas); and renewable energy development proposals, to be assessed against the renewable energy policies, the non-statutory Highland Renewable Energy Strategy, and where appropriate Onshore Wind Energy: Supplementary Guidance. All proposals should still accord with the other general policies of the Plan.

19.10

### **Policy 36 Development in the Wider Countryside**

19.10.1

Outwith Settlement Development Areas, development proposals will be assessed for the extent to which they:

- are acceptable in terms of siting and design;
- are sympathetic to existing patterns of development in the area;
- are compatible with landscape character and capacity;
- avoid incremental expansion of one particular development type within a landscape whose distinct character relies on an intrinsic mix/distribution of a range of characteristics
- avoid, where possible, the loss of locally important croft land; and

- would address drainage constraints and can otherwise be adequately serviced, particularly in terms of foul drainage, road access and water supply, without involving undue public expenditure or infrastructure that would be out of keeping with the rural character of the area.

Development proposals may be supported if they are judged to be not significantly detrimental under the terms of this policy. In considering proposals, regard will also be had to the extent to which they would help, if at all, to support communities in Fragile Areas (as defined by [Highlands & Islands Enterprise](#)) in maintaining their population and services by helping to re-populate communities and strengthen services.

Within Fragile Areas, proposals that will lead to the change of use or loss of a lifeline rural facility such as a village shop, whether or not that facility is outwith the settlement development area, will be required to provide information as why the facility/use is no longer feasible including evidence that it has been marketed for that purpose at a reasonable price/rent for a minimum period of 3 months.

Renewable energy development proposals will be assessed against the Renewable Energy Policies, the non statutory Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and where appropriate, Onshore Wind Energy: Supplementary Guidance.

All proposals should still accord with the other general policies of the plan.

Development proposals for housing in the wider countryside will be determined against the relevant sections of the Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design: Supplementary Guidance.

## 19.11 Ageing Population

- 19.11.1 As the demography of the Council area continues to change with the population bulge of the baby-boomer generation reaching retirement, the housing needs of the wider population are diversifying. The [Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#) identifies that the Highland population is ageing to a greater degree than that of the rest of Scotland. The shift in the age profile of our population continues with an anticipated 50% increase in the number of people of retirement age by 2021 and a slightly higher increase in those aged over 75.
- 19.11.2 With an increase in the older population there is an opportunity for the private sector to cater for this wide and significant sector of the housing market. Developing a true mix of housing types will assist the ability of the older population to live longer in their community. Housing development tuned to the priorities of the older population can draw those who are thinking forward to downsize and take advantage of homes that can more readily accommodate future needs.
- 19.11.3 Where a higher level of assistance is sought by individuals the solutions may involve the development of supported communities with facilities aimed at providing a sliding scale of care as and when needed. Development of supported communities should facilitate integration with the wider community. To this end, sites for such development should be within easy walking distance of local services.
- 19.11.4 There will be a role for dedicated care homes for people with the need for a greater level of assistance that can no longer be catered for within the home environment. Proposals for the provision of new care homes will be assessed in consultation with the Council's Social Work Service and NHS Highland. Proposals for new care home facilities should be of a scale that is appropriate to meet local needs.



19.12

### **Policy 37 Accommodation for an Ageing Population**

19.12.1

Where a need is identified, the area local development plan will seek to allocate a suitably located site(s) close to amenities and services for accommodation appropriate for an ageing population. The Council intends to produce future Supplementary Guidance on this issue which will consider more specific targets and delivery mechanisms.

The main principles of the Accommodation for an Ageing Population: Supplementary Guidance will be to:

- consider the current and future housing requirements for older people;
- clarify the main issues in the delivery of appropriately located and designed housing;
- seek the delivery of housing suitable to meet lifetime needs;
- recognise the characteristics of housing for older people; and
- identify the role and requirement for specialist accommodation.

## **19.13 New Settlements**

19.13.1 This Plan has identified a new settlement at Tornagrain to help meet the housing requirement for the Inner Moray Firth as evidenced in [Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#).

19.13.2 In other areas of Highland it may be necessary to create new settlements where there is a need to offer choice to the housing market and meet the needs and demands of a particular housing area that can not be met through expansion of existing settlements. To support the types of services that should be provided as part of a new settlement, it is anticipated that any individual new settlement would include a residential component in the order of 500 to 1,000 dwellings. The policy should be read in conjunction with New/Extended Crofting Township Policy 48.

19.14

### **Policy 38 New Settlements**

19.14.1

The Council will support proposals for the establishment of comprehensively planned new settlements which are intended to meet assessed future housing need and demand and which accord with the policies of this Plan. Such proposals will also be assessed as to whether:

- The location proposed is in an area of high housing demand;
- A diverse mix of dwellings in terms of tenure and size is proposed;
- The location proposed is close to existing and potential employment opportunities;
- The location is accessible to/from public transport;
- Adequate new/improved infrastructure is proposed (such as waste water infrastructure and waste infrastructure); and
- A diverse and adequate range of services and facilities is proposed.

The detail of any proposal for a new settlement should be brought forward through the area local development plan process.

## 19.15 Gypsies/Travellers

- 19.15.1 It is important that new development meets the needs of the whole community, including the specific needs of the gypsies/travellers. The Council recognises gypsies/travellers right to travel and their specific housing needs. Where a need has been identified in the [Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#) and [Highland Housing Strategy](#) we must help identify land for this purpose.
- 19.15.2 The policy aims to set a framework for the identification of suitable sites the detail of which will be followed through via the area local development plan process. This will ensure thorough consultation and provide greater certainty to gypsies/travellers and settled communities.

19.16

### **Policy 39 Gypsies/Travellers**

19.16.1

The Council will support a site to accommodate gypsies/travellers, subject to other policies in this Plan, if:

- it meets an identified need; or,
- a newly arising need can be proven.

In all cases the applicant must also demonstrate that:

- the location allows reasonable access to services and the main road network;
- the site would not appreciably detract from the character or appearance of the area;
- the site would not significantly detract from the amenity currently enjoyed by residents in the area;
- the proposal is compatible with existing land use;
- the site can be sympathetically located in a secure environment and provided with essential services;
- the proposal is not likely to result in or add to significant environmental problems;
- it has been demonstrated that the site will be properly managed.

In the case of seasonal site provision it must be demonstrated that the location is suitable for seasonal use.

In the case of temporary encampments (authorised halting or stopping spaces) it must be demonstrated that there is a mechanism in place to avoid this turning into permanent provision.

## 20. Delivering a Competitive, Sustainable, Adaptable Highland Economy

### A' Lìbhrigeadh Eaconamaidh Gàidhealach Farpaiseach, Seasmhach is Sùbailte

#### 20.1 Retail

20.1.1 Inverness City Centre and other town and village centres are important, having economic, social, and cultural roles and catering for a wide range of people and their needs. The Scottish Government supports initiatives which promote town centre development through the planning system. The policies contained within this Plan are therefore designed to encourage both economic opportunities as well as improvements to the public realm of meeting places and social spaces.

20.1.2 Scottish Government Planning Policy supports the identification of a hierarchy of centres, and the use of policies which encourage the most appropriate scale of development to fit with this hierarchy. The Council's settlement hierarchy is set out on the Proposals Map.

20.2

#### **Policy 40    Retail Development**

20.2.1

Retail development proposals will be favourably considered where the following criteria are met:

##### **1. within identified city/town/village centres**

- i. proposals should aim to maintain or enhance the quality of existing centres, taking into account Policies 28 and 29. Within that policy framework new development should seek to consolidate traditional high streets, respecting visual impact and built form, and any settlement statement and supplementary guidance relating to that settlement.

##### **2. for edge of city/town/village centre locations**

- i. where there is no suitable site within the city/town/village centre in line with the sequential approach; and
- ii. where there would be no detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the city/town/village centre.

##### **3. for out of centre locations**

- i. where there are no suitable sites within the city/town/village centres or within edge of town centre locations in line with the sequential approach;
- ii. where there would be no detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the city/town/village centre; and
- iii. where good active travel and public transport accessibility exists or can be secured.

## 20.3 Business and Industrial Land

- 20.3.1 Sustainable economic growth is at the heart of the Plan's Vision and Spatial Strategy. The Council is supportive of new business and industrial developments where they are located in sustainable locations and reduce the need to travel.
- 20.3.2 In order to remove any potential constraints to economic growth, the Plan also encourages provision of a range of business and industrial sites throughout Highland to match known and likely future demand in terms of scale, location and type.
- 20.3.3 In particular, Highlands and Islands Enterprise have highlighted a potential shortfall in the supply of Class 4, Class 5 and Class 6 general industrial land in particular parts of Highland, and are preparing further analysis of requirements. This further work is set out in the Plan's Action Programme.
- 20.3.4 Emerging industries such as marine renewables pose a particular policy challenge as they offer scope for significant inward investment but have, as yet, uncertain locational and other requirements. The Council proposes a support in principle approach to such developments pending the better specification of requirements and the opportunity to review the area local development plan.

20.4

### **Policy 41 Business and Industrial Land**

20.4.1

The Council will support the development of strategic business and industrial sites/locations as indicated on the Proposals Map and listed below. Area local development plans will further identify and specify business and industrial sites within the settlements listed below and elsewhere. The Council will safeguard each site from other competing uses unless a development plan review concludes that the site is no longer required or suitable for business and industrial purposes.

Scrabster, Forss, Thurso Business Park, Murkle Bay, Wick, Brora, Golspie, Dornoch, Tain, Nigg, Delny, Cromarty Industrial Park, Inverbreakie, Alness Business Park, Highland Deephaven, Evanton Industrial Estate, Dingwall Business Park, Muir of Ord, Kishorn, Lochalsh Business Park, Portree Industrial Estate, Broadford Industrial Estate, Corpach, Blar Mor Industrial Estate, Glen Nevis Business Park / Ben Nevis Industrial Estate, Kinlochleven Business Park, Carse Industrial Estate, Inverness East, Inverness Airport Business Park, Nairn South, Balmakeith.

In the first instance, proposals for new business and industrial development will be directed to these sites and other land already allocated for or accommodating an existing employment use. However, the Council will also support the principle of business and industrial proposals outwith these sites/areas if the land requirement is from an emerging industry with uncertain size and locational characteristics (such as marine renewables) or there is another unforeseen element to the requirement (such as a large inward investment). Developers will have to demonstrate that their proposals cannot reasonably be accommodated on existing allocated industrial and business sites. Such proposals will also still need to be assessed against other parts of the development plan and should set out and follow principles which accord with the vision and spatial strategy of this Plan. Supplementary Guidance which follows this approach may be prepared where time allows and the complexity of the issue suggests it appropriate.

## 20.5 Previously Used Land

- 20.5.1 Previously used land, often referred to as brownfield land, is land that was developed but is now vacant or derelict or land currently in use with known potential for redevelopment. Such land may previously have been subject to a use which has resulted in land contamination and can be located within both urban and rural areas.

### 20.6 **Policy 42 Previously Used Land**

- 20.6.1 The Council will support development proposals that bring previously-used land back into beneficial use provided:

1. site investigation and risk assessment are undertaken and demonstrate that the site is in, or is capable of being brought into, a condition suitable for the proposed development; and
2. the proposed development accords with all other relevant policies of this plan.

## 20.7 Tourism

- 20.7.1 The tourism sector in Highland is highly varied and makes a significant contribution to the Highland Economy.

- 20.7.2 The [Highland Area Tourism Partnership Plan 2005-2015](#) sets an ambitious vision for Tourism in Highland

“Our vision is of a vibrant, growing and sustainable tourism industry in the Scottish Highlands that has responded well to the changing expectations of customers and is renowned for its quality of service and facilities and solid value for money. The responsibility for providing a warm Highland Welcome will be spread widely across businesses, agencies and the general public.”

- 20.7.3 While this vision puts a responsibility on a wide range of partners, the Planning System has an important role to play. Through other policies in the Plan we safeguard opportunities to come into contact with the natural, built and cultural heritage. Here we would like to enable growth in high quality tourism development and support the aims and outcomes of the Highland Area Tourism Partnership Plan.

### 20.8 **Policy 43 Tourism**

- 20.8.1 Proposals for tourist facilities will be assessed as to whether:

- the scale of the proposal is proportionate to its location/settlement;
- the site is within a settlement boundary and whether it will complement existing/allocated tourist facilities within that settlement;
- the proposal will increase the length of peoples stay, increase visitor spending or promote a wider spread of visitors;
- the proposal will safeguard, promote responsible access, interpretation and effective management or enhancement of natural, built and cultural heritage features.

Area local development plans will identify more specific opportunities for enhancement of existing tourism facilities and areas where a co-ordinated approach to tourism is needed.



## 20.9 Tourist Accommodation

- 20.9.1 If we wish to support proposals for increasing tourism development throughout Highland then we will need places for tourists to stay. In Highland we have a number of options for where people can stay. One of the fastest growing sectors for tourist accommodation is self catering. While we need to ensure that this type of accommodation is delivered we also need to ensure that development of this accommodation does not adversely affect the availability of land for permanent housing.
- 20.9.2 Tourist accommodation can comprise of paid overnight accommodation in chalets, bed and breakfasts, hotels, hostels, guesthouses, holiday homes, caravans and camp sites but does not include second homes.

20.10

### **Policy 44 Tourist Accommodation**

20.10.1

Proposals for tourist accommodation within settlement boundaries will be supported if the Council is satisfied that the proposal can be accommodated without adverse impacts upon neighbouring uses, complies with Policy 28: Sustainable Design and will not prejudice the residential housing land supply.

Outwith settlements, proposals will be supported if the proposal complies with the Plan's policy and related guidance on Housing in the Countryside: Policy 35.

Tourist accommodation within the open countryside will be supported where: it can be demonstrated that a demand exists for this type of accommodation; that it can be achieved without adversely affecting the landscape character or the Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage features of the area.; and, it is consistent with the other guidance on siting and design set out in Policy 36: Wider Countryside. In these circumstances, the Council will generally attach a condition to permissions in order to control occupancy and use of the accommodation.

## 20.11 Communications Infrastructure

- 20.11.1 Advanced electronic communications infrastructure is essential to an area as large and varied as Highland to help achieve economic growth. It can help to reduce the need to travel, particularly business travel and therefore contributing to a reduction in emissions. It is the Scottish Government's objective to ensure that everyone can enjoy the same degree of access to high quality electronic communication opportunities.

20.12

### **Policy 45 Communications**

20.12.1

The Council will support proposals which lead to the expansion of the electronic communications network in Highland. This includes delivery of core infrastructure for telecommunications, broadband and other digital infrastructure.

## 20.13 Siting and Design of Communications Infrastructure

20.13.1 The siting and design of electronic communications infrastructure is a key issue for the planning system. The Council believes that support in principle for such development should be balanced by consideration of a range of site-specific issues.

20.14

### **Policy 46 Siting and Design of Communications Infrastructure**

20.14.1

The Council will support proposals for the provision of new communications infrastructure, where:

- equipment and any associated access are sited and designed sensitively to avoid adverse impacts on natural, built and cultural heritage, including landscape character and views;
- existing masts or other structures can not be shared;
- existing services are not interfered with; and
- redundant masts and equipment are removed (without prejudice to their possible re-use elsewhere).

The cumulative visual effect of equipment will also be taken into account when assessing proposals.

## 20.15 Crofting and Agriculture

20.15.1 The Council recognises that crofting and agriculture is a core component of life in the Highlands and is beneficial not only to crofting communities, but also the wider population. These benefits include:

- the maintenance and promotion of Highland culture/heritage/distinctiveness;
- economic wellbeing and job creation;
- improving and proper management of biodiversity/landscape interests/scenic area;
- social/community benefit; including access to land and housing, and
- the productive use of land (agricultural/economic).

20.15.2 Accordingly, it wishes to promote a policy framework that safeguards and promotes that resource and heritage. Agricultural land will be protected in line with Scottish Planning Policy.

20.16

### **Policy 47 Safeguarding Inbye/AppORTioned Croftland**

20.16.1

The Council expects development proposals to minimise the loss of in-bye/appORTioned croft land. For housing proposals, these should be for single houses (with consideration given to the history of development on the croft and any division of the croft) and should accord with the Council's Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design Supplementary Guidance. All proposals should where possible avoid:

- siting on the better part of a croft in terms of its agricultural value; and
- impeding use of the remaining croft land by virtue of its location.

If proposals do not meet these criteria, then they will only be deemed acceptable where the following apply:

- there exists a proven/recognised wider community interest; and
- in terms of other policy considerations, such as accordance with settlement pattern or impact on a natural, built or cultural heritage feature, they can be considered acceptable.

In terms of this policy, wider community interest may be demonstrated where:

- there is no alternative viable land (outwith in-bye land/appORTioned croft land) for development within the community; and
- the proposal brings significant economic or social benefits to the community as a whole.

Where new houses on a croft are permitted within a hinterland area, a Section 75 Agreement will be used to tie the new development to the associated land holding. This approach may also be applied outwith the hinterland areas where proposals are located within sensitive areas, such as National Scenic Areas, where development would not otherwise be supported.

## 20.17 Crofting Townships

20.17.1 The Council wishes to support the creation of new crofting townships and significant extensions to existing ones (with associated housing) where circumstances allow. Within the pressurised hinterlands of commuter towns opportunities will be more constrained because of limited landscape and servicing capacities. Elsewhere a more positive framework can apply subject to certain provisos.

## **Policy 48 New/Extended Crofting Townships**

### **Within the hinterlands of towns** (as defined on the Proposals Map):

Proposals should demonstrate a wider public interest - i.e. significant benefits to the community of both crofters and non-crofters. This could be achieved through various means, including: a significant enhancement of the extent and coherence of the green network in the area through habitat creation/management and/or recreation/access provision of paths, provision of affordable housing which is secured for the longer term, and establishing the land in community ownership and providing tenancies.

A planning obligation under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, or a similar mechanism, will be used to tie new development to its associated land holding.

**In all areas** proposals will be assessed in terms of:

- compatibility with landscape character, including landform and landscape pattern, having regard to existing crofting settlements;
- impact on natural, built and cultural heritage features, including the avoidance of negative impacts on designated sites;
- compatibility with existing servicing infrastructure, or where existing infrastructure is not available or has insufficient capacity to serve the proposal, acceptable arrangements for the provision of new servicing infrastructure (NB. proposals for new infrastructure must meet applicable planning policy requirements and be consentable by external regulators such as SEPA, Scottish Water, Marine Scotland etc; furthermore, they must not involve infrastructure out of keeping with the rural character of the area);
- the economic viability of service delivery (for example, the economics of school bus provision and refuse collection if it is not on an existing route);
- evidence that the development proposals will secure good land management (the Crofter's Commission will confirm the bona fides for crofting proposals);
- where a proposal is located within a sensitive area, such as a National Scenic Area, a planning obligation under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, or a similar mechanism, may be used to tie the new development to its associated land holding.

In support of planning applications for new crofting townships, the following information will be required:

- a business plan (albeit, there is no expectation of a full time income from a croft);
- for woodland crofts, a management plan must be submitted which meets the UK Forestry Standard;
- where deforestation of an area is required, or the proposal involves the large scale restructuring of agricultural land or use of uncultivated/semi-natural areas for intensive purposes, then an Environmental Impact Assessment may be required;
- a masterplan for the entire development area, focussing on issues such as the preferred density, siting, design and layout of buildings (with reference to the Council's Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design Supplementary Guidance) and associated infrastructure and services.

## 20.19 Coastal Development

20.19.1 The Council has produced a [Coastal Development Strategy](#) which classifies the coast in line with national guidance. This identifies the Isolated Coast as a category which Scottish Planning Policy continues to regard as an important resource in its own right and unsuitable for development. This feature is considered a locally/regionally important feature through Policy 57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage policy. The [Coastal Development Strategy](#) also reviews the various uses of our coastal zone and sets out a vision for this key resource. The Coastal Development Strategy will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance to this Plan.

20.19.2 Major applications on the coast are likely to require an Environmental Statement.

20.20

### **Policy 49 Coastal Development**

20.20.1

Development proposals for the coast or for installations in nearshore waters should, in both their location and their design, show consideration to the range of existing interests ensuring best use of resources taking account of existing and planned marine activities and development. Proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on the natural, built or cultural heritage and amenity value of the area.

The Council will promote the landward side of the road for development where proposals on the coastal side would otherwise interrupt scenic views over open water: unless a coastal position is necessary, or if the effect would be a conflict with the existing settlement pattern. Where development on the coast is justified, opportunities for the development or reuse of previously used land and buildings should be considered in the first instance. The site should not be at risk from coastal erosion or flooding or cause an unacceptable impact as a result of natural coastal processes which it triggers or accentuates. In relation to medium or high flood risk areas: water-based uses and sub-sea cables may be acceptable; and essential infrastructure, which cannot be located elsewhere, may be acceptable, both subject to mitigation, as appropriate. EuroSION data should be consulted when determining whether natural coastal processes have potential to be an issue. Other important factors will be potential landscape impact, and effect on the setting of coastal communities. Consideration will be given to the potential for any proposal to result in coalescence.

Proposals will be assessed against the requirements of the Highland Coastal Development Strategy: Supplementary Guidance. The principal aims of the strategy are to:

- guide the sustainable development and use of Highland's coastal zone whilst safeguarding its natural and cultural heritage assets;
- provide a strategic planning framework for the coast and nearshore area of Highland which takes account of national policy guidance and the need for more detailed plan coverage in appropriate areas;
- complement the statutory terrestrial elements of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, Scottish Planning Policy and the implementation of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. This recognises that the use of nearshore waters (particularly the more sheltered water) is relevant and often closely related to the use of the land adjacent;
- provide strategic vision and guidance for development on and around the Highland coast, i.e. development in the planning sense;
- provide a classification of the Highland coast relevant to development in the nearshore area.



## 20.21 Aquaculture

- 20.21.1 The scale of Highland's coastline makes production of meaningful spatial guidance for the whole Highland area impracticable. Detailed planning guidance for the main areas of pressure is provided in the [Aquaculture Framework Plans](#) (e.g. for Loch Nevis) and the [Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans](#) (e.g. for the Two Brooms Area and the Sound of Mull). There will be evolving Marine Policies from the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, with the introduction of a National Marine Plan, and then the Regional Marine Plans which will follow. These introduce a more holistic streamlined licensing system for the marine environment improving the efficiency and transparency of decision-making for developers. It is recognised that in the future Local Development Plans will be informed by these statutory plans.
- 20.21.2 The preferred approach for aquaculture combines spatial planning guidance at a realistic level in the key areas which require it via the production of Aquaculture Framework Plans and integrated coastal plans, and a general criteria-based policy as a catch-all to guide assessment of the relatively small proportion of proposals which come forward outwith these areas.
- 20.21.3 Seaweed cultivation requires a marine license from the Scottish Government but at present it does not require planning permission from the Local Authority. Marine and freshwater aquaculture installations require several consents and licences for different aspects of their operation. Firstly they require planning consent from the local authority and authorisation from SEPA under the Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR). The former's primary concerns are to ensure that the location, type and scale of physical development is appropriate and the development is compatible with other interests. The latter controls the discharge of effluent, waste and other chemicals. Installations in the sea also require a Marine Licence from the Scottish Government. In the case of aquaculture this is for the discharge of chemotherapeutants from well boats and to ensure there is no conflict with safe maritime passage. All aquaculture production businesses (APB's) are required to be authorised by Marine Scotland (eg in relation to fish health) prior to commencing farming activities. Existing APB's must ensure an amendment is sought to any existing authorisation to include new sites once planning permission has been granted. Lighting and marking requirements for navigational safety are determined by the Northern Lighthouse Board. Further details of the regulatory arrangements for aquaculture can be found [here](#).
- 20.21.4 In assessing planning applications for aquaculture, the Council consults the statutory bodies mentioned above, along with SNH, the relevant District Salmon Fishery Board, the Crown Estate, and Scottish Water. Where Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is involved, the Council also consults the local community council directly and all planning applications for aquaculture installations are advertised in the press to allow for comments from the public. When proposals are likely to impact on Natura sites an Appropriate Assessment is also required. The comments submitted by the statutory consultees are integral to the Council's decisions on planning applications and the Council seeks to make these decisions 'in the round', taking all the submitted views into consideration.

## Policy 50 Aquaculture

The Council supports the sustainable development of fin-fish and shellfish farming subject to there being no significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively on:

- the natural, built and cultural heritage, taking into consideration:
  - landscape character, scenic and visual amenity with reference to SNH commissioned report: landscape/seascape carrying capacity for aquaculture;
  - the classification and objectives set out in the river basin management plan for the Scotland river basin district and supplementary area management plans;
  - wild fish populations;
  - biological carrying capacity;
  - and cumulative benthic and water column impacts - for fin fish proposals support is conditional on proposals being consistent with Marine Scotland's Locational Guidelines for the authorisation of Marine Fish Farms in Scottish Waters;
  - habitats and species, including designated sites and protected species;
- existing activity, taking into consideration:
  - commercial inshore fishing grounds;
  - existing and consented aquaculture sites;
  - established harbours and natural anchorages and navigation (including recreational);
  - the location of existing/proposed pipelines/outfalls and discharge points for treated waste water and storm water.

All proposals will be subject to detailed assessment in these terms. Where proposals are located on a suitable site they will also need to show:

- appropriate operational and site restoration arrangements (including management of noise and lighting impacts, public health and safety, and the effective control of pollution, fish farm escapes, predator interaction and disease);
- good design of cages, lines and associated facilities (please refer to [Marine aquaculture and the Landscape: The Siting and Design of Marine Aquaculture Developments in the Landscape SNH](#));
- that opportunities for shared use of jetties, piers and ancillary facilities are promoted where possible.

There is a national presumption against expansion of marine fin fish farm on north and east coasts. This does not preclude shellfish farming in these areas. More detailed policy relating to key pressure areas for aquaculture is given through the Council's [Aquaculture Framework Plans](#) and [Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans](#), which the Council intends to adopt as Supplementary Guidance to this Plan.

Where new fish farm provision will result in existing fish farm infrastructure becoming redundant, we will seek the removal of the redundant infrastructure as a requirement of the development.

The core principles of the Highland Council's aquaculture framework plans and coastal development plans are similar. However, coastal development plans cover all sectors and are relevant to proposals for all types of installations in

coastal waters. The aquaculture framework plans will:

- guide the location and scale of aquaculture development;
- ensure that development is environmentally sustainable;
- identify both opportunities and constraints so that developers have a realistic idea of the development potential and other interests which should be taken into account;
- provide an overview for the use of the coastal waters and promote a balanced approach which can safeguard the area's core natural assets and sustain or enhance its productivity over the longer term;
- aim to guide investment, help in the evaluation of development proposals, and help to minimise conflicts of interest.

## 20.23 Trees and Development

20.23.1 Trees and woodlands are a resource of multiple benefits with substantial contributions to landscape character and distinctiveness, biodiversity, the climate change agenda, and opportunities for recreation, economic development, and community spin offs. They play a vital role in integrating any new development into the surrounding area. The [Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy 2006](#) seeks to maximise the opportunities for new and existing forest and woodland and will be a material planning consideration when assessing a proposal's impact on woodland and forestry. Whilst this version is not intended to be made statutory Supplementary Guidance, its future review will seek this status. In addition the Council has prepared Supplementary Guidance on Trees, Woodland and Development which provides further detail and information on policies 51 Trees and Development, and 52 Principle of Development in Woodland.

20.24

### Policy 51 Trees and Development

20.24.1

The Council will support development which promotes significant protection to existing hedges, trees and woodlands on and around development sites. The acceptable developable area of a site is influenced by tree impact, and adequate separation distances will be required between established trees and any new development. Where appropriate a woodland management plan will be required to secure management of an existing resource.

The Council will secure additional tree/hedge planting within a tree planting or landscape plan to compensate removal and to enhance the setting of any new development. In communal areas a factoring agreement will be necessary.

The Council's Trees, Woodland and Development Supplementary Guidance will be adopted as statutory supplementary guidance. The guidance will identify the main principles for the protection and management of trees and woodland in relation to new development. It will:

- identify key relevant legislation and regulation;
- establish the key factors for assessment of development sites in relation to the presence of trees;
- give guidance on preparation of tree protection, management, planting and landscape plans;
- for developments involving a significant element of woodland, give advice on the need for a woodland management plan;
- provide advice for development within existing woodland on the potential for woodland removal and need for compensatory planting;
- generally support well planned developments which are designed to create and coexist with significant areas of new woodland.

## 20.25 Principle of Development in Woodland

20.25.1 In addition to a supportive policy framework for expansion of woodland there also needs to be a strong presumption in favour of protecting existing valuable woodland resources. The Scottish Government [Control of Woodland Removal](#) and Guidance documents clearly set out the justification and provide a strategic framework for appropriate woodland removal.

20.26

### **Policy 52 Principle of Development in Woodland**

20.26.1

The applicant is expected to demonstrate the need to develop a wooded site and to show that the site has capacity to accommodate the development. The Council will maintain a strong presumption in favour of protecting woodland resources. Development proposals will only be supported where they offer clear and significant public benefit. Where this involves woodland removal, compensatory planting will usually be required.

The Council will consider major development proposals against their socio economic impact on the forestry industry within the locality, the economic maturity of the woodland, and the opportunity for the proposals to coexist with forestry operations.

For housing proposals within existing woodland, applicants must pay due regard to its integrity and longer term management.

In all cases there will be a stronger presumption against development where it affects inventoried woodland, designated woodland or other important features (as defined in Trees, Woodland and Development Supplementary Guidance).

All proposals affecting woodland will be assessed against conformity with the Scottish Government's Policy on [Control of Woodland Removal](#).

The current Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy will be considered as a material consideration. It is the intention that future reviews of the strategy will be adopted as supplementary guidance.

The Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy reflects the strategic directions of the Scottish Forest Strategy developing its priorities for action at the regional level and through its key principles seeks to:

- ensure sustainability;
- increase the community benefit from forestry and woodlands;
- identify opportunities for forest and woodland expansion compatible with other interests;
- improve existing forests and woodland to enhance forestry's contribution to the economy and environment of Highland;
- work with partners to address economic and infrastructure issues;
- retain and enhance the level of funding for forestry in Highland.



## 20.27 Minerals and Soils

- 20.27.1 Minerals are important natural resources with an economic value that help support sustainable economic growth. However, their inappropriate extraction and processing can also have an environmental cost. In order to maintain a supply of mineral resources, the Council will safeguard and improve existing reserves and operations and will encourage appropriate extension of existing reserves/operations before allowing new sites to be developed. With particular reference to construction aggregates, the Council will seek to ensure that the landbank of approved reserves in each market area is sufficient at all times to meet needs that are expected to arise in the following ten-year period. The Council will conduct an audit of mineral supply. If shown to be necessary by the result of the audit, the Council will, in the area local development plans, seek to identify areas of search and areas to be safeguarded.
- 20.27.2 Conservation of peat lands is important for nature conservation, archaeological interests and as carbon sinks. Spatial mapping of peatland is available. However, it does not provide comprehensive information on the quality of the peatland.
- 20.27.3 The Scottish Soil Framework promotes the sustainable management and protection of soils consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of Scotland. The most significant pressures on soil are climate change and loss of soil organic matter. Developers of wind farms often consider using sites where peat and sensitive soils are present. In connection with this, it may be helpful to refer to Good Practice During Wind Farm Construction (Version 1, October 2010), published by Scottish Renewables, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Forestry Commission Scotland.

20.28

### **Policy 53 Minerals**

20.28.1

The Council will support the following areas for mineral extraction:

- Extension of an existing operation/site
- Re-opening of a dormant quarry
- A reserve underlying a proposed development where it would be desirable to extract prior to development.

Before a new site for minerals development will be given permission, it must be shown that other existing reserves have been exhausted or are no longer viable or, for construction aggregates, amount to less than a ten-year supply of permitted reserves.

The Council will support borrow pits which are near to or on the site of the associated development if it can be demonstrated that they are the most suitable source of material, are time limited and appropriate environmental safeguards are in place for the workings and the reclamation.

Geodiversity will also be considered when assessing proposals; the Council may set out conditions covering working methods, restoration and after use to safeguard the geodiversity value. Geodiversity value may occur outwith designated sites. The Council will encourage opportunities to enhance geodiversity in all relevant development proposals including the potential to create, extend or restore geodiversity interests e.g. during mineral working and restoration.

The Council will safeguard all existing economically significant, workable minerals reserves/operations from incompatible development which is likely to sterilise it unless:

- there is no alternative site for the development; and
- the extraction of mineral resources will be completed before the development commences.

All minerals developments will have to provide information on pollution prevention, restoration and mitigation proposals. Restoration should be carried out in parallel with excavation where possible. Otherwise it should be completed in the shortest time practicable. Planning conditions will be applied to ensure that adequate provision is made for the restoration of workings. The Council will expect all minerals developments to avoid or satisfactorily mitigate any impacts on residential amenity, the natural, built and cultural heritage, and infrastructure capacities. After uses should result in environmental improvement rather than just restoring a site to its original state. After uses should add to the cultural, recreational or environmental assets of an area. A financial guarantee may be sought.

20.29

#### **Policy 54 Mineral Wastes**

20.29.1

The Council will encourage the minimisation and positive re-use/recycling of mineral, construction and demolition wastes.

Waste management is an issue to be addressed for new or existing extractions to the satisfaction of the Council for the prevention or minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal of waste with a view to minimising waste generation and its harmfulness. A Waste Management Plan should be provided to show this information.

20.30

#### **Policy 55 Peat and Soils**

20.30.1

Development proposals should demonstrate how they have avoided unnecessary disturbance, degradation or erosion of peat and soils.

Unacceptable disturbance of peat will not be permitted unless it is shown that the adverse effects of such disturbance are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits arising from the development proposal.

Where development on peat is clearly demonstrated to be unavoidable then The Council may ask for a peatland management plan to be submitted which clearly demonstrates how impacts have been minimised and mitigated.

New areas of commercial peat extraction will not be supported unless it can be shown that it is an area of degraded peatland which is clearly demonstrated to have been significantly damaged by human activity and has low conservation value and as a result restoration is not possible.

Proposals must also demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that extraction would not adversely affect the integrity of nearby Natura sites containing areas of peatland.

## 20.31 Accessibility and Transport

- 20.31.1 The Plan highlights the importance of supporting sustainable development. A key component is that development should be located and designed in such a way that, wherever possible, the need to travel is reduced and people have a choice of sustainable modes of travel between the main places where they might reside, work, shop, learn and do leisure activities. In particular, careful design can create places that are attractive and convenient for people and can significantly improve ease of access by non car modes, for example through the use/ implementation of 'Home Zones' and 'Safer Routes to School'. High quality infrastructure is important in attracting people to use alternatives to the car.
- 20.31.2 Given the rural nature of much of the Highlands, significant use of the private car can be expected to continue for many trips, particularly in the more remote and sparsely populated areas or where the population is highly dispersed. Nevertheless, through careful consideration of development proposals a greater level of sustainability can be achieved in new development in the Plan area overall, supporting sustainable travel modes. Opportunities may be taken through this to bring about accessibility improvements of wider benefit to communities, helping in their economic and social development.
- 20.31.3 Regard will be had to the [Regional Transport Strategy](#), national transport policies and priorities, the [Local Transport Strategy](#) and any relevant guidelines produced by the Council in implementing the Plan.

## Policy 56 Travel

Development proposals that involve travel generation must include sufficient information with the application to enable the Council to consider any likely on- and off- site transport implications of the development and should:

- be well served by the most sustainable modes of travel available in the locality from the outset, providing opportunity for modal shift from private car to more sustainable transport modes wherever possible, having regard to key travel desire lines;
- in particular, the Council will seek to ensure that opportunities for encouraging walking and cycling are maximised;
- be designed for the safety and convenience of all potential users;
- incorporate appropriate mitigation on site and/or off site, provided through developer contributions where necessary, which might include improvements and enhancements to the walking/cycling network and public transport services, road improvements and new roads; and
- incorporate an appropriate level of parking provision, having regard to the travel modes and services which will be available and key travel desire lines and to the maximum parking standards laid out in Scottish Planning Policy or those set by the Council.

When development proposals are under consideration, the Council's Local Development Strategy will be treated as a material consideration.

The Council will seek to ensure that locations with potential for introducing bus priority measures are protected from development.

The Council will seek the implementation and monitoring of Green Travel Plans in support of significant travel generating developments.

Development proposals that are likely to affect the operation of any level crossing will be considered in accordance with the relevant part of the supplementary guidance associated with Policy 30: Physical Constraints.

Where site masterplans are prepared, they should include consideration of the impact of proposals on the local and strategic transport network. In assessing development proposals, the Council will also have regard to any implications arising from the relevant [Core Paths Plan](#) and will apply the terms of Policy 77: Public Access.



20.33 Figure 7: Highland Road Hierarchy



## 21. Safeguarding Our Environment A' Dìon ar n-Àrainneachd

### 21.1 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

21.1.1 The outstanding natural, built and cultural heritage of the Highlands has to be fully considered when development proposals come forward throughout the area. The Plan identifies three categories based on the type and importance of natural, built and cultural heritage they contain. These categories are local and regionally important, nationally important and internationally important.

21.1.2 **Local and regionally important** features are mostly identified by the Council, and contribute to the identity of the Plan area.

- Special Landscape Areas
- Category B and C(S) listed buildings
- Sites and Monuments Record archaeological sites
- War memorials
- Settlement setting
- Inventoried Semi-Natural Woodland and Long-Established Woodland (Plantation)
- Amenity trees
- Views over open water
- Wild Areas
- Locally important croft land
- Local Nature Conservation Sites
- Isolated coast
- un-notified Geological Conservation Review Sites and Local Geodiversity Sites
- Archaeological Heritage Areas
- Conservation Areas

21.1.3 **Nationally important** natural, built and cultural heritage features are identified by national organisations or by The Council under national legislation.

- Scheduled Monuments
- Category A listed buildings
- National Nature Reserves
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Inventoried Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- National Scenic Areas
- Historic Battlefields
- National Park
- Designated wrecks
- Inventoried Ancient Woodland and Long-Established Woodland (Semi-Natural)

21.1.4 **Internationally important** natural and cultural heritage features are identified under government directives and European conventions.

- Special Protection Areas (including proposed)
- Special Areas of Conservation (including candidate)
- Ramsar sites

- 21.1.5 These categories and the features included within them may be updated should circumstances change during the Plan period.
- 21.1.6 **This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Proposals Map and the policy frameworks in Appendix 2.**
- 21.1.7 This policy sets out the tests against which all development which affects natural, cultural and built heritage features must be assessed. Where necessary, Appropriate Assessment (assessing the likely significant effects a Local Development Plan will have on a range of European designated sites) is undertaken for allocations prior to adoption of the Local Development Plan. However, individual Appropriate Assessments may be required to be completed for proposed developments prior to determining planning applications.
- 21.1.8 The historic and natural environment can have an important role to play in the sustainable economic growth of Highland, especially in relation to tourism. The Council also has in place Supplementary Guidance: Highland Historic Environment Strategy. The primary vision of the strategy is to ensure that the future management of change to the historic environment in Highland is based on an understanding of its economic, social and cultural values and that all future decisions are based on informed consideration of the heritage assets to ensure that they are protected and conserved for existing and future generations. Guidance notes on the historic environment will be developed for planning officers and developers during the lifetime of this plan. Existing guidance on the Council's website on archaeology will also be revisited and formalised. Historic Scotland has guidance notes which provide operational guidance: Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes.
- 21.1.9 The impact on all natural, built and cultural heritage features must be addressed when considering and assessing development proposals, and the Background maps set out the locations of all these different features in so far as they have been mapped digitally on our system.
- 21.1.10 Features identified by the Council as being present at the time a proposal is considered and which are of the types indicated under the policy, but which have not yet been mapped, will still be subject of protection under this policy. Up to date information on the location of SAC, SPA, SSSI and NSA can be found on SNH's [website](#).

## Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

All development proposals will be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and scale of the development, and any impact on the feature and its setting, in the context of the policy framework detailed in Appendix 2. The following criteria will also apply:

1. For features of **local/regional importance** we will allow developments if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource.
2. For features of **national importance** we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.
3. For features of **international importance** developments likely to have a significant effect on a site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for nature conservation will be subject to an appropriate assessment. Where we are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, we will only allow development if there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive) would be affected, development in such circumstances will only be allowed if the reasons for overriding public interest relate to human health, public safety, beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, or other reasons subject to the opinion of the European Commission (via Scottish Ministers). Where we are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, the proposal will not be in accordance with the development plan within the meaning of Section 25(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Note: Whilst Appendix 2 groups features under the headings international, national and local/regional importance, this does not suggest that the relevant policy framework will be any less rigorously applied. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Proposal Map.

The Council intends to adopt the Supplementary Guidance on Wild Areas in due course. The main principles of this guidance will be:

- to provide mapping of wild areas;
- to give advice on how best to accommodate change within wild areas whilst safeguarding their qualities;
- to give advice on what an unacceptable impact is; and
- to give guidance on how wild areas could be adversely affected by development close to but not within the wild area itself.

In due course the Council also intends to adopt the Supplementary Guidance on the Highland Historic Environment Strategy. The main principles of this guidance will ensure that:

- Future developments take account of the historic environment and that they are of a design and quality to enhance the historic environment bringing both economic and social benefits;
- It sets a proactive, consistent approach to the protection of the historic environment.

## 21.3 Species and Habitats

- 21.3.1 Certain species are protected under European and/or UK law and their presence on or near a development site will require consideration to ensure no offence under the relevant legislation is committed and more generally that no adverse effect on population, including cumulatively, arises. On occasion a species licence as well as planning permission will be required. Certain habitats outwith designated sites are a general development consideration.
- 21.3.2 The Supplementary Guidance 'Highland's Statutorily Protected Species' provides advice on establishing which biodiversity issues may be found on a particular site and how to address these issues. A Biodiversity Checklist for Protected Species on Development Sites is appended to the guidance and any issues that the checklist highlights, directly pertaining to protected species, should be addressed prior to submission of a planning application. The guidance, including the checklist, will be incorporated into the assessment and determination of planning applications where this is appropriate. General biodiversity advice relating to development will be contained within a Sustainable Design Supplementary Guidance. In addition, the online Biodiversity Toolkit should be consulted. The Council may in due course also prepare further technical Supplementary Guidance in respect of Other Important Species and Other Important Habitats.
- 21.3.3 We will encourage the protection and enhancement of Green networks. These are multi-functional in benefit including for biodiversity, species and habitats. Article 10 Features of the Habitats Directive include for example, rivers and burns, loch and ponds, wetlands, hedgerows and other traditional field boundaries, areas of woodland and coastal habitats. These are part of the Green Network and a separate Policy 74 will also apply.
- 21.3.4 All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. Certain bird species are given extra protection and these are listed in Schedules 1, 1A and A1 of the Act.
- 21.3.5 Sources for further information on the habitats and species protected, where available, are given in footnotes. Guidance on the assessment of significance of impacts on birds outwith designated areas can be found on the [SNH website](#). Guidance on consideration of European Protected Species in the planning process can be found on the [Scottish Government's website](#). Guidance on badger protection can be found on the [Council's website](#). Where more than one natural, built or cultural heritage feature occurs in an area, only the topmost tier feature will be indicated on the printed Proposals Map and therefore other features may nest underneath this, which should also be taken into account.

## **Policy 58    Protected Species**

Where there is good reason to believe that a protected species may be present on site or may be affected by a proposed development, we will require a survey to be carried out to establish any such presence and if necessary a mitigation plan to avoid or minimise any impacts on the species, before determining the application.

Development that is likely to have an adverse effect, individually and/or cumulatively, on European Protected Species (see Glossary) will only be permitted where:

- There is no satisfactory alternative;
- The development is required for preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment; and
- The development will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Development that is likely to have an adverse effect, individually and/or cumulatively, on protected bird species (see Glossary) will only be permitted where:

- There is no other satisfactory solution; and
- The development is required in the interests of public health or public safety.

This will include but is not limited to avoiding adverse effects, individually and/or cumulatively, on the populations of the following priority protected bird species:

- Species listed in Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive;
- Regularly occurring migratory species listed in Annex II of the Birds Directive;
- Species listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended;
- [Birds of conservation concern](#).

Development that is likely to have an adverse effect, individually and/or cumulatively (see glossary), on other protected animals and plants (see Glossary) will only be permitted where the development is required for preserving public health or public safety.

Development proposals should avoid adverse disturbance, including cumulatively, to badgers and badger setts, protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004).



21.5

## **Policy 59 Other Important Species**

21.5.1

The Council will have regard to the presence of and any adverse effects of development proposals, either individually and/or cumulatively, on the Other Important Species which are included in the lists below, if these are not already protected by other legislation or by nature conservation site designations:

- Species listed in Annexes II and V of the EC Habitats Directive;
- Priority species listed in the [UK](#) and [Local](#) Biodiversity Action Plans;
- Species included on the [Scottish Biodiversity List](#).

We will use conditions and agreements to ensure detrimental affect on these species is avoided.

21.6

## **Policy 60 Other Important Habitats and Article 10 Features**

21.6.1

The Council will seek to safeguard the integrity of features of the landscape which are of major importance because of their linear and continuous structure or combination as habitat “stepping stones” for the movement of wild fauna and flora. (Article 10 Features). The Council will also seek to create new habitats which are supportive of this concept.

The Council will have regard to the value of the following Other Important Habitats, where not protected by nature conservation site designations (such as natural water courses), in the assessment of any development proposals which may affect them either individually and/or cumulatively:

- Habitats listed in Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive;
- Habitats of priority and protected bird species (see Glossary);
- Priority habitats listed in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans;
- Habitats included on the Scottish Biodiversity List.

The Council will use conditions and agreements to ensure that significant harm to the ecological function and integrity of Article 10 Features and Other Important Habitats is avoided. Where it is judged that the reasons in favour of a development clearly outweigh the desirability of retaining those important habitats, the Council will seek to put in place satisfactory mitigation measures, including where appropriate consideration of compensatory habitat creation.

## 21.7 Landscape

- 21.7.1 Landscape and scenic value are very important in Highland, both within and outwith designated areas with many landscapes of high quality offering striking views. Different types and scales of development are suited to different landscapes. We need to facilitate positive change in the landscape, by ensuring developments are appropriate for their specific location and facilitating where there can be enhancement or restoration of degraded landscapes.
- 21.7.2 Scottish Natural Heritage's landscape character assessments and landscape capacity studies provide guidance on the selection of an appropriate location and design for development. The aim is to ensure the landscape has the capacity for development whilst promoting sustainable growth.
- 21.7.3 Many of the landscapes of highest quality and value within Highland are designated landscapes including National Scenic Areas (NSAs) and Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) details of which can be found in Appendix 2. Within these areas it will be particularly important for landscape change to relate to the key characteristics and special qualities of the designated area.

21.8

### **Policy 61 Landscape**

21.8.1

New developments should be designed to reflect the landscape characteristics and special qualities identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the area in which they are proposed. This will include consideration of the appropriate scale, form, pattern and construction materials, as well as the potential cumulative effect of developments where this may be an issue. The Council would wish to encourage those undertaking development to include measures to enhance the landscape characteristics of the area. This will apply particularly where the condition of the landscape characteristics has deteriorated to such an extent that there has been a loss of landscape quality or distinctive sense of place. In the assessment of new developments, the Council will take account of Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Capacity Studies and its supplementary guidance on Siting and Design and Sustainable Design, together with any other relevant design guidance.

Note: The principles and justification underpinning the Council's approach to sustainable developments are contained in the supplementary guidance: "Sustainable Design". The key principles underlying this guidance are set out in Policy 28: Sustainable Design.

## 21.9 Geodiversity

- 21.9.1 Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, landforms, sediments and soils, together with the natural processes which form and alter them. The diversity of rocks and landforms in Highland is the basis for landscape and scenery that is highly valued by residents and visitors alike. There are two European Geoparks in Highland: Lochaber and North West Highlands. They are areas of outstanding geological heritage where there is considerable local effort to conserve and encourage its enjoyment and understanding. We have a range of international, national and regional/local designations which help to safeguard our geodiversity: National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, un-notified Geological Conservation Review Sites and Local Geodiversity Sites. However, geodiversity interests in the wider landscape, outwith designated sites, are also important and represent an integral component of the scenery and the natural and built heritage of the Highlands.

21.10

## **Policy 62 Geodiversity**

21.10.1

Development proposals that include measures to protect and enhance geodiversity interests of international, national and regional/local importance in the wider countryside, will be supported. The Council will also support improvement of accessibility and interpretation as an educational or geo-tourism resource, where it is possible to integrate sympathetically development, geodiversity and other existing interests.

## **21.11 Water Environment**

21.11.1 A good quality water environment has many benefits. In recognition of this the European Union has adopted the Water Framework Directive which sets out to protect and improve the water environment taking account of water quality, quantity the physical form of water features and the species dependent on it for their survival. In this context, the water environment includes rivers and burns, lochs, canals, coastal and transitional waters (e.g. estuaries), wetlands and groundwater. In undertaking assessments of proposals which could affect the water environment, consideration should be given to the potential cumulative impacts of such developments.

21.11.2 In order to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), planning authorities are designated “responsible authorities” by the Water Environment and Water Services (Designation of Responsible Authorities and Functions) Order 2006. Responsible authorities must carry out their statutory functions in a manner that secures compliance with the objectives of the Directive (i) preventing deterioration; and, (ii) promoting improvements in the water environment; in order that all water bodies achieve “good” ecological status by 2015.

21.11.3 River Basin Management Plans have been produced using a partnership approach to help meet the aims of the Water Framework Directive. Highland is covered by the Scotland River Basin Management Plan with underlying Area Management Plans for the North Highland, West Highland, Argyll and North East due to be published late summer 2010. Further information on [River Basin Management](#) is available from SEPA's website.

21.11.4 The Council will contribute to the actions set out these plans, seeking to ensure the pressure placed on the water environment by development is minimised and opportunities to incorporate improvements are realised.

21.12

## **Policy 63 Water Environment**

21.12.1

The Council will support proposals for development that do not compromise the objectives of the [Water Framework Directive \(2000/60/EC\)](#), aimed at the protection and improvement of Scotland's water environment. In assessing proposals, the Council will take into account the [River Basin Management Plan for the Scotland River Basin District](#) and associated Area Management Plans and supporting information on opportunities for improvements and constraints. (see Figure 8).



21.13 Figure 8: River Basin Management Plans covering Highland

## 21.14 Flooding

- 21.14.1 The risk of flooding from all sources is likely to increase with projected climate change (including sea level rise) and therefore it is important to have an overall aim of avoiding and reducing flood risk. Adequate flood management and mitigation will be important in the limited circumstances where avoidance is not possible. Flood risk is now an integral factor in the Council's choice of which areas of land to allocate for development.
- 21.14.2 However, developers need clear guidance on where flood risk is likely to occur and where they will be asked to undertake further assessment of that risk and the policy below helps provide that clarity. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has produced maps of flood risk areas and these are a useful starting point for developers in considering the location of their proposals. These are available on the [SEPA website](#).
- 21.14.3 The Council intends to produce further Supplementary Guidance in the form of technical standards and checklists for the production of flood risk assessments and drainage impact assessments to ensure the implementation of the principles of the policy below and Policy 66 Surface Water Drainage.

21.15

### **Policy 64 Flood Risk**

21.15.1

Development proposals should avoid areas susceptible to flooding and promote sustainable flood management.

Development proposals within or bordering medium to high flood risk areas, will need to demonstrate compliance with Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) through the submission of suitable information which may take the form of a Flood Risk Assessment.

Development proposals outwith indicative medium to high flood risk areas may be acceptable. However, where:

- better local flood risk information is available and suggests a higher risk;
- a sensitive land use (as specified in the risk framework of [Scottish Planning Policy](#)) is proposed, and/or;
- the development borders the coast and therefore may be at risk from climate change;

a Flood Risk Assessment or other suitable information which demonstrates compliance with SPP will be required.

Developments may also be possible where they are in accord with the flood prevention or management measures as specified within a local (development) plan allocation or a development brief. Any developments, particularly those on the flood plain, should not compromise the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Where flood management measures are required, natural methods such as restoration of floodplains, wetlands and water bodies should be incorporated, or adequate justification should be provided as to why they are impracticable.



## 21.16 Waste Water Treatment

21.16.1 The best way to deal with the effluent generated by larger developments and/or settlements is by means of a 'publicly' maintained network of sewers and related sewage plants. SEPA as the relevant environmental agency has adopted a policy to encourage such treatment.

21.16.2 However, it is necessary to allow other private sewage treatment options in certain circumstances, in particular, where settlements are smaller, more dispersed in pattern and often not served by adequate existing or programmed existing public sewage systems. Developers should refer to [SEPA's Policy on the Provision of Waste Water Drainage in Settlements](#), for information.

21.17

### **Policy 65 Waste Water Treatment**

21.17.1

Connection to the public sewer as defined in the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968 is required for all new development proposals:

- either in settlements identified in the plan with a population equivalent of more than 2000; or
- wherever single developments of 25 or more dwellings (or equivalent) are proposed.

In all other cases a connection to the public sewer will be required, unless the applicant can demonstrate that:

- the development is unable to connect to a public sewer for technical or economic reasons; and
- that the proposal is not likely to result in or add to significant environmental or health problems.

The Council's preference is that any private system should discharge to land rather than water. Within areas of cumulative drainage impact (as defined by SEPA), applicants will be required to submit evidence to SEPA and the Council that their proposal will not result in or add to significant environmental or health problems.

For all proposals where connection to the public sewer is not currently feasible and Scottish Water has confirmed public sewer improvements or first time public sewerage within its investment programme that would enable the development to connect, a private system would only be supported if:

- the system is designed and built to a standard which will allow adoption by Scottish Water;
- the system is designed such that it can be easily connected to a public sewer in the future.

Typically this will mean providing a drainage line up to a likely point of connection. The developer must provide Scottish Water with the funds which will allow Scottish Water to complete the connection once the sewerage system has been upgraded.

## 21.18 Surface Water Drainage

- 21.18.1 Localised flooding can be caused or worsened by inadequate surface water drainage arrangements in new developments. Sustainable Drainage Systems provide control over quality and quantity of surface water drainage and provide opportunities for amenity and ecological enhancement.

21.19

### **Policy 66 Surface Water Drainage**

21.19.1

All proposed development must be drained by Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) designed in accordance with [The SuDS Manual \(CIRIA C697\)](#) and, where appropriate, the [Sewers for Scotland Manual 2nd Edition](#). Planning applications should be submitted with information in accordance with [Planning Advice Note 69: Planning and Building Standards Advice on Flooding](#) paragraphs 23 and 24. Each drainage scheme design must be accompanied by particulars of proposals for ensuring long-term maintenance of the scheme.

## 22. Sustainable Development and Climate Change Leasachadh Seasmhach agus Atharrachadh Aimsir

### 22.1 Renewable Energy Developments

22.1.1 The Highland area has great potential for renewable energy production and to contribute towards meeting ambitious targets set internationally, nationally and regionally. This is recognised in the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy (2006) and can bring benefits in terms of tackling climate change, increasing energy security and contributing to the local and regional economies of the Highlands. Onshore wind and hydro electric power are already making substantial contributions and are being joined by other technologies such as biomass, energy from waste, landfill gas and the marine renewables including offshore wind, wave and tidal. There is increasing interest in smaller scale developments of renewables, including both community and commercial ventures, and interest by communities in taking a share of large schemes. There is also the opportunity for greater use of micro-generation of renewable energy, to serve individual buildings or small groups.

22.1.2 Additional electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure will need to be developed in Highland in order to realise the region's potential contribution to renewable electricity generation, contributing to national requirements and in order to serve local needs. It is a national priority that the electricity network heading both south and east is improved to take advantage of the renewables potential. There will be requirements for both onshore and offshore transmission infrastructure. The vision set out in National Planning Framework for Scotland 2 for a sub-sea electricity network is supported by the Council. Certain grid reinforcement projects have been identified by the Scottish Government in the National Planning Framework 2 as being national developments. Such designation includes overhead transmission lines, underground and sub-sea cable routes and associated converter stations and substations. Identification as such in the Framework is the mechanism for establishing the need for these developments in Scotland's national interest. As developments of national importance, the Scottish Government expects their design to be of a high quality and rigorous consultation and assessment will be required for proposals. National Planning Framework 2 identifies the matters to be addressed when consent for these projects is sought. The national developments for grid reinforcement that are within or potentially linking with Highland include:

- upgrading the existing Beaulieu – Dounreay overhead transmission line;
- reinforcement of the Beaulieu – Keith overhead transmission line;
- reinforcement of the sub-sea cable link between Orkney and the Scottish mainland;
- new sub-sea cable links for the Outer Hebrides and the Shetland Islands.

22.1.3 The Highland Renewable Energy Strategy & Planning Guidelines (2006) provides supplementary planning guidance for a wide range of technologies. The Renewable Energy Resource Assessment on which it is based provides valuable information to prospective developers about a wide range of opportunities and constraints which can help to inform their site selection and formulation of proposals. Parts of the non-statutory Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines 2006 document relating to onshore wind energy are not compliant with national policy (notably those relating to a sequential approach). They will be superseded by the forthcoming Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, which will have

statutory status. That Supplementary Guidance will include a spatial framework for windfarm development in Highland, together with other guidance for developers.

- 22.1.4 As part of more sustainable development of the Highlands our waste will be seen as a potential resource and, as part of a strategy which will see waste reduction and increased recycling, it will provide a source of energy and heat production. The Plan's Waste Management policies provide for this, whilst the Highland Heat Map will assist in identifying opportunities for the consideration of renewable heat through the Sustainable Design policy. In considering proposals for Energy from Waste facilities, the planning authority will have regard to SEPA's "Thermal Treatment of Waste Guidelines" (2009), which is part of the national waste management plan.
- 22.1.5 The relative significance of any particular consideration listed in Policy 67 in the decision-making process may vary with and depend upon the type and scale of scheme proposed, and the appropriate weight to be applied will be determined having regard to the circumstances of the particular proposal and with reference to the development plan as a whole and any material considerations.
- 22.1.6 In respect of "community" renewable energy developments which qualify for consideration under Policy 68, the extent of the relevant "community" will be assessed on a case by case basis, and could vary accordingly. For example, the relevant area may be a community council area, or the area which would benefit from a particular community venture or from the community share in a larger project. With respect to the potential relaxation of amenity requirements provided for by the policy, it is anticipated that this will apply primarily (but not necessarily solely) to local visual and landscape character amenity. In order to apply the relaxation, evidence will be required by the planning authority of a reasonable degree of local support for the proposal and that all potentially affected persons have been given the opportunity to object.

## **22.1.7 The Highland Council's Position on Renewable Energy Developments and 'Community Benefit'**

- 22.1.8 The relative significance of any particular consideration listed in Policy 67 in the decision-making process may vary with and depend upon the type and scale of scheme proposed, and the appropriate weight to be applied will be determined having regard to the circumstances of the particular proposal and with reference to the development plan as a whole and any material considerations.
- 22.1.9 The Council will expect developments to benefit the local community and contribute to the wellbeing of the Highlands, whilst recognising wider national interests. The Council will seek to enter into agreements with developers as appropriate on behalf of local communities for environmental and socio-economic purposes. "Community benefit" arrangements which do not meet the tests set out in Circular 1/2010: Planning Agreements will not be taken into account in the development management process. However, anticipated socio-economic impacts that are related to the nature and scale of the renewable energy development itself will be a material consideration in the assessment or determination of the application. This information may be presented in any Environmental Statement prepared in respect of the development.

## **Policy 67 Renewable Energy Developments**

Renewable energy development proposals should be well related to the source of the primary renewable resources that are needed for their operation. The Council will also consider:

- the contribution of the proposed development towards meeting renewable energy generation targets; and
- any positive or negative effects it is likely to have on the local and national economy;

and will assess proposals against other policies of the development plan, the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines and have regard to any other material considerations, including proposals able to demonstrate significant benefits including by making effective use of existing and proposed infrastructure or facilities.

Subject to balancing with these considerations and taking into account any mitigation measures to be included, the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied that they are located, sited and designed such that they will not be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively with other developments (see Glossary), having regard in particular to any significant effects on the following:

- natural, built and cultural heritage features;
- species and habitats;
- visual impact and impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area (the design and location of the proposal should reflect the scale and character of the landscape and seek to minimise landscape and visual impact, subject to any other considerations);
- amenity at sensitive locations, including residential properties, work places and recognised visitor sites (in or outwith a settlement boundary);
- the safety and amenity of any regularly occupied buildings and the grounds that they occupy- having regard to visual intrusion or the likely effect of noise generation and, in the case of wind energy proposals, ice throw in winter conditions, shadow flicker or shadow throw;
- ground water, surface water (including water supply), aquatic ecosystems and fisheries;
- the safe use of airport, defence or emergency service operations, including flight activity, navigation and surveillance systems and associated infrastructure, or on aircraft flight paths or MoD low-flying areas;
- other communications installations or the quality of radio or TV reception;
- the amenity of users of any Core Path or other established public access for walking, cycling or horse riding;
- tourism and recreation interests;
- land and water based traffic and transport interests.

Proposals for the extension of existing renewable energy facilities will be assessed against the same criteria and material considerations as apply to proposals for new facilities.

In all cases, if consent is granted, the Council will approve appropriate conditions (along with a legal agreement/obligation under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, where necessary), relating to the removal of the development and associated equipment and to the restoration of the site, whenever the consent expires, other than in circumstances where fresh consent has been secured to extend the life of the project, or the project ceases to operate for a specific period.



The Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance will replace parts of the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy. It will identify: areas to be afforded protection from windfarms; other areas with constraints; and broad areas of search for windfarms. It will set out criteria for the consideration of proposals. It will ensure that developers are aware of the key constraints to such development and encourage them to take those constraints into account at the outset of the preparation of proposals. It will seek to steer proposals, especially those for larger windfarms, away from the most constrained areas and ideally towards the least constrained areas and areas of particular opportunity. It will also set out criteria which will apply to the consideration of proposals irrespective of size and where they are located, enabling proposals to be considered on their merits. It will seek submission as part of the planning application of key information required for the assessment of proposals and provide certainty for all concerned about how applications will be considered by the Council.

22.3

#### **Policy 68 “Community” Renewable Energy Developments**

22.3.1

The Council’s initial assessment of renewable energy proposals will apply the same tests of acceptability for a community project as it would to a commercial proposal. However, where a community wishes to develop a small project solely as a community venture, or takes a share in a larger project, then where it is the only community significantly impacted by the proposal the Council will regard this as a material consideration. In such circumstances and subject to the proposals being assessed as acceptable under other relevant policies of the Plan, the Council may grant consent for renewable energy development with greater impacts upon the amenity of that community’s area as a place in which people reside or work than would normally be the case.

22.4

#### **Policy 69 Electricity Transmission Infrastructure**

22.4.1

Proposals for overground, underground or sub-sea electricity transmission infrastructure (including lines and cables, pylons/ poles and vaults, transformers, switches and other plant) will be considered having regard to their level of strategic significance in transmitting electricity from areas of generation to areas of consumption. Subject to balancing with this consideration, and taking into account any proposed mitigation measures, the Council will support proposals which are assessed as not having an unacceptable significant impact on the environment, including natural, built and cultural heritage features. In locations that are sensitive, mitigation may help to address concerns and should be considered as part of the preparation of proposals. This may include, where appropriate, underground or sub-sea alternatives to overground route proposals. Where new infrastructure provision will result in existing infrastructure becoming redundant, the Council will seek the removal of the redundant infrastructure as a requirement of the development.

## 22.5 Waste Management

22.5.1 The Council's Waste Management Strategy was updated in early 2009 in light of national targets. A Waste Strategy Report was prepared in conjunction with Moray Council to identify the range of services and treatment facilities which would be required to allow the Council to achieve the targets for municipal waste. The Waste Strategy Report considered a range of different locations and capacities for the necessary waste treatment infrastructure and examined both locally based and centralised solutions. The Zero Waste Plan sets targets for recycling of all waste and it is expected that new waste management infrastructure will be required in the Highland wide LDP area to manage all waste, not just municipal waste, in line with Zero Waste Plan and Scottish Planning Policy. Our chosen approach is for locally based solutions which can be delivered on an incremental basis. This might comprise of Energy from Waste plants, In Vessel Composting plants together with a Materials Recovery Facility. The indicative locations have been selected to take account of proximity of treatment facilities wherever possible. Localised infrastructure has several benefits when compared with a centralised solution, namely allowing facilities to deal with local waste, utilise heat effectively and provide a local heat source.

22.5.2 Detail on how the Council will consider waste management in new developments can be found in Managing Waste in New Developments: Supplementary Guidance.

22.5.3 The following policies apply to both municipal and non-municipal waste.

### 22.6 Policy 70 Waste Management Facilities

22.6.1 The Council will support waste management facility proposals at the following preferred sites:

- Former Longman landfill site, Inverness (see also Policy 5);
- Seater Landfill Site, Caithness;
- Former landfill site, Portree ;
- Glen Nevis Business Park (and any expansion of it for industrial use).

Proposals for waste management facilities will also be acceptable where they are located on existing or allocated industrial land, specifically Classes 5: General Industrial and Class 6 Storage or Distribution provided they meet the criteria in the next paragraph.

All proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- conformity with the Plan's Spatial Strategy in terms of the origin of existing and future waste generation;
- conformity with other waste policies - the [Zero Waste Plan](#) (including the National Need and Capacity information), [Scottish Planning Policy](#), Planning Advice Note 63: Waste Management Planning and, where relevant, the [Council's Municipal Waste Strategy](#);
- minimisation of transport of waste from its source;
- suitability of the local road network and of the site access to accommodate the nature and volume of traffic likely to be generated by the proposed development;
- public health or safety impacts;
- compatibility with surrounding existing and allocated land uses; and
- whether the applicant has submitted:
  - sufficient information with the application to enable a full assessment to be made of the likely effects of the development, together with proposals for appropriate control, mitigation and monitoring;

- a design statement in support of the application, where the development would have more than a local landscape and visual impact;
- land restoration, after care and after-use details (including the submission of bonds);
- a justification, if applicable, as to why the sites/areas outlined above have not been pursued.

To help meet recycling targets outlined by the Scottish Government, all new developments involving the creation of additional residential, commercial, retail or industrial units will be expected to comply with the requirements for waste management (such as provision of bins and recycling points) set out in the Council's supplementary guidance: Managing Waste in New Developments.

In respect of landfill sites, proposals will also be assessed against the Landfill (Scotland) Regulations 2003. Applicants should also assess the likely cumulative impacts of additional landfill (both new landfill sites and extensions to existing landfill sites), including consideration of site design, increases in road traffic, period and intensity of disturbance to settlements and the length of time and level of landscape impact. Developers should indicate what measures will be taken to mitigate likely cumulative impacts.

22.7

22.7.1

#### **Policy 71    Safeguarding of waste management sites**

Existing, former and allocated strategic waste management sites shall be safeguarded from alternative development, except where demonstrated to be surplus or no longer suitable to meet future requirements, or where they have been allocated in the development plan for redevelopment. Existing waste management sites and proposed strategic waste management sites are shown on Figure 9.

Development that is proposed adjacent to or in the vicinity of an existing waste management facility and that would be likely to adversely affect the present or future operation of the facility will not be favoured.

Development that is proposed on, adjacent to, or in the vicinity of a site that is identified for provision of a new waste management facility and that would be likely to make the site unavailable or unsuitable for the provision of the new facility will not be favoured.

In assessing development of the kinds described in the preceding two paragraphs, the Council will take into account Scottish Planning Policy, Scotland's Zero Waste Plan (in particular Annex B), Planning Advice Note 63: Waste Management Planning and, where relevant, the Council's Municipal Waste Strategy.



22.8 Map 17: Seater Landfill Site



22.9 Map 18: Glen Nevis Business Park

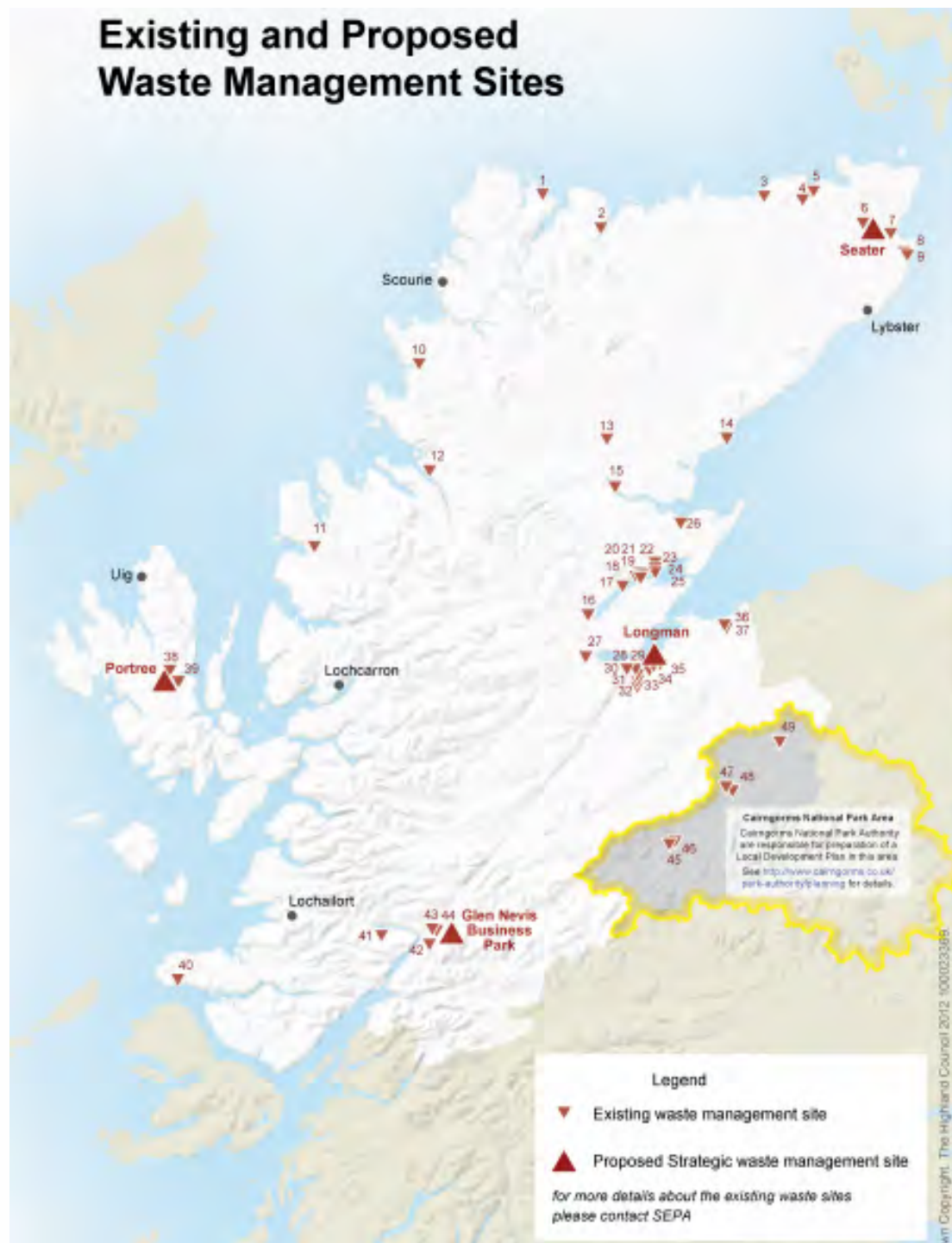


22.10 Map 19: Portree Waste Facility



22.11 Map 20: Longman Landfill





22.12 Figure 9: Location of Existing and Proposed Waste Facilities in Highland

Civic amenity	Civic amenity/Transfer Station	Transfer Station
1 Durness	2 Tongue	8 Wick Ind. Estate
4 Janetstown	10 Lochinver	16 Scottish Water TS, Dornoch
9 Wick Airport	12 Ullapool	19 Shanks, Evanton
15 Bonar Bridge	13 Lairg Station	22 P Munro, Alness
21 Alness	14 Brora	23 Highland Waste, Invergordon
26 Tain	45 Kingussie	24 Landfill/Fridge/Freezer TS, Invergordon
31 Inverness	<b>Metal Recycler</b>	28 Cannon Hygiene TS, Inverness
37 Nairn	27 Highland Clearance, Muir of Ord	32 Inverness Longman
39 Portree inc Metal RC	<b>Metal Recycler/Transfer Station</b>	33 Stoneyhill, Inverness
42 Fort William	5 Speedy, Thurso	34 Pat Munro, TS, Inverness
49 Grantown on Spey	18 J Lawrie, Evanton	35 WM Munro T.S., Inverness
<b>Civic amenity/Landfill (closed)</b>	29 R Finnie, Inverness	36 PHS Ltd TS, Nairn
11 Gairloch	30 HQC, Inverness	40 HC Kilchoan TS
38 Portree Former Landfill	46 J Williamson, Kingussie	43 HC Fridge/Freezer Storage TS, Fort William
<b>Landfill/Civic Amenity</b>	<b>Other Treatment</b>	44 Scottish Water TS Fort William Area Depot
6 Seater inc Composting	3 Dounreay	48 Granish Recycling Ctr/TS, Aviemore
41 Duiskey	20 ILM, Alness	17 Wm Munro, Composting & TS, Evanton Ind Est
47 Granish	25 MSIS, Invergordon	
<b>Landfill</b>		
7 Skitten by Wick		



## 22.13 The Highland Council's Position on Radioactive Waste in Highland

- 22.13.1 It is Council policy, as stated in the Council's programme for administration 'Strengthening the Highlands 2009-11', to continue to support the above ground storage of intermediate level waste from Dounreay until a Scottish waste strategy is agreed and implemented and to object to the use of Dounreay or any other site within the Highlands for a national nuclear waste repository.
- 22.13.2 The Council will continue to engage with Scottish Government on preparation of that national strategy for long term management of intermediate level waste.
- 22.13.3 Planning permission has been granted for facilities for the disposal of low level waste arising from the decommissioning of Dounreay and neighbouring Vulcan within the Dounreay site.

## 22.14 Pollution and Environmental Management

- 22.14.1 The high quality of the environment in Highland should not be taken for granted. Pollution can come in the form of increased noise levels, reduction in air quality, reduction in water quality or an increase in ambient light. Proposals should demonstrate the level of impact that they may have on the environment with regard to these types of pollution and if the impact is likely to be significant then how it could be mitigated. The following policy will apply to all land uses.

22.15

### Policy 72 Pollution

22.15.1

Proposals that may result in significant pollution such as noise (including aircraft noise), air, water and light will only be approved where a detailed assessment report on the levels, character and transmission and receiving environment of the potential pollution is provided by the applicant to show how the pollution can be appropriately avoided and if necessary mitigated.

Where the Council applies conditions to any permission to deal with pollution matters these may include subsequent independent monitoring of pollution levels.

Major Developments and developments that are subject of Environmental Impact Assessment will be expected to follow a robust project environmental management process, following the approach set out in the Council's Guidance Note "Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects" or a similar approach.

## 22.16 Air Quality

- 22.16.1 In certain areas of Highland there are some issues with air quality. It is important that we monitor these areas to ensure that there is not going to be an impact on the health of people in Highland or the quality of the environment because of development.
- 22.16.2 [The National Air Quality Strategy](#) sets out objectives and standards for the review and assessment of air quality to ensure that set levels of certain pollutants are not exceeded in areas where the public might be exposed. We also need to direct sensitive developments away from areas of poor air quality. The following policy will apply to all land uses.

22.17

22.17.1

### **Policy 73    Air Quality**

Development proposals which, individually or cumulatively, may adversely affect the air quality in an area to a level which could cause harm to human health and wellbeing or the natural environment must be accompanied by appropriate provisions, such as an Air Quality Assessment, (deemed satisfactory to the Local Authority and SEPA as appropriate) which demonstrate how such impacts will be mitigated.

Some existing land uses may have a localised detrimental effect on air quality. Any proposals to locate development in the vicinity of such uses and therefore introduce receptors to these areas (e.g. housing adjacent to busy roads) must consider whether this would result in conflict with the existing land use. Proposals which would result in an unacceptable conflict with the existing land use to air quality impacts will not be approved.

## 23. Healthier Highland Gàidhealtachd nas Fallaine

### 23.1 Green Networks, Open Space and Physical Activity

- 23.1.1 High quality, accessible, fit for purpose open spaces help to enhance the Highland area as a place in which to live and work. They can enhance the feel of the local area and provide opportunities for people to meet up and take part in physical activity. The Council has carried out a comprehensive audit of quality, quantity and accessibility of open space in all larger settlements in line with Scottish Planning Policy. This has been used as evidence in the creation of provision standards which are contained within the Highland Council's [Open Space in New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance](#).
- 23.1.2 Open space in isolation does not offer as many benefits as when it is joined up in a meaningful way. Green Networks can help to enhance the value of open spaces in terms of recreation and wildlife biodiversity.

23.2

#### **Policy 74 Green Networks**

23.2.1

Green networks should be protected and enhanced. Development in areas identified for the creation of green networks should seek to avoid the fragmentation of the network and take steps to improve its connectivity, where this is appropriate. The detailed identification of green networks around regional and sub regional centres (see Figure 10) will be carried out by the Council using the methodology described in the document "[Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance](#)". Pending identification by the Council of green networks, both within the study areas and elsewhere, developers should identify, protect and enhance the existing network of green spaces and green corridors which link built-up areas to the surrounding countryside, using the methodology in the supplementary guidance. The main principles of the guidance are to:

- help promote greenspace linkages and to safeguard and enhance wildlife corridors in and around new and existing developments;
- set out a methodology for identifying the Highland Green Network;
- enable new development to take advantage of the outstanding landscape in the area while also preserving areas of significant landscape value; and
- set out mechanisms for delivery of projects to maintain and enhance the existing green network.

## **Policy 75    Open Space**

The Council's long term aim for open space provision is for:

- the creation of sustainable networks of open space of high quality;
- areas of local open space that are accessible by foot and linked to a wider network;
- fit for purpose greenspaces and sports facilities that support and enhance biodiversity; and
- open spaces that improve the quality of life of residents and visitors.

To achieve these aims any new residential development of 4 or more dwellings will be required to provide publicly accessible open space in line with the quantity, quality and accessibility requirements set out in the Open Space in New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance.

Existing areas of high quality, accessible and fit for purpose open space will be safeguarded from inappropriate development and enhancement will be sought, where appropriate. All sites identified in the Highland Council's Audit of Greenspace will be safeguarded unless:

- it can be suitably demonstrated that the open space is not fit for purpose;
- substitute provision will be provided meeting the needs of the local area; or
- development of the open space would significantly contribute to the spatial strategy for the area.



23.4 Figure 10: Areas where Green Networks will be identified in Highland



## 23.5 Playing Fields and Sports Pitches

23.5.1 Playing fields and other sports pitches provide communities with valuable areas of open space for more formal recreation. These areas need to be protected and enhanced where appropriate. The Council has produced a Facilities Planning Model, in which the quantity, quality and accessibility of playing fields, sports pitches and sports centres has been assessed and the future needs and demands of the community are taken into consideration.

23.6

### **Policy 76    Playing Fields and Sports Pitches**

23.6.1

Playing fields will be safeguarded from development and should not be redeveloped, except where:

- The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field;
- The proposed development involved a minor part of the playing field which would not affect its use and potential for sport and training;
- The playing field which would be lost would be replaced by a new playing field of comparable or greater benefit for sport in a location which is convenient for its users, or by the upgrading of an existing playing field to provide a better quality facility either within the same site or at another location which is convenient for its users and which maintain or improved the overall playing capacity in the area; or
- It can be clearly demonstrated that there is an excess of sports pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand in the area, and that the site could be developed without detriment to the overall quality of provision.

## 23.7 Access to the Outdoors

- 23.7.1 Access to the outdoors is important to Highland for recreation, tourism and to help everyone maintain a healthy lifestyle. [The Land Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) established access rights to most land and inland water for everyone in Scotland. People only have these access rights if they exercise them responsibly by respecting people's privacy, safety and livelihoods and Scotland's Environment.
- 23.7.2 To aid the Council in meeting the provisions of the Land Reform Act, the Council have produced an [Access Strategy](#) and [Core Path Plans](#), in time, these will adopted as Supplementary Guidance to this Plan.
- 23.7.3 Future area local development plans will endeavour to identify aspirational routes that can be delivered. More detailed guidance may be provided on the delivery of these routes through supplementary guidance.

23.8

### **Policy 77 Public Access**

23.8.1

Where a proposal affects a route included in a [Core Paths Plan](#) or an access point to water, or significantly affects wider access rights, then The Council will require it to either:

- retain the existing path or water access point while maintaining or enhancing its amenity value; or
- ensure alternative access provision that is no less attractive, is safe and convenient for public use, and does not damage or disturb species or habitats.

For a proposal classified as a Major Development, the Council will require the developer to submit an Access Plan. This should show the existing public, non-motorised public access footpaths, bridleways and cycleways on the site, together with proposed public access provision, both during construction and after completion of the development (including links to existing path networks and to the surrounding area, and access point to water).

23.9

### **Policy 78 Long Distance Routes**

23.9.1

The Council, with its partners, will safeguard and seek to enhance long distance routes (as indicated on Figure 11), and their settings. Consideration will be given to developing/improving further strategic multi user routes both inland and along the coast with due regard to the impact on the Natural Heritage features along these routes.



23.10 Figure 11: Long Distance Routes

## Appendices

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## 24. Appendix 1 - Glossary

### Pàipear-taice 1 - Beag-fhaclair

This section explains some of the terms we use in this document. The Council has tried to minimise use of planning jargon however, the following glossary may aid users' understanding. Please note the explanations given are not intended as legal definitions of the planning terms used.

**Access Rights:** Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives everyone statutory access rights to most land and inland water. People only have these rights if they exercise them responsibly by respecting people's privacy, safety and livelihoods, and Scotland's environment.

**Accessibility:** The ability of people to have access to goods, services, employment and other facilities.

**Action Programme:** is a working document developed in consultation with key stakeholders and sets out, in very broad terms, how and by whom the key elements of the Local Development Plan's strategy will be implemented.

**Affordable housing:** Broadly defined as housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. In some places the market can provide some or all of the affordable housing that is needed, but in other places it is necessary to make housing available at a cost below market value to meet an identified need with the support of subsidy. The Council accepts the following categories of development as affordable:

- Social rented accommodation- owned and/or managed by a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) required to meet bona fide local needs by their charter from the Housing and Regeneration Division of the Scottish Government;
- Approved private rented accommodation- owned and /or managed by a private sector landlord to approved management and maintenance standards with equivalent to Registered Social Landlord rents; and
- Low cost owner occupation- which can be met in a variety of ways subject to negotiation of Agreements providing for occupants to be drawn from target client groups, such as existing social tenancies or approved waiting list applicants. Low cost home ownership is housing which is provided at a price substantially below open market values. Low cost owner occupation can be delivered by one or more of the following: shared ownership, shared equity (LIFT), subsidised home ownership, discounted serviced plots or house sale prices, unsubsidised Low Cost Home Ownership or serviced plots.

See the Council's Affordable Housing SPG for further guidance.

**Allocation:** Land identified in a Local Development Plan as appropriate for a specific use or mix of uses.

**Appropriate Assessment:** An assessment required under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) where a plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either alone or in combination with other



plans or projects. In the light of the conservation objectives of the site, the assessment should consider whether there would be any adverse effect on the integrity of the site as a result of the plan or project.

**Article 10 Features:** Wildlife habitat features which provide 'corridors' or 'stepping stones' between habitat areas and that help plants and wildlife to move from one area to another. Examples include rivers and their banks, areas of woodland, and traditional field boundaries. Protecting and managing these areas through the land use planning system is promoted in Article 10 of the EC Habitats and Species Directive 1992.

**Article 4 Direction:** Some types of development do not need planning permission beyond the general planning permission granted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as amended). An Article 4 Direction is an order made by Scottish Ministers which suspends (for specified types of development on specified properties) that general permission and so requires planning applications to be submitted in those cases.

**Biomass:** Biological material derived from living, or recently living organisms. In the context of biomass for energy this is often used to mean plant based material, but biomass can equally apply to both animal and vegetable derived material.

**Circular:** Contains Scottish Government policy on the implementation of legislation or procedures

**Coastal Zone:** For the purposes of our Coastal Development Strategy within 1 km of the coast and the inshore marine area out to 3 nautical miles

**Commerce:** For the purposes of this Plan the term 'commerce' encompasses retail, office and leisure development (Use Classes 1-3, 7, 10 & 11).

**Commercial Centres:** distinct from town centres in terms of range of uses and commercial centres with a more specific focus on retailing or on retailing and leisure uses.

**Common Grazing:** land held in common by neighbouring crofts, normally a large area of rough hill pasture, used to graze animals and to take peat/seaweed if available.

**Countryside areas:** all areas outwith defined Settlement Development Areas.

**Crofters Commission:** The Commission acts as an impartial tribunal in the regulation of crofting.

**Culverts:** A conduit used to enclose a flowing body of water. It may be used to allow water to pass underneath a road, railway, or embankment for example.

**Cumulatively:** Proposals will be assessed for cumulative impact which is changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with any other developments (not just similar developments) or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together. This includes proposals which have been permitted as well as those that

have been submitted and are waiting to be determined. It can relate to landscape and visual effects as well as a wider range of social, economic and environmental effects. These cumulative impacts may be positive as well as negative.

**Design Statement:** will explain the design principles on which the development is based and illustrate the design solution. More information and advice can be found in Planning Advice Note 68, Design statements.

**Designated Wreck:** A designated wreck site is a wreck or the site of a wreck within Scotland's territorial waters that has been designated as a protected area under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 or as a scheduled monument under Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

**Developer contributions:** Payments made to The Council or another agency, or work in kind, to help improve the infrastructure (for example, roads, open space, waste-water treatment, restoring worked-out mineral sites) so that the development can go ahead.

**Development brief:** A detailed document for an area allocated for development in a local development plan. The brief provides information to possible developers on issues such as the preferred siting, design and layout of buildings, and the need for associated infrastructure and services.

**Development factors:** The factors that we must take into account when deciding where development can take place and the nature of that development.

**Development Plan:** Sets out how land could be used over the next few years. By law the Council need to produce a development plan for the whole area.

**Development Plan Scheme:** The document setting out the Council's intentions for preparing development plans in the next few years.

**District Heating Schemes:** The distribution of heat energy around a community or district through combined heat and power generation. Electricity generated by the CHP plant may also be supplied to residents with excess sold to the grid.

**Effective Housing Land Supply:** Identified land which is free or expected to be free of development constraints in the plan period under consideration.

**Energy from Waste (EfW):** Energy that is recovered by thermally treating waste e.g. incinerating.

**European Protected Species:** Species of animal and plant listed respectively in Schedule 2 and Schedule 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 as amended.

**Flood Risk Areas:** Medium to high flood risk areas are defined as 1 in 200 or greater than 0.5% annual probability of flooding.

**Flood Risk Assessment:** An assessment carried out to predict and assess the

probability of flooding for a particular site or area and recommend mitigation measures including maintenance.

**Fragile areas:** Areas which are in decline or in danger of becoming so as a consequence of remoteness and socio-economic factors, such as population loss, erosion of services and facilities and lack of employment opportunities. In some areas the natural heritage is a dominant influence on appropriate land management.

**Framework plan:** An outline plan (prepared by public agencies) that provides guidance on how a large site should be developed, including issues such as landscaping, access and internal layout.

**Grazings Committees:** Have responsibility for making and regulating stock numbers and other matters affecting 'the fair exercise' of their joint rights.

**Greenfield land:** Presently undeveloped land, in use, or generally capable of being brought into active or beneficial use for agricultural, forestry or amenity purposes.

**Green Network:** Comprises the network of greenspaces and green corridors within and around settlements, linking out into the wider countryside, helping to enhance the area's biodiversity, quality of life and sense of place. A green network will provide the setting within which high quality, sustainable growth can occur. A green network can be made up of woodlands; other natural and semi-natural habitats; watercourses and wetlands; formal and informal greenspace in and around settlements, and, active travel routes.

**Health & Safety Executive (HSE):** the national independent watchdog for work-related health, safety and illness.

**Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE):** the Scottish Government's economic and community development agency for the Highlands and Islands.

**Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS):** its remit covers all forms of public transport in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland including ferry, road transport, rail, air travel, cycling and walking.

**Hinterland:** Based on commuting patterns to and from major employment centres where the thrust of policy is to manage growth, self sustaining communities and protect the countryside. Hinterland areas relate to Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth and Fort William.

**HER:** Historic Environment Record, available on the Council's website.

**Historic Battlefields:** an area of land over which a battle or skirmish was fought or significant activities relating to a battle or skirmish occurred

**Historic Scotland:** An executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

**Housing Market Areas:** A geographical area which is relatively self-contained in terms of housing demand.

**Housing requirement:** The number of housing units for which land must be identified to meet future demand. We work this out by considering market demand, changes in the number of people and households, the existing housing stock and the existing availability of land for housing.

**HRES:** Highland Renewable Energy Strategy & Planning Guidelines.

**HwLDP:** Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

**Inbye Land:** Normally arable ground on which a crofter's house is usually built.

**Ineffective housing stock:** Housing which is not lived in permanently because it is empty or a second or holiday home.

**Infill development:** Building a limited number of buildings within a small gap in existing development.

**Infrastructure:** The basic services and facilities needed to support development. These include road access and water and sewerage facilities and green infrastructure, e.g. landscaping, green networks, open spaces, and paths.

**In-migration:** The movement of people coming to live in a region or community.

**In-Vessel Composting:** Shredded waste is placed inside a chamber or container through which air is forced. This speeds up the composting process.

**Key Agency:** A national or regional organisation that has an important role in planning for the future of an area. Key Agencies are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

**Landfill/form:** Landfill being an area of land identified for the deposit of waste. Landform being the deposit of waste on or above the existing contours of the ground.

**Landscape Capacity Studies:** Consider the extent to which a particular landscape type is able to accept a particular kind of change (such as mining, forestry, windfarms) without significant effects on its character.

**Landscape Character:** The distinct and recognisable pattern of landscape elements that occurs consistently in a particular area, and how these are perceived by people, that makes one landscape different from another.

**Landscape Character Assessments:** Describe the landscape character types and provide some tailored guidance on how to accommodate development within the specific character types present.

**Local centre:** Part of the settlement hierarchy set out on the proposals map.

**Local Housing Development Fora:** A group of council services, public agencies, housing associations and other housing-related interests which regularly meet to consider the need for and opportunities for affordable housing.

**Local Housing Strategy:** In Highland is known as the Highland Housing Strategy. It Documents the need and demand for housing, as well as wider housing issues, based on an assessment of housing, demographic, economic and community issues. Provides the policy context and outcomes that stakeholders want for Highland residents and details the approaches that will be taken to achieve these outcomes.

**Long term allocations:** Indicate the direction that the next area Local Development Plan will take in terms of future development beyond the five year lifespan of this Local Development Plan.

**Local Transport Strategy:** sets the framework for transport in Highland and guides decision making on transport issues.

**Main Issues Report:** The purpose of a Main Issues Report is to highlight the choices that can be taken in planning for the development of the Highland area over the next twenty years.

**Main Strategic Routes:** Transport routes which are vital for local communities.

**Marine Renewable Energy:** the generation of electricity from wave, tidal or (off-shore) wind resources, as appropriate to a location.

**Masterplan:** A document that explains how a site or series of sites will be developed. It will describe how the proposal will be implemented, and set out the costs, phasing and timing of development. A masterplan will usually be prepared by or on behalf of an organisation that owns the site or controls the development process.

**Material consideration:** Matters we must consider when making a decision on a planning application. Scottish Government guidance states that there are two main tests in deciding whether a consideration is material and relevant and advises as follows:

"It should serve or be related to the purpose of planning. It should therefore relate to the development and use of land; and

It should fairly and reasonably relate to the particular application. It is for the decision maker to decide if a consideration is material and to assess both the weight to be attached to each material consideration and whether individually or together they are sufficient to outweigh the development plan. Where development plan policies are not directly relevant to the development proposal, material considerations will be of particular importance."

Whether a consideration is material is a matter that may ultimately be decided by the courts when required.

**Material Recycling Facility:** A site provided by the local authority for local residents to dispose, and allow for the sorting of, of bulky household waste, garden waste and



other recyclable materials.
<b>Micro-generation:</b> The production of energy on the smallest of scales, for individual buildings or communities.
<b>Mitigation:</b> Works to reduce the effects of an adverse impact.
<b>Mixed Use:</b> This refers to the practice of allowing more than one type of compatible uses on a site. This can for example mean a combination of housing, business, and community uses, or that any of these uses are suitable on the site.
<b>Modal Shift:</b> The change in people's travelling habits towards use of more sustainable transport methods such as cycling, or public transport. An example would be when somebody stops travelling to and from work by car and starts using public transport.
<b>Monitoring Statement:</b> Looks at how the Highlands has changed since the Council started using the Highland Structure Plan in 2001. This was published alongside the Main Issues Report for the Highland-wide Local Development Plan in August 2009.
<b>National Health Service Highland (NHS Highland):</b> They are the Health Board for the Highland area. Their purpose is to maximise the health of the Highland population.
<b>National Planning Framework (NPF):</b> Is the Scottish Government's strategy for Scotland's long term spatial development.
<b>Network of Centres:</b> will include town centres, commercial centres, and other local centres, and may take the form of a hierarchy.
<b>Non-Renewable Resources:</b> Resources that will run out and cannot be replaced. Non-renewable energy sources include coal, gas and oil.
<b>NSA:</b> National Scenic Area (see Appendix 2 for more information).
<b>Open Space:</b> Areas of public open space identified through the Highland wide Open Space Audit. Open Space is defined in Planning Advice Note 65: Planning and Open Space.
<b>Other Protected Animals and Plants:</b> Species of animal (excluding birds) and plant listed respectively in Schedule 5 and Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.
<b>Permitted development rights:</b> These relate to certain types of development (usually minor) which do not need planning beyond the general planning permission granted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as amended).
<b>Place-making:</b> To ensure that the most sustainable sites are used for development and that the design process, layout structure and form provide a development that is

appropriate to the local context and supports a sustainable community.

**Planning Advice Note (PAN):** Provides advice and information on technical planning matters.

**Precautionary principle:** The principle that authorities should act cautiously to avoid damaging the environment or wellbeing of communities (in a way that cannot be reversed) in situations where the scientific evidence is not proven but the possible damage could be significant.

**Previously-developed land (brownfield land):** Land which has previously been developed. The term may cover vacant or derelict land, land occupied by redundant or unused buildings, and developed land in a settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.

**Proposal:** An intended action of significance to the Plan area, to be carried out by The Council itself or in partnership with other public agencies and private bodies.

**Proposed Plan:** A Proposed Plan represents the planning authorities settled view as to what the final adopted content of the plan should be.

**Protected Bird Species:** All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. These are any bird of a kind which is ordinarily resident in or is a visitor to Great Britain in a wild state, but does not include poultry or game birds. Certain wild bird species are given extra protection, and these are listed in Schedule 1 of the Act. Certain of these species are given even greater protection (currently only the white-tailed eagle) and these are listed in Schedules 1A and A1 of the Act.

**Ramsar Site:** See Appendix 2 for more information.

**Regeneration:** To improve the physical and economic prospects of an area that has experienced decline.

**Regional Centre:** Part of the settlement hierarchy set out on the proposals map.

**Renewables:** Technologies that utilise renewable sources for energy generation.

**Restoration:** A process of returning land and/or buildings to a state comparable to that prior to development/degradation.

**SAC:** Special Area of Conservation (see Appendix 2 for more information).

**Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA):** is Scotland's environmental regulator. SEPA is a non-departmental public body, accountable through Scottish Ministers to the Scottish Parliament. Their main role is to protect and improve the environment.

**Scottish Government:** The devolved government for Scotland is responsible for most of the issues of day-to-day concern to the people of Scotland, including health,

education, justice, rural affairs, planning and transport.

**Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH):** Scottish Natural Heritage is funded by the Scottish Government. Their purpose is to:

- promote care for and improvement of the natural heritage
- help people enjoy it responsibly
- enable greater understanding and awareness of it
- promote its sustainable use, now and for future generations.

**Scottish Planning Policy:** Is the statement of Scottish Government policy on nationally important land use planning matters.

**Scottish Water:** Are a publicly owned company, answerable to the Scottish Parliament. Their role is to provide clean, fresh drinking water and treat waste water.

**Section 75 Agreement:** A legal agreement made between the landowner and the planning authority (often with other people) which restricts or regulates the development or use of land. It is normally used to agree and to secure developer contributions.

**Sequential Approach:** The sequential approach establishes a sequence of site selection for retail development through a preferred sequence of site development; town centre; edge of town centre; other commercial centres identified in the development plan; and out of centre locations that are or can be made easily accessible by a choice of transport modes.

**Settlement Development Areas (SDAs):** Areas defined in and around certain existing settlements, being the preferred areas for most types of development.

**Settlement Hierarchy:** The definition of settlements, for example as 'regional', 'sub regional' or 'local' centres, depending on the size of their population and the services they contain (for example, education, health, transport and retail).

**Settlement Strategy:** A justified overview of the distribution of development and roles of settlements.

**Settlements:** Groups of houses, some that do and some that don't have facilities, identified through the settlement hierarchy.

**SLA:** Special Landscape Area (see Appendix 2 for more information).

**SPA:** Special Protection Area (see Appendix 2 for more information).

**Spatial Strategy:** should encapsulate the headline changes that the Plan seeks to achieve and provide locational guidance for new development.

**SSSI:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (see Appendix 2 for more information).

**Strategic Development Site:** Sites identified as providing opportunity for large scale

investment providing for the economic growth of the area

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** SEA is a key component of sustainable development establishing important methods for protecting the environment and extending opportunities for participation in public policy decision making. SEA achieves this by:

- Systematically assessing and monitoring the significant environmental effects of public sector strategies, plans and programmes
- Ensuring that expertise and views are sought at various points in the process from SNH, SEPA, Historic Scotland and the public
- Requiring a public statement as to how opinions have been taken into account.

**Sub-regional centre:** Part of the settlement hierarchy set out within the Spatial Strategy.

**Supplementary Guidance (SG):** is a document which can give further detail on policies and proposals within the Local Development Plan. Common types of Supplementary Guidance include:

- **Development briefs or masterplans** - which provide a detailed explanation of how the Council would like to see particular sites or small areas develop.
- **Strategies or frameworks on specific issues** - for example, guidance on the location of large wind farms.
- **Detailed policies** - for example on the design of new development.

For more information on the Supplementary Guidance that the Council will prepare please see Appendix 3 of this Local Development Plan.

**Sustainable design:** Design which reduces the possible negative effects on the environment as far as possible and makes the most of social and economic benefits.

**Sustainable development:** Sustainable development has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

**Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS):** Drainage techniques used to treat and return surface water run-off from developments (roof water, road run-off, hard standing areas) to the water environment (rivers, groundwater, lochs) without adverse impact upon people or the environment. Further guidance can be found in CIRIA's SuDS Manual C697 or Sewers for Scotland 2nd Edition.

**Transport Infrastructure:** Transport services and facilities needed to allow development to take place, including: roads, bus services, rail and ferry links.

**Transport Scotland:** Is an agency of the Scottish Government and is accountable to Parliament and the public through Scottish Ministers. Transport Scotland works in partnership with private sector transport operators, local authorities and government. It also works closely with seven regional transport partnerships which take a strategic view of the transport needs of people and businesses in their region.

**Viability:** A measure of the capacity to attract ongoing investment, for maintenance, improvement and adaptation to changing needs.

**Vision Statement:** a broad statement of how the development of an area could and should occur and matters that may affect that development.

**Waste Management Facilities:** Facilities for the sorting, recycling, treatment and disposal of municipal and commercial waste.

**Water Bodies:** Places where water is found such as rivers, burns, lochs, ponds, boggy wet land, water held under the ground and coastal waters.

**Wider Countryside:** For the purposes of housing development the wider countryside (See Policy 36) relates to areas outwith Settlement Development Areas and also outwith the defined hinterland boundary (See Policy 35). For developments of another nature the wider countryside relate to areas outwith Settlement Development Areas.

**Wildness:** A quality that can be experienced where there is a high degree of naturalness and lack of modern structures or land use, where an area is remote and access to it is physically challenging, where there is a perceived sense of sanctuary or solitude, and where the landscape offers a sense of awe/ anxiety and arresting qualities.

**Wild Area:** A term used to describe an area of wildness qualities that may occur along a wide spectrum, from places fairly near to settlement but within which there are qualities of remoteness and naturalness, to more remote mountain and moorland interiors.

**Wild Land:** Those areas where wildness qualities are best expressed, defined by the Scottish Government as 'uninhabited and often relatively inaccessible countryside where the influence of human activity on the character and quality of the environment has been minimal.

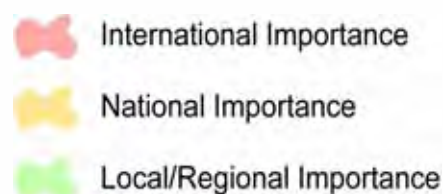
**WWTW:** Waste Water Treatment Works.



## 25. Appendix 2 - Definition of Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage Features

### Pàipear-taice 2 - Mìneachadh Feartan Dualchais Nàdarra, Togte & Cultarail

The Proposals Map sets out the locations of all these different features in so far as they have been mapped digitally on our system. However, features identified by the Council as being present at the time a proposal is considered and which are of the types indicated below, but which have not yet been mapped, will still be subject of protection under Policy . The Council may update the mapping from time to time to take account of revisions and additions, such as the identification of further features through its programmes of work.

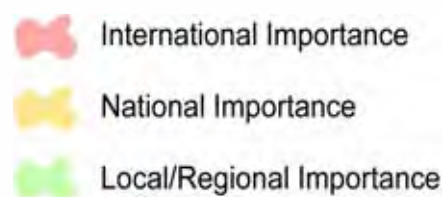


Note: Whilst Appendix 2 groups features under the headings international, national and local/regional importance, this does not suggest that the relevant policy framework will be any less rigorously applied. The Policy should also be read in conjunction with the Proposals map.

### Features of International Importance

Type	Background	Policy Framework
<b>Special Protection Areas (SPA) (including proposed)</b>	Classified by Scottish Ministers under either the EC Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EC) or the European Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), which provides for the protection, management and control of all species of wild birds. SPAs form part of the EU Natura network of nature conservation protection.	The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994, Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) (including candidate)</b>	Designated by Scottish Ministers under the EC Habitats and Species Directive (92/43/EEC), aimed at the maintenance or restoration of certain natural habitats and wild species at favourable conservation status. SACs (including candidate) form part of the EU Natura network of nature conservation protection. Certain qualifying features are of “European Priority Interest” (e.g. active blanket bog) where additional regulatory provisions apply.	The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994, Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Ramsar Sites</b>	Approved by Scottish Ministers under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as waterfowl habitat, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. Such sites are wetland sites of international importance, usually because of their value to migratory birds.	Scottish Planning Policy

The Proposals Map sets out the locations of all these different features in so far as they have been mapped digitally on our system. However, features identified by the Council as being present at the time a proposal is considered and which are of the types indicated below, but which have not yet been mapped, will still be subject of protection under Policy . The Council may update the mapping from time to time to take account of revisions and additions, such as the identification of further features through its programmes of work.



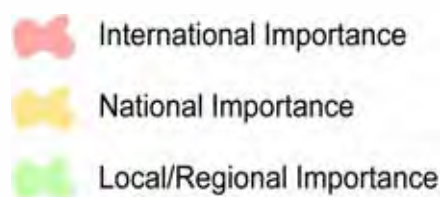
## Features of National Importance

Type	Background	Policy Framework
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	Designated by Scottish Ministers under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as being of national importance. The integrity of the site and its setting is protected by national policy.	Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP). The Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy. For information on features, see the HER (refer plan glossary).
<b>Category A Listed Buildings</b>	Compiled by Scottish Ministers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 as being of national or international importance to ensure the preservation of the building or its setting, or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it may possess. This includes controlling any alteration, extension, repair or demolition of such interest. The list of buildings also includes structures such as walls and bridges.	Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and associated guidance. The Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy. For information on features, see the HER (refer plan glossary).
<b>National Nature Reserves</b>	Declared under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as areas considered to be of national importance for their nature conservation interest. These areas are protected by national policy in that the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated should not be adversely affected.	Scottish Planning Policy.

Type	Background	Policy Framework
<b>Tree Preservation Orders</b>	The Council has specific powers to protect trees and woodland if it appears to them to be "expedient in the interests of amenity". The principal effect of a Tree Preservation Order is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping or wilful damage of trees without the specific consent of the Planning Authority. Special provisions also apply to trees within the Conservation Areas.	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1999, Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order and Trees in Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 1975 (and 1981 amendments).
<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</b>	Designated by Scottish Natural Heritage under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or more recently and in future the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 as areas of land or water which are of special interest by reason of flora, fauna, geology or geomorphology. Regard must be had to opportunities to conserve or enhance the natural heritage interests of the site. These areas are protected by national policy in that the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated should not be adversely affected.	Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Inventoried Gardens and Designed Landscapes</b>	Contained within the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland compiled and maintained by Historic Scotland. The garden and designed landscape and its setting are protected by national policy. Under the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2007, Historic Scotland must be consulted on any proposed development that may affect these sites or their setting.	Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP). The Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy.

Type	Background	Policy Framework
<b>National Scenic Areas</b>	Generally these were established by Order under planning legislation by the Secretary of State in 1981 on the basis of "Scotland's Scenic Heritage" (Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1978). They are defined as areas of "national scenic significance ..... of unsurpassed attractiveness which must be conserved as part of our national heritage." However, the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 renews the powers of Scottish Ministers to designate NSAs where an area is of outstanding scenic value in a national context. Thereafter special attention is to be paid to the desirability of safeguarding or enhancing an NSA's character or appearance. These areas are protected by national policy in that the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated should not be adversely affected. SNH have produced a report, <a href="#">National Scenic Areas Special Qualities</a> , which details landscape qualities that make National Scenic Area special.	Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Inventoried Ancient Woodland (1) and Long-Established Semi-Natural Woodland (2a)</b>	Contained within the Inventory of Ancient, Long-Established and Semi-Natural Woodland prepared by the former Nature Conservancy Council (1989). Specifically this includes ancient woodland sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 1750 'Roy' maps and all map sources since. It also includes sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the OS First Edition maps of the 1860s but it is not shown as woodland on the 1750 maps. These woodlands are regarded as having the greatest value for nature conservation.	Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>National Park</b>	National parks are designated under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 because they are areas of National importance for their natural and cultural heritage. They are central to rural economic development and recreation, sustainability and the conservation of their diverse natural habitats.	Scottish Planning Policy.

The Proposals map sets out the locations of all these different features in so far as they have been mapped digitally on our system. However, features identified by the Council as being present at the time a proposal is considered and which are of the types indicated below, but which have not yet been mapped, will still be subject of protection under Policy . The Council may update the mapping from time to time to take account of revisions and additions, such as the identification of further features through its programmes of work.



## Features of Local / Regional Importance

Type	Background	Policy Framework
<b>Special Landscape Areas (SLA)</b>	These areas were identified by the Council by virtue either as being large scale areas of regional importance for scenic quality, or as being small scale areas of local scenic and recreational value. The Council will consider the potential impacts of development proposals on the integrity of the SLAs, including impacts on the wider setting. There may be cases where the setting of an SLA could be adversely affected by development in the foreground which would interrupt important views into and out of the SLA. When determining the impact on the landscape character and scenic quality and overall integrity of the SLA, attention will be given to its citation and in particular the Key Landscape and Visual Characteristics, its Special Qualities, and its Sensitivities to Change.	Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Category B and C(S) Listed Buildings</b>	Included by Scottish Ministers within a list compiled under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to ensure the preservation of the building or its setting, or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it may possess. This includes controlling any alteration, extension, repair or demolition of such interest. The list of buildings also includes structures such as walls and bridges. Advice is that B listed buildings are considered to be of regional or more than local importance and C(S) listed buildings are of local importance.	Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and associated guidance. The Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy. For information on features, see the HER (refer plan glossary).



Type	Background	Policy Framework
<b>Sites and Monuments Record Archaeological Sites</b>	A record maintained and continually updated by The Council's Archaeological Unit of all known archaeological sites in Highland, including a location and brief description. The importance of such sites in terms of protection or professional recording prior to disturbance is advised on a case-by-case basis. The integrity of the site and its setting will be considered.	Scottish Planning. The Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy. For information on features, see the HER (refer plan glossary).
<b>War Memorials</b>	Highlighted in order that the ambience and setting of war memorials should not be adversely affected by inappropriate or unsympathetic development and in order that the Royal British Legion Scotland should be consulted where The Council believes such an adverse effect may occur.	The Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy For information on features, see the HER (refer plan glossary).
<b>Settlement Setting</b>	Identified by The Council. These are areas of land which are on or close to the edges of settlements or adjacent to main approach routes and which are considered to contribute significantly and positively to the intrinsic setting of the settlement and to be part of its character worthy of retention. They can include areas between groupings of settlements in close proximity to each other (allowing for any expansion provided for by the Settlement Development Areas) to protect the open land from development that would lead to settlements coalescing and losing their individual identity. This recognises that development should generally be within existing settlements.	Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Inventoried Long Established Plantation Origin Woodland (2b) and Other Woodlands on Roy Maps (3)</b>	Contained within the Inventory of Ancient, Long-Established and Semi-Natural Woodland prepared by the former Nature Conservancy Council (1989). Specifically this includes sites shown as plantation woodland in the 1860s but are shown as plantation or unwooded in 1750 maps. It also includes sites which were shown as unwooded in the 1860s but which were present as woodland in the 1750s. These woodlands are regarded as being important for nature conservation.	Scottish Planning Policy.

Type	Background	Policy Framework
<b>Amenity Trees/ woodlands</b>	Areas of woodland (both broadleaved and coniferous) considered by The Council to have local amenity importance by virtue of contribution to landscape value, providing framework and containment for settlements, informal recreational opportunities or association as community woodlands. In so doing they contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality.	Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Views Over Open Water</b>	Identified by The Council to protect relatively narrow areas of land between roads or railways and the coastline or lochshores where such land provides a foreground to scenic views.	
<b>Wild areas</b>	<p>These will encompass the most extensive, remotest and sensitive areas of wildness, most commonly found within hill and mountain areas, remote moorland, and on remote coasts and islands. These areas possess wildness qualities that are of value for amenity, recreation and in contributing to the unique identity of the Highlands. This is of high value for residents and visitors for tourism, film and other commercial operations. These areas will also encompass other areas of wildness qualities which are more easily accessed or are nearer to populated areas.</p> <p>As part of a national programme, SNH will map wildness qualities across Scotland and will identify areas of Wild Land at a national level. This will be done in consultation with Highland Council and other planning authorities. Highland Council, with the assistance of SNH, may then consider whether it is appropriate to identify wild areas of a quality and value that are of local/ regional importance.</p> <p>The assessment of wildness qualities will include the following:</p> <p><b>Physical attributes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived naturalness;</li> <li>• Lack of modern artefacts or structures;</li> <li>• Little evidence of contemporary land uses;</li> <li>• Rugged or otherwise challenging terrain;</li> <li>• Inaccessibility/accessibility;</li> <li>• Extent of area;</li> </ul>	<p>National Planning Framework for Scotland 2 (para 99)</p> <p>Scottish Planning Policy, February 2010 (para 128).</p>

### Perceptual responses

- Sense of sanctuary or solitude;
- Risk or sense of awe or anxiety;
- Perceived arresting or inspiring qualities; and
- Fulfilment from physical challenge.

Supplementary Guidance will be produced that will also contain advice on how to best accommodate change within these areas while safeguarding their qualities.

Prior to wild land being identified, proposals that may have an adverse impact on the wild land resource should undergo an assessment process. To produce this assessment applicants should refer to [SNH Assessing the Impacts on Wildland: Interim Guidance Note](#).

The assessment should include consideration of impacts that occur cumulatively as well as individually; they may occur incrementally, particularly through fragmentation and/or erosion in marginal areas.

There may be cases where wildness could be adversely affected by development close to wild land but not within it. When determining whether there is an unacceptable impact from outwith: noise, impact on views, and light pollution will need to be assessed.

### Locally Important Croft Land

Identified by The Council on advice from crofting interests where it is considered that the continued use of the land for agriculture is important locally for the viability of crofting in the area.

### Local Nature Conservation Sites

Identified by The Council on advice from groups with expertise in local nature conservation interests, such as Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Groups. These sites have local importance for habitats and species. These sites are provisional and require to be refined following detailed survey or assessment and in consultation with SNH and landowners. Not yet digitally mapped.

Scottish Planning Policy.

Type	Background	Policy Framework
<b>Un-notified Geological Conservation Review Sites</b>	Identified by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee as being the very best and most representative geological and geomorphological features and fossil sites in Great Britain, and so considered to qualify for SSSI designation. Un-notified GCR Sites are un-notified as SSSIs but are nevertheless considered by JNCC to be of national importance. Some GCR sites may be part notified (i.e. SSSI) and part un-notified. Further details on the GCR and sites can be found on the <a href="#">SNH</a> and <a href="#">Joint Nature Conservation Committee</a> web pages.	Scottish Planning Policy and <a href="http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2947">www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2947</a>
<b>Local Geodiversity Sites</b>	Identified by Scottish Natural Heritage or by a Regionally Important Geological Site Group, being sites of local or regional importance for the protection and study of geology and geomorphology. Not yet digitally mapped.	Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Isolated Coast</b>	Identified by The Council, being remote stretches of coast (including islands) characterised by an absence of settlements or other onshore development, no presence of offshore activity, and affording extended views lacking obvious signs of human activity, both onshore and offshore. This work has been carried out on a Highland wide basis as part of preparing the Council's Coastal Development Strategy.	Scottish Planning Policy.
<b>Archaeological Heritage Areas</b>	Identified by The Council as being of exceptional archaeological and historic significance by virtue of the importance, number and location of features, density of monuments/sites, and opportunities for interpretation.	Scottish Planning Policy. The Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy.
<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Designated by The Council under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 as areas of special architectural and historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Planning permission will be required within such areas for specific types of development that would otherwise be permitted development, including demolition.	Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and associated guidance. The Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy

## 26. **Appendix 3 - Supplementary Guidance** **Pàipear-taice 3 - Stiùireadh a Bharrachd**

The Council has in place various supplementary guidance which supplements the Local Plan and provides additional advice and guidance on planning policy matters.

The modernised planning system requires supplementary guidance to play a greater role than it has in the past. Scottish Government advises that much detailed material can be contained in supplementary guidance, which allows the Plan to focus on the vision, spatial strategy, overarching and other key policies and proposals. Guidance may include detailed policies (it is not necessary for all policies to be within the Plan itself), development briefs and masterplans, as well as advice to support a policy. However, where guidance is intended to be statutory i.e. part of the Plan and used to assist decision making on planning applications, the main principles or context for the guidance must be established within the Plan itself.

The following table provides a list of existing guidance (to be carried forward or amended) and new guidance (to be produced to accompany the Plan). Further work will be undertaken on whether the guidance will be statutory or non-statutory going forward and all statutory guidance will be presented for consultation at the Proposed Plan stage. This appendix is accurate as at the date of the adoption of the plan. Details on the progress of preparing and publishing individual guidance will change over time. Up to date information is available on the Council's web-site.

### **Existing Supplementary Guidance**

<b>Title of Guidance</b>	<b>Date Adopted</b>	<b>Description</b>
A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework	September 2007	Framework for future developments over the next 30+ years within the land eastwards from Inverness to the border with Moray and south to the B9006.
Access Strategy	May 2008	Aims to provide access opportunities, encourage stakeholders to work together in the development of better facilities, develop a comprehensive access network, remove barriers and build links so that everyone can enjoy and explore the Highlands to the best of their ability.
Affordable Housing	August 2008	Protocol for securing Affordable Housing contributions in relation to new residential developments.
Aquaculture Framework Plans	Various Dates	Guides aquaculture development to appropriate locations and helps minimise conflicts of interest. Produced for Loch Nevis, Loch Sunart, Loch Bracadale, Loch Hourn, Loch Inchard and Loch Eriboll.
Coastal Development Strategy	May 2010	Sets out a vision for the sustainable use and development of the Highland's coastal zone.



Title of Guidance	Date Adopted	Description
Sustainable Design Guide	June 2011	Provides guidance on what sustainable design means in the Highland context and highlights opportunities for developers to add value to their projects by taking account of the way that the economic, environmental and social impacts of development interact over the short and long term.
Education and New Residential Developments	August 2009	Protocol for securing contributions towards the provision of primary and secondary schools in the Highlands in relation to new residential developments. To be incorporated within the emerging Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance.
Forest and Woodland Strategy	April 2006	Identifies strategic forestry/woodland areas and opportunities in Highland for potential funding, provides a framework for evaluating applications under the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme, and provides a context for the preparation of forest plans.
Highland Renewable Energy Strategy	May 2006	Identifies preferred locations for renewable energy developments and a protocol for dealing with such developments. To be replaced, in part, by the emerging Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance.
Houses in Multiple Occupation	November 2011	Identifies when planning permission is required for HMOs, sets limits to the proportion of HMOs within census output areas and provides guidance on assessing planning applications for HMOs.
Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design Guidance	August 2011	Provides advice on the interpretation of Council policy in relation to building housing in the countryside and to offer advice on the siting, design and construction of new houses in the countryside.
Inner Moray Firth Ports and Sites Policy Study/Strategy	June 2005	Sets out a vision for the period to 2050 which will help shape future collaboration, steer public investment priorities, maximise regional development potential, and identify key implementation actions.

Title of Guidance	Date Adopted	Description
Integrated Coastal Plans	September 2006	Guides the use and development of the coastal zone in the 'Two Brooms' area – Loch Broom, Little Loch Broom, the Summer Isles and Gruinard Bay. Aims to encourage management which maintains a healthy ecosystem alongside appropriate human use of the marine environment.
Nigg Development Masterplan	September 2009	Outlines a vision and feasible options for the development of the Nigg Yard site as a multi-user industrial facility over the next 15-20 years.
Open Space in New Residential Development	June 2009	Provides details of the standard of open space that should be provided in new residential developments.
Highland Housing Strategy	May 2010	Documents the need and demand for housing, as well as wider housing issues, based on an assessment of housing, demographic, economic and community issues. Provides the policy context and outcomes that stakeholders want for Highland residents and details the approaches that will be taken to achieve these outcomes.
Trees, Woodland and Development	September 2011	Provides guidance on the protection and management of trees in relation to developments.
Highland Council Core Paths Plan	September 2011	Provides details of the network of paths (core paths) throughout the Highland area which can be accessed on foot, by bike or any other non-motorised means.
Local Transport Strategy	Committee/ August 2010	Provides a strategic framework for transport in the Highland for the next three years which will guide decision-making on transport-related issues.
Managing Waste in New Developments	March 2011	Provides guidance on the Council's requirements for waste management facilities for new developments, and the requirements for developer contributions for new waste management infrastructure. To be incorporated within the emerging Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance
Guidance on Development and Biodiversity – Highland's Statutorily Protected Species	November 2011	Provides guidance on protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including the statutorily protected species found within the Highland Area.

<b>Title of Guidance</b>	<b>Date Adopted</b>	<b>Description</b>
Physical Constraints on Development	September 2011	Identifies and maps the physical constraints on development within the Highland Area.
Nairn Town Centre Development Brief	March 2011	Provides an overall framework for the development of the town centre and sets out guidelines on design and other standards expected by the Planning Authority.

## Existing Development Briefs

<b>Title of Development Brief</b>	<b>Date Adopted</b>	<b>Description</b>
Dingwall Riverside Development Brief	January 2010	Promotes a framework that will guide development proposals within the brief area towards an overall form that will offer residential, retail, social and employment opportunities while maintaining strong links to Dingwall town centre.
Dounreay Planning Framework Framework Plan, January 2006	January 2006	Translates the decommissioning and restoration proposals described in UKAEA's Dounreay Site Restoration Plan into a land use planning framework for the decommissioning, restoration and after use of the site.
Drummuie, Golspie Development Brief, January 2001	January 2001	Promotes the future use and development of this significant Council owned property at Drummuie in Golspie, East Sutherland.
Firthview-Woodside Development Brief, April 2003	April 2003	Co-ordinates land assembly and the layout of development, identifies the infrastructure and facilities required, assesses the impact of development within the neighbourhood and wider district and the possible scope for planning "gain".
Fort Augustus Village Centre Development Brief, Jan 2007	January 2007	Provides a framework for land assembly, engineering works and site remodelling, as well as an indicative site layout and servicing options.
Hedgefield, Inverness Development Brief, October 2005	October 2005	Promotes the future use and development of the 'B' Listed Hedgefield House and grounds, Inverness.

Title of Development Brief	Date Adopted	Description
Inshes and Milton of Leys Development Brief, March 2004	March 2004	Guides the continuing development of land at Inshes and Milton of Leys as part of the City's expansion strategy. Reviews the framework for the development, identifies related infrastructure and community facilities and sets out a revised protocol for developer contributions.
Lairg Development Opportunities Development Brief	June 1997	Sets out development guidelines for four key areas of underused land and derelict buildings in the centre of Lairg.
Lochcarron Kirkton Development Brief	September 2007	Sets out a framework for a comprehensive and cohesive approach to development, including layout, access, sustainable development principles, servicing and environmental requirements. A degree of design guidance is included to ensure that development moves forward in a sensitive and appropriate manner.
Longman Core, Inverness Development Brief, June 2006	June 2006	Seeks to co-ordinate the redevelopment of land and property at the "core" of the Longman Industrial Estate, Inverness. Sets the context for development in a key urban transport corridor and examines the contribution that this location can make to meeting anticipated need for bulky-goods/warehouse retail floorspace in the City. Wider review for Longman to be undertaken 2012/13.
Markethill, Fort Augustus Development Brief, November 2003	November 2003	Seeks to open-up land for local homes, employment and facilities, and to co-ordinate development and other uses between the A82(T) and Caledonian Canal.
Morangie Road, Tain Development Brief	September 1997	Provides an overall framework for the release and development of the site and sets out guidelines on design and other standards expected by the Planning Authority.
Ness Development Brief - Approved January 2007	January 2007	Promotes the development of one of the City's principal expansion areas to complete a sustainable and balanced Ness District. Provides a financial protocol to co-ordinate and secure equitable developer contributions and specifies an optimum mix and layout of land use.

Title of Development Brief	Date Adopted	Description
Sandiland, Cromarty Development Brief - Feb 2006	February 2006	Provides detailed guidance and advice on the future development of vacant and derelict property comprising the Townlands Barn (formerly known as Sandilands House) and adjoining land south of Cromarty High Street.
South Bonar Industrial Estate Development Brief Development Brief, September 2005	September 2005	Assesses the potential of the Industrial Estate at South Bonar and adjoining land for economic development, and presents options for future development of the site.
Thurso West Expansion Area Development Brief, June 2003	June 2003	Guides the development of a significant area of land at Pennyland on the west side of Thurso and sets out a detailed development framework, including layout and design principles, servicing requirements and environmental factors.

## Future Supplementary Guidance

Title of Guidance	Next Milestone/Date	Description
A96 Corridor Developer Contributions	Ongoing	Protocol for securing developer contributions within the A96 Corridor.
Developer Contributions	Committee/ March 2012	Protocol for securing developer contributions for the Highland Area [excluding A96 Corridor].
Green Networks	Ongoing	Promotes greenspace linkages and safeguards/enhances wildlife corridors in and around new and existing developments.
Heritage Strategy	Committee/ March 2012	Provides guidance on the protection and enhancement of the built heritage of the area.
Housing in the Countryside: Housing Group Capacity Studies	N/A	These capacity studies will be produced on an as-required basis and will assess the ability of housing groups to accommodate additional development.
Inverness City Vision	Consultation March 2012	Provides a wide-ranging vision for the future development and growth of Inverness City.
Local Transport Strategy	Committee/ August 2010	Provides a strategic framework for transport in the Highland for the next three years which will guide decision-making on transport-related issues.



Title of Guidance	Next Milestone/Date	Description
Onshore Wind Energy	Committee/ March 2012	Replaces parts of the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy, identifies areas to be afforded protection from windfarms, other areas with constraints, broad areas of search for windfarms, and sets out criteria for the consideration of proposals. Small-Scale Wind Turbine Proposals Supplementary Guidance is underway.
Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessments	Committee/ March 2012	Provides guidance on reducing the risk of flooding in line with the Council's duties under Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.
Public Art Strategy	Committee/ March 2012	Strategy for securing and managing contributions from developments for the provision of Public Art. To be incorporated within the emerging Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance.
Residential Layout and Design	2012	Provides guidance on the layout and design of new residential developments in the Highland area.
Sandown Development Brief	March 2012	Guides the development of a significant area of land at Sandown on the west side of Nairn, sets out a detailed development framework, including layout and design principles, servicing requirements and environmental factors.
Wild Areas	Summer 2012	Identifies areas of wild land within Highland and provides advice on how best to accommodate change within these areas while safeguarding their qualities.
Castletown Masterplan	2012	Masterplan prepared by The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment covering the area of Castletown and Castlehill. Contains an overall plan for the area together with detailed options for the Harbour, the Mill and the Church, Main Street and Traill Street. Affordability and sustainability are part of the strategies and some phasing is set out.

Title of Guidance	Next Milestone/Date	Description
John O'Groats Masterplan	2012	Masterplan prepared by Highlands and Islands Enterprise which describes a vision and detailed framework of how John O'Groats could be developed to bring economic growth, support regeneration of Caithness, and enable the place to meet its potential.
Marine Renewables	As required	To establish the likely land requirements and infrastructure needs of the emerging marine renewables industry.

## Future Development Briefs

Title of Development Brief	Anticipated Completion	Description
Inshes/Raigmore	2012/13	Provides an overall framework for the development of the area and sets out guidelines on design and other standards expected by the Planning Authority
Inverness City Centre Development Brief	Consultation March to May 2012	Provides an overall framework for the development of the City Centre and sets out guidelines on design and other standards expected by the Planning Authority
Longman Core Development Brief	2012/13	Provides an overall framework for the development of the Longman Core and sets out guidelines on design and other standards expected by the Planning Authority
Longman Landfill	2012	Provides an overall framework for the development of the site and sets out guidelines on design and other standards expected by the Planning Authority
Muirtown/South Kessock	2012	Provides an overall framework for the development of the area and sets out guidelines on design and other standards expected by the Planning Authority
Ness-side/Charleston	2012/13	Provides an overall framework for the development of the area and sets out guidelines on design and other standards expected by the Planning Authority

27. **Appendix 4 - Links to Associated Documents**  
**Pàipear-taice 4 - Ceangalan gu Sgrìobhainnean Co-cheangailte**

**Chapters 1-17**

The Highland Council **Development Planning Web pages**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/developmentplans>

Cairngorms National Park Authority **Planning Web pages**

<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/>

The Scottish Government **Planning Web pages**

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning>

The Highland Council (2009) **Strengthening the Highlands 2009-2011 - The Highland Council's Programme for Administration**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/corporateplan/>

The Highland Council (2009) **The Highland Council's Single Outcome Agreement 2**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/soa/>

Office of the Queens Printer for Scotland **Scottish Planning Legislation and Regulations**

<http://www.oqps.gov.uk>

The Highland Council (2010) **The Highland Housing Need and Demand Assessment**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/HighlandHousingNeedandDemandAssessment.htm>

The Highland Council (2010) **Inverness City Vision 2010**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/InvernessCityVision.htm>

Highland Council (2007) **The A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7297B608-64F3-478C-AC10-4CEABF3595C1/0/A96DevelopmentFramework.pdf>

The Highland Council/Halcrow Group Limited (2009) **The Nigg Development Masterplan**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/nigg.htm>

The Highland Council (2006) **Dounreay Planning Framework**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/dounreay-planning-framework.htm>

Highland and Islands Enterprise and GVA Grimley (2009) **The John O' Groats Masterplan**

<http://www.hie.co.uk/highlands-and-islands/regionally-significant-investments/archive/john-o-groats-masterplan.html>

## Chapter 18 Spatial Strategy – General Policies

The Highland Council (2011) **Supplementary Guidance on Sustainable Design**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/>

The Highland Council (2011) **Supplementary Guidance on Physical Constraints**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/>

The Highland Council (2012) **Supplementary Guidance on Developer Contributions – Consultation Draft**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/>

## Chapter 19 Sustainable Highland Communities

The Highland Council (2010) **Highland Housing Strategy**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/livinghere/housing/housingstrategiesandinitiatives/>

The Highland Council (2011) **Supplementary Guidance on Houses on Multiple Occupation**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/>

The Highland Council (2011) **Supplementary Guidance on Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/>

Scottish Natural Heritage **Landscape Character Assessments**

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/lca/>

Highlands & Islands Enterprise **About Fragile Areas**

<http://www.hie.co.uk/about-hie/fragile-areas.html>

Scottish Government (2010) **Scottish Planning Policy**

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/03132605/0>

## Chapter 20 Delivering a Competitive, Sustainable, Adaptable Highland Economy

The Highland Council (2005) **Highland Area Tourism Partnership Plan 2005-2015**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/tourismdevelopment/highlandtourismpartnership.htm>

The Highland Council (2010) **Coastal Development Strategy**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/coastalplanning/classificationofthehighlandcoast/>

The Highland Council **Aquaculture Framework Plans**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/coastalplanning/aquacultureframeworkplans/>

The Highland Council **Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans**  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/coastalplanning/integratedcoastalzonemanagement/>

Scottish Natural Heritage (2011) **Marine Aquaculture and the Landscape: The Siting and Design of Marine Aquaculture Developments in the Landscape**  
<http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=113>

The Highland Council (2006) **Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy 2006**  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/agriculturefisheriesandforestry/treesandforestry/highland-forest-and-woodland-strategy.htm>

The Highland Council (2011) **Supplementary Guidance on Trees, Woodland and Development**  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/>

Scottish Government (2009) **Policy on Control of Woodland Removal**  
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/woodlandremoval>

Hi-Trans (2008) **Regional Transport Strategy**  
[http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional\\_Transport\\_Strategy](http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional_Transport_Strategy)

The Highland Council (2010) **Local Transport Strategy**  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/transportplanning/localtransportstrategy.htm>

The Highland Council (2011) **The Highland Council Core Paths Plan**  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/what-to-see/countrysideaccess/corepathplans.htm>

## Chapter 21 Safeguarding Our Environment

Scottish Natural Heritage **Protected Areas**  
<http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/advice-for-planners-and-developers/protected-areas/>

Association of Local Government Ecologists (2011) **Biodiversity Toolkit**  
<http://www.biodiversityplanningtoolkit.com/>

Scottish Natural Heritage (2009) **Strategic Locational Guidance for Onshore Wind farms in respect of the Natural Heritage**  
<http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/renewable-energy/onshore-wind/>

Scottish Government (2001) **European Protected Species, Development Sites and the Planning System: Interim guidance for local authorities on licensing arrangements**  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158490/0042962.pdf>

The Highland Council (2007) **Badger Policy Guidance Note**  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/Otherplanningguidance.htm>



British Trust for Ornithology (2009) **Birds of Conservation Concern**  
<http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack/bird-recording/birds-conservation-concern>

HMSO (1994) **Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan**  
<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/>

Highland Biodiversity Partnership **Local Biodiversity Action Plans**  
<http://www.highlandbiodiversity.com/>

Scottish Biodiversity Forum **Scottish Biodiversity List**  
<http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/advice-and-resources/scottish-biodiversity-list/>

Scottish Environment Protection Agency **River Basin Management Plans**  
[http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river\\_basin\\_planning.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx)

European Commission (2000) **Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)**  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html)

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency **Indicative River and Coastal Flood Risk Map**  
[http://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding/flood\\_extent\\_maps.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding/flood_extent_maps.aspx)

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (2006) **Policy and Supporting Guidance on the Provision of Waste Water Drainage in Settlements**  
[http://www.sepa.org.uk/planning/waste\\_water\\_drainage.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/planning/waste_water_drainage.aspx)

Ciria (2007) **The SuDS Manual (CIRIA C697)**  
[http://www.ciria.org/service/Home/AM/ContentManagerNet/HomePages/CIRIA\\_1502\\_2008092\\_9T115140HomePage.aspx?Section=Home](http://www.ciria.org/service/Home/AM/ContentManagerNet/HomePages/CIRIA_1502_2008092_9T115140HomePage.aspx?Section=Home)

Scottish Water (2011) **Sewers for Scotland Manual 2nd Edition**  
<http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/business/our-services/new-connections/sewers-for-scotland-and-suds>

Scottish Government (2004) **Planning Advice Note 69: Planning and Building Standards Advice on Flooding**  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/publications/pans>

## Chapter 22 Sustainable Development and Climate Change

SEPA (2009) **Thermal Treatment of Waste Guidelines**  
[http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste\\_regulation/energy\\_from\\_waste.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_regulation/energy_from_waste.aspx)

Scottish Government (2010) **Zero Waste Plan**  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Waste-1/wastestrategy>

The Highland Council and Moray Council (2008) **The Highland and Moray Council Waste Strategy**  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/wastemanagement/aboutwastemanagement/highlandandmoraycouncilwastestrategy.htm>

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The Highland Council (2010) **Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/Otherplanningguidance.htm>

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2007) **The National Air Quality Strategy**

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/air/air-quality/approach/>

## Chapter 23 Healthier Highland

The Highland Council (2009) **Supplementary Guidance on Open Space in New Residential Developments**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/>

The Highland Council (2011) **Supplementary Guidance on Green Networks**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/>

The Highland Council (2011) **Highland Greenspace Audit 2010**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/osspeg.htm>

Scottish Parliament (2003) **The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003**

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/asp\\_20030002\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/asp_20030002_en_1)

Highland Council (2007) **Access Strategy**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/what-to-see/countrysideaccess/accessstrategy.htm>

## Appendix 2

Scottish Natural Heritage (2010) **The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas**

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/national-designations/nsa/special-qualities/>

Scottish Natural Heritage (2007) **Assessing the Impacts on Wild Land: Interim Guidance Note**

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/landscape-policy-and-guidance/wild-land/wild-land-policy/>

Scottish Natural Heritage **Geological Conservation Review Sites**

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/safeguarding-geodiversity/protecting/geological-conservation/>

Joint Nature Conservation Committee **Geological Conservation Review Sites**

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2947>

## 28. Appendix 5 - Schedule of Land Ownership

### Pàipear-taice 5 - Clàr Seilbh Talmhainn

This Schedule of Landownership sets out where The Highland Council own land covered by allocations in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. This is a requirement of Regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

Description of land owned by planning authority	Reference to policies, proposals or views contained in local development plan which relate to the occurrence of development of the land
Rose Street Car Park, Rose Street, Inverness, IV1 1NQ	Policy 3 – City Centre Development
Inverness Library, Farraline Park, IV1 1NH	Policy 3 – City Centre Development
Inverness Bus Station, Margaret Street, Inverness, IV1 1LT	Policy 3 – City Centre Development
Strothers Lane Car Park, Strothers Lane, Inverness, IV1 1NW	Policy 3 – City Centre Development
Spectrum Centre, Margaret Street, Inverness, IV1 1LS	Policy 3 – City Centre Development
Raining Stairs Car Park, Inverness, IV2 3ES	Policy 3 – City Centre Development
Bridge Street Development, Bridge Street, Inverness, IV2 3BJ	Policy 3 – City Centre Development
Town House Car Park, Castle Street, Inverness, IV2 3AD	Policy 3 – City Centre Development
Fire Station, Harbour Road, Inverness, IV1 1TB	Policy 4 – Longman Core Development
Area Command Office, Burnett Road, Inverness, IV1 1RL	Policy 4 – Longman Core Development
Library Support Unit, Harbour Road, Inverness, IV1 1SY	Policy 4 – Longman Core Development
28 Harbour Road, Inverness, IV1 1SY	Policy 4 – Longman Core Development
30 Harbour Road, Inverness, IV1 1SY	Policy 4 – Longman Core Development
TEC Services Store, Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1RY (to rear of Kwik Fit)	Policy 4 – Longman Core Development
Land comprising of Longman landfill, Inverness, IV1 1FB	Policy 5 – Longman Landfill Policy 71 – Waste Management
Land East of Blackpark Filling Station, Clachnaharry Road, Inverness, IV3 8QH	Policy 6 – Muirtown and South Kessock
Carsegate Industrial Estate, Carsegate Road, Inverness, IV3 8EX	Policy 6 – Muirtown and South Kessock
Kessock Fields Open Space, Kessock Road, Inverness, IV3 8AJ	Policy 6 – Muirtown and South Kessock
Police Headquarters, Old Perth Road, Inverness, IV2 3SY	Policy 7 – Inshes and Raigmore
Land at Sandown Farm, Sandown Sandown, Nairn, IV12 5NE	Policy 9 – A96 Corridor – Phasing and Infrastructure Policy 16 - Sandown

Cawdor Primary School, Cawdor, Nairn IV12 5XZ	Policy 9 – A96 Corridor – Phasing and Infrastructure Policy 22 – Cawdor Expansion
Cawdor Burial Ground, Cawdor, Nairn, IV12 5XP	Policy 9 – A96 Corridor – Phasing and Infrastructure Policy 22– Cawdor Expansion
Land comprising of car park, museum and harbour at John O’Groats, KW1 4YR	Policy 25 – John O’Groats
King George V Playing Fields, Main Street, Castletown, KW14 8TP	Policy 26 – Castletown
Castletown Primary School, Castletown, KW14 8UA	Policy 26 – Castletown

29. **Appendix 6 - Settlement Hierarchy**  
**Pàipear-taice 6 - Rangachadh Thuineachaidhean**

**Regional Centre Functions**

	Inverness
3G Mobile Phone Network Availability	X
Airport with European Connections	X
Archive Centre	X
Arts and Culture Facilities	X
Broadband Provision	X
Conference Facilities	X
Connections to Long Distance	X
Footpaths/Cycle Routes	X
Direct access to road based transport connections linking to the rest of the UK	X
Higher/Further Education Facilities	X
Hospital with Accident and Emergency Department	X
Large Scale Industry	X
Library	X
Main Post Office	X
Major Food Superstore (over 2,500m <sup>2</sup> )	X
Multi-Screen Cinema	X
Museum	X
Park and Ride Facilities	X
Public Transport Interchange	X
Regional Scale Sports Facilities	X
Regional Tourism Gateway	X
Specialist Comparison Retailing	X
Specialist Office Accommodation	X
Strategic Open Spaces	X



## Sub-Regional Centre Functions

	South East Ross	North East Caithness	Skye	South West Highland	South East Sutherland	Nairn
3G Mobile Phone Network Availability						X
Air Connections		X		X		
Arts and Culture Facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X
Broadband Provision	X	X	X	X	X	X
Connections to Long Distance Footpaths/Cycle Routes	X	X	X	X	X	X
Direct access to road based transport connections linking to the rest of the UK	X	X	X	X	X	X
Food Superstore (less than 2,000m <sup>2</sup> )	X	X	X	X	X	X
General Hospital	X	X	X	X	X	X
Higher/Further Education Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X
Library	X	X	X	X	X	X
Medium-Large sized Industrial area	X	X	X	X	X	X
Non-Food and Bulk Goods Retail	X	X	X	X	X	X
Office Accommodation	X	X	X	X	X	X
Post Office	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public transport Linkages to Regional Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sports Facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategic Open Spaces	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tourist Information Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X
Train Station	X	X	X	X	X	X

Sub-Regional Centres may be groups of settlements which have similar characteristics and complement each other and are within a reasonable distance of each other. Below is the list of the settlements which make up each of the sub-regional centres, the sub-regional centres can comprise of a number of local centres.

<b>South East Ross</b> Dingwall Ainness Invergordon	<b>North East Caithness</b> Thurso Wick	<b>Skye</b> Portree	<b>South West Highland</b> Fort William	<b>South East Sutherland</b> Dornoch Golspie Brora Helmsdale	<b>Nairn</b> Nairn
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## Local Centre Functions

	Thurso*	Wick*	Beaully	Muir of Ord	Drumnadrochit	Alness*	Nairn*	Invergordon*	Tain	Dornoch*	Lairg	Golspie*	Brora*	Helmisdale*	Bethhill	Kinlochbervie	Durness	Ullapool	Gairloch	Lochcarron	Kyle of Lochalsh	Portree*	Bradford	Acharacle	Strontian	Kinlochleven	Fort William*	Fort Augustus	Culloden
Public Transport to Regional Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Fuel Filling Station	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Bank	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Post Office	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Secondary School	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Health Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Super/Mini-Market	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Office	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Accommodation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Small Scale Business/Industrial	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Broadband Provision	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Fit for Purpose Open Space	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Sports and Leisure Facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Tourist Information	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

\* Part of a Sub Regional Centre

### 30. **Appendix 7 - Aims and Objectives of the Retention in Part of the Highland Adopted Local Plans**

#### **Pàipear-taice 7 - Clàr Gleidhidh – Ullachaidhean nan Seann Phlanaichean Ionadail ri Leantainn an Gnìomh**

The adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan replaces the Highland Structure Plan (except within the Cairngorms National Park) and updates/supersedes the “general policies” of the existing adopted Local Plans.

In order to retain the other elements of the existing adopted Local Plans (including but not limited to; site allocations, settlement development areas not covered by the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and site specific policies) a Parliamentary Order was laid before Scottish Parliament on 16th March 2012 to enable these elements to remain in force to the extent so specified as required by Schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 As Amended. The Order is called The Town and Country Planning (Continuation in force of Local Plans) (Highland) (Scotland) Order 2012 and came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.

For the Order to be passed it had to be clear that the retained elements of the adopted local plans have met the requirements of European Community Law with respect to Habitats Regulation Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) considers all the policies and proposals of the adopted local plans which are intended to be retained in force. The result of this exercise informs the content of the order. Where a planning application for development gives rise to likely significant effects on a Natura site beyond the scope of that considered in the HRA, an appropriate assessment will be required to be undertaken as set out in Policy 57 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. This could include development proposals on sites allocated in the Local Plans (giving rise to potential effects that were not foreseen in this HRA) and development proposals on sites not allocated in the Local Plans (giving rise to potential effects beyond those considered for the policy framework in this appropriate assessment). The allocations identified through the HRA process as being likely to have significant effects on European sites either alone or in combination with other plans are compiled below.

The elements of the adopted Local Plans which will remain in force are included in this Retention Schedule. The retention in part of adopted local plans allows the Council to retain in force a set of land allocations and some local policies/proposals to help facilitate and manage development across Highland. These retained elements of local plans will remain retained until the time a new area Local Development Plan is prepared covering that area. At that time the retained elements of the local plan will no longer be part of the Development Plan

This Retention Schedule is based upon the Town and Country Planning (Continuation in force of Local Plans) (Highland) (Scotland) Order 2012 and relates to the following Local Plans;



- Inverness Local Plan (Adopted 2 March 2006)
- Nairnshire Local Plan (Adopted: 21 December 2000)
- Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (Adopted: 8 February 2007)
- Sutherland Local Plan 2010 (Adopted: 24 June 2010)
- Caithness Local Plan (Adopted: 12 September 2002)
- West Highland and Islands Local Plan (Adopted: 9 September 2010)
- Wester Ross Local Plan (Adopted: 29 June 2006)
- Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (Adopted: 11 September 1997)

## Habitats Regulations Appraisal

Policy 57 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan seeks to safeguard European sites. The HRA of the Retention of Highland Local Plans identifies the following allocations are likely to have significant effects on European sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects in terms of the following:

Local Plan Sites	Natura Sites	Effects this development may have on European sites
<b>Caithness Local Plan</b>		
Westfield 5j	Caithness Lochs SPA	Loss of feeding areas for qualifying species, displacement of qualifying species from feeding areas.
Watten 5a, 5b, 2a-c	Caithness Lochs SPA	Loss of feeding areas for qualifying species, displacement of qualifying species from feeding areas.
Halkirk 3.01, 3.02, 5, 19	River Thurso SAC	Deterioration in water quality which will effect qualifying species
Thurso 16, 23 ,33, 39, 13e, 13f, 13k, 26	River Thurso SAC	Deterioration in water quality which will effect qualifying species
<b>In-combination effects</b>		
Westfield 5j Watten 5a, 5b, 2a-c	Caithness Lochs SPA	Loss of feeding areas for qualifying species, displacement of qualifying species from feeding areas including disturbance (construction and blade rotation) effects from nearby wind turbines and collision risk
Halkirk 3.01, 3.02, 5, 19 Thurso 16, 23 ,33, 39, 13e, 13f, 13k, 26	River Thurso SAC	Cumulative deterioration in water quality which will effect qualifying species
<b>Inverness Local Plan</b>		
Invermoriston 1	River Moriston SAC	Impact on habitat and loss of species due to potential impact on water quality
Dalchreichart 1	River Moriston SAC	Impact on habitat and loss of species due to potential impact on water quality
Drumnadrochit 22	Urquhart Bay Woods SAC	Loss of habitats/species due to potential impact on hydrology and water quality and recreational disturbance.

Drumnadrochit 23	Urquhart Bay Woods SAC	Loss of habitats/species due to potential impact on hydrology and water quality
<b>In-combination effects</b>		
Croy 6 and Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policy 20	Loch Flemington SPA	Loss of species due to potential impact on hydrology and water quality in combination with HwLDP Policy 20 Croy Expansion
<b>Local Plan Sites</b>	<b>Natura Sites</b>	<b>Effects this development may have on European sites</b>
Invermoriston 1 Dalchreichart 1 Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policy 8 + 9	River Moriston SAC	Water and fish habitat quality issues as a result of increased waste water discharge and diffuse pollution from new and existing housing development and associated infrastructure could affect the River Moriston SAC. Existing mitigation in local plan not considered adequate. Potential impact of additional water abstraction for A96 Corridor developments on fish habitat quality. Potential impact of River Ness bridge crossing on species through disturbance, habitat modification and pollution
Drumnadrochit 22, 23 HwLDP Policy 9	Urquhart Bay Wood SAC	Loss of habitats/species due to potential impact on hydrology, water quality, recreational disturbance and water level

Reference should be made to the further information contained in the [Habitats Regulations Appraisal Record of the Retention of Highland Local Plans](#).

As stated in Policy 57 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, when dealing with a planning application for a development (which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) where we are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site, the proposal will not be in accordance with the development plan.



## Retention Schedule

Provisions of local plans to continue in force

### Inverness Local Plan (Adopted: 2 March 2006)

Provisions of Inverness Local Plan to continue in force	Limitations and exclusions
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 1 (Strategy)	Only to the extent that it relates to settlement policies
Chapter 2 (the City of Inverness)	<p>Other than to the extent to which the provisions relate to land to which a new site specific land allocation applies and excluding the following provisions—</p> <p>in Policy 7 (retailing outwith the city centre)—</p> <p>the reference in the second paragraph to the established retail parks at Inshes and West Seafield; and</p> <p>the reference in the third paragraph to a defined area of the Longman/A82 core;</p> <p>in Policy 8 (regeneration)—</p> <p>sub-paragraph (iv) (Longman Bay);</p> <p>sub-paragraph (v) (rail yard/college); and</p> <p>sub-paragraph (vii) (Ashton);</p> <p>Policy 9 (West Seafield);</p> <p>Policy 10 (Beechwood Park);</p> <p>Policy 11 (West Seafield (Beechwood));</p> <p>Policy 12 (Stratton);</p> <p>in Policy 13 (Longman)—</p> <p>the principle contained in the second bullet point; and</p> <p>the final paragraph</p> <p>in Policy 15 (district centres), sub-paragraph (i) (Holm Mills);</p> <p>Policy 16 (Raigmore Hospital);</p> <p>Policy 17 (Stoneyfield);</p> <p>Policy 19 (Stratton Lodge);</p> <p>Policy 20 (Police Headquarters);</p> <p>in Policy 22 (district/neighbourhood centres/parks), the references to Charleston, Ness-side and Culloden;</p> <p>Policy 28 (A96/Smithton Distributor Roads);</p> <p>Policy 31 (urban distributor roads) to the extent to which it relates to the Smithton Distributor/Barn Church Road – between the A96 and Culloden;</p> <p>in Policy 32 (park-'n'-ride), the reference to West Seafield and to Longman Bay;</p> <p>in Policy 33 (passenger rail halts), the reference to West Seafield;</p> <p>in Policy 38 (land allocations)—</p> <p>sub-paragraph (iv) (Ness Castle/Ness-side); and</p> <p>sub-paragraph (v) (Charleston);</p> <p>in Policy 41 (green wedges)—</p> <p>in sub-paragraph (v) (Beechwood/A9), the reference to the creation of a City common at Beechwood; and</p> <p>sub-paragraph (vi) (Longman/A96);</p>

Provisions of Inverness Local Plan to continue in force	Limitations and exclusions
	Policy 85 (land adjoining Inshes Retail Park); Policy 101 (allocation of land at Stratton for expansion of the District Centre); Policy 107 (allocation of land for a District Park at Stratton/Ashton); and in Policy 109 (traffic management measures) in sub-paragraph (i), the reference to Barn Church Road.
Chapter 3 (A96 Corridor)	Other than the following provisions— Policy 1 (principles); and Policy 6 (industry – fabrication yard).
Chapter 5 (Lochside)	
Chapter 7 (Beaully)	
Chapter 8 (Drumnadrochit)	
Chapter 9 (Ardersier)	Other than the provisions contained under the heading “Expansion” (including policies 11 (Nairn Road) and 12 (Mains of Ardersier))
Chapter 10 (Croy)	Other than the provisions of Policy 11 (amenity areas)
Chapter 11 (Kirkhill)	
Chapter 12 (Kiltarlity)	
Chapter 13 (Dores)	
Chapter 14 (Strathnairn)	
Chapter 15 (Lochend)	
Chapter 16 (Dochgarroch)	
Chapter 17 (Abriachan)	
Chapter 18 (Bunchrew)	
Chapter 19 (Inchmore)	
Chapter 20 (Culloden Moor)	Other than the provisions contained under the heading “Amenity Areas” in so far as they relate to Policy 6 (area of 11.4 hectares west of the railway).
Chapter 21 (Clephanton)	
Chapter 22 (Daviot)	
Chapter 23 (Rural development area)	Other than the provisions of Policy 2 (housing in the countryside)
Chapter 24 (Fort Augustus)	
Chapter 25 (Tomatin)	
Chapter 26 (Balnain)	
Chapter 27 (Invermoriston)	
Chapter 28 (Dalchreichart)	
Chapter 29 (Cannich)	
Chapter 30 (Foyers)	
Chapter 31 (Croachy)	
Chapter 32 (Stratherrick)	
Chapter 33 (Tomich)	
Chapter 34 (Struy)	
Appendix	Other than the provisions contained under the heading “Background Policies”

Provisions of Inverness Local Plan to continue in force	Limitations and exclusions
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text	Only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order.

## Nairnshire Local Plan (Adopted: 21 December 2000)

Provisions of Nairnshire Local Plan to continue in force	Limitations and exclusions
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 2 (General Policies)	Only to the extent to which it sets out and applies general policies on settlement (S1 to S7)
Chapter 3 (Landward Area)	Only the provisions of Policy 4 (allocation of land at Delnies for Business/Tourism)
Chapter 4 (Nairn)	Other than to the extent to which the following provisions relate to land to which a new site specific land allocation applies—
	in land allocation 11 (business/tourism), sub-paragraph (a) (allocation of land at Sandown);
	paragraph 13 (49 hectares at Balblair);
	in paragraph 16 (access improvements), sub-paragraph (ii) (new distributor link with Cawdor Road);
	paragraph 17 (recreational facilities);
	paragraph 20 (agreements for tree planting);
	in land allocation 22 (community/recreation)—
	sub-paragraph (b) (land at Sandown);
	sub-paragraph (c) (land at Kingsteps);
	sub-paragraph (e) (land at Tradespark);
	sub-paragraph (f) (land at Sandown);
	sub-paragraph (g) (land at Sandown-Delnies);
	sub-paragraph (i) (land west of Cawdor Road);
	sub-paragraph (j) (land at Sandown);
	sub-paragraph (k) (land at Balblair); and
	sub-paragraph (l) (land at Balmakeith);
	land allocation 25 (framework plan-structural planting)
	land allocation 27 (housing); and
	paragraph 28 (development briefs/masterplans)
Chapter 5 (Auldearn)	
Chapter 6 (Cawdor)	Only the provisions of land allocation 3(a) relating to Home Farm
Chapter 7 (Croy)	
Chapter 8 (Ferness)	
Chapter 9 (Piperhill)	

<b>Provisions of Nairnshire Local Plan to continue in force</b>	<b>Limitations and exclusions</b>
Chapter 11 (Rural Townships)	
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations and referencing and explanatory text.	Only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order.

## Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (Adopted: 8 February 2007)

<b>Provisions of Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan to continue in force</b>	<b>Limitations and exclusions</b>
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 5 (general policies)	Only to the extent to which it sets out and applies 'Settlement Policies'
Chapter 6 (landward area)	Other than the provisions of—
	the paragraph under the heading "General";
	paragraphs 1 to 3;
	paragraphs 31 to 33;
	paragraphs 37 to 39;
	paragraph 44;
	paragraphs 53 to 72; and
	paragraphs 74 and 75.
Chapter 7 (Achnasheen)	
Chapter 8 (Alness)	
Chapter 9 (Avoch)	
Chapter 10 (Conon Bridge)	
Chapter 11 (Contin)	
Chapter 12 (Cromarty)	
Chapter 13 (Culbokie)	
Chapter 14 (Dingwall)	
Chapter 16 (Evanton)	
Chapter 17 (Fortrose)	
Chapter 18 (Rosemarkie)	
Chapter 19 (Garve)	
Chapter 20 (Hill of Fearn)	
Chapter 21 (Inver)	
Chapter 22 (Invergordon)	
Chapter 23 (Kildary)	

<b>Provisions of Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan to continue in force</b>	<b>Limitations and exclusions</b>
Chapter 24 (Marybank)	
Chapter 25 (Maryburgh)	
Chapter 26 (Milton (of Kildary)	
Chapter 27 (Muir of Ord)	
Chapter 28 (Munlochy)	
Chapter 29 (North Kessock)	
Chapter 30 (Portmahomack)	
Chapter 31 (Seaboard Villages)	
Chapter 32 (Strathpeffer)	
Chapter 33 (Tain)	
Chapter 34 (Tore)	
Appendix 1	Only to the extent to which it sets out and describes "Settlement Policies".
Appendix 2	
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text	Only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order.



## Sutherland Local Plan 2010 (Adopted: 24 June 2010)

Provisions of Sutherland Local Plan to continue in force	Limitations and exclusions
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 2 (introduction and context)	
Chapter 4 (key forecasts, strategy and vision)	Other than provisions of Section A (key forecasts)
Chapter 5 (general policies)	Only the provisions of—
	paragraph 5.2 (land allocations) and policy 2 (development factors and development requirements); and
	paragraph 5.17 and policy 17 (commerce) to the extent to which policy 17 relates to development for retail purposes [within the locations specified in that policy]
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text	Only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order.

## Caithness Local Plan (Adopted: 12 September 2002)

Provisions of Caithness Local Plan to continue in force	Limitations and exclusions
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 3 (general policies)	Other than to the extent to which it sets out and applies “Primary Policies”
Chapter 4 (landward area)	Only to the extent to which it relates to—
	policy 5(c) (Dunnet);
	policy 8 (Mill and Mains of Forss);
	policy 13 to the extent to which that policy relates to development at Mey;
	policies 16 and 17 (Thrumster);
	policy 20 (Dunnet);
	policy 22 (John O’Groats);
	paragraph 23 (Dounreay) and related policies (a) to (f);
	paragraph 24 (oil and gas) and related policy;
	paragraph 25 (land south of Murkle Bay) and related policy;
	paragraph 26 (Forss);
	paragraph 32 (Gills Bay);
	paragraph 33 (Georgemas); and
	paragraph 39 (former mill at Westerdale);

<b>Provisions of Caithness Local Plan to continue in force</b>	<b>Limitations and exclusions</b>
Chapter 5 (Castletown)	Only the provisions of policy 15 (expansion) to the extent to which that policy relates to development for East of Stangergill Burn.
Chapter 6 (Dunbeath)	
Chapter 7 (Halkirk)	
Chapter 8 (Keiss)	
Chapter 9 (Lybster)	
Chapter 10 (Reay)	
Chapter 11 (Scrabster)	
Chapter 12 (Thurso)	
Chapter 13 (Watten)	
Chapter 14 (Wick)	
Appendices	Other than Appendices 1, 2 and 9
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text	Only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order.

## West Highland and Islands Local Plan (Adopted: 9 September 2010)

<b>Provisions of West Highland and Islands Local Plan to continue in force</b>	<b>Limitations and exclusions</b>
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 3 (introduction and context)	
Chapter 5 (key forecasts, strategy and vision for Lochaber)	Other than provisions of Section A (key forecasts)
Chapter 6 (key forecasts, strategy and vision for Skye and Lochalsh)	Other than provisions of Section A (key forecasts)
Chapter 7 (general policies)	Only the provisions of— paragraphs 7.6 to 7.9 (land allocations), including policy 2; and
	paragraph 7.50 and policy 16 (commerce) to the extent to which policy 16 relates to development for retail purposes [within the locations specified in that policy]
Chapter 8 (Settlements – Lochaber – Fort William)	Other than the provisions of policy B6 (Glen Nevis Business Park)

<b>Provisions of West Highland and Islands Local Plan to continue in force</b>	<b>Limitations and exclusions</b>
Chapter 9 (Settlements – Skye & Lochalsh)	Other than the provisions of policy I1 (Land North of Sluggans)
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text	Only to the extent to which those provisions show illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order.

## Wester Ross Local Plan (Adopted: 29 June 2006)

<b>Provisions of Wester Ross Local Plan to continue in force</b>	<b>Limitations and exclusions</b>
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 9 (general policies)	Only the provisions of paragraph 8 (development factors) of policy 4 (other development considerations) and the final paragraph of Policy 4 to the extent to which it relates to that paragraph.
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text	Only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order.

## Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (Adopted: 11 September 1997)

Provisions of Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan to continue in force	Limitations and exclusions
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 2 (landward)	Only the provisions of paragraph 2.2.6 (distilleries) to the extent to which they relate to Tormore.
Chapter 3 (Grantown-on-Spey)	Only the provisions relating to the village of Advie.
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text	Only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order.

31. **Appendix 8 - Policy Index**  
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# Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan

## Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Ghallaigh agus Chataibh

**Adopted**



August 2018

[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)





We are pleased to present the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan, also known as CaSPlan, which The Highland Council will use to guide development and investment in the Caithness and Sutherland area. It was adopted by the Council on 31 August 2018.

Alongside the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, this Plan seeks to deliver key outcomes for:

- **growing communities,**
- **connectivity and transport,** and
- **employment,**
- **environment and heritage**

CaSPlan mainly focuses growth on larger settlements but also supports growth of smaller settlements that is gradual and fits well, in order to help strengthen those communities and support sustainable rural and community-led development. The area faces challenging population changes. The Plan therefore provides a framework to guide and enable a range of levels of development, to support diversification of the economy. The Plan also provides greater certainty to local communities and the development industry on how development sites should be delivered in order to make good places for people to live and work.

This Plan has been prepared in consultation with a range of stakeholders and the content of the adopted Plan is the outcome of a comprehensive engagement process including independent scrutiny at Examination. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to its preparation.

We are pleased to say that the Highland Community Planning Partnership is supportive of these outcomes in principle and of the overall direction of CaSPlan. Individual partners and other agencies have had an ongoing role to advise and comment on CaSPlan during its preparation and will have also in implementing the Plan. The Highland and Local Community Planning Partnerships together with the relevant Local Committees of the Council will have a role in monitoring actions, set out in the associated Action Programme, which will assist delivery of the Plan's vision. The Action (Delivery) Programme will be adopted and published later this year and updated at least every two years, whilst we will monitor progress on a more frequent basis.



Councillor Matthew Reiss  
Chair of the Caithness Committee



Councillor Linda Munro  
Chair of the Sutherland County Committee



The Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan) is the second of three new area local development plans that, along with the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) and Supplementary Guidance, will form the Highland Council's Development Plan that guides future development in Highland. The Plan covers the area shown on Map 1 'CaSPlan Strategy Map'. CaSPlan focuses on where development should and should not occur in the Caithness and Sutherland area over the next 10-20 years. Along the north coast the Pilot Marine Spatial Plan for the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters will also influence what happens in the area.

CaSPlan will be of particular interest to people who live, work or invest in the Caithness and Sutherland area.

In preparing this Plan, the Highland Council has held various consultations. These included the development of a North Highland Onshore Vision to support growth of the marine renewables sector, Charrettes in Wick and Thurso to prepare whole-town visions and a Call for Sites and Ideas, followed by a Main Issues Report and Additional Sites and Issues consultation, then consultation on the Proposed Plan (from January to March 2016) and subsequently on the Modified Proposed Plan (from September to November 2016). The comments submitted during these stages helped us prepare this Plan, with an independent Examination to deal with outstanding issues reporting in April 2018. The final version of CaSPlan reflects the outcomes of that Examination.

The Highland Community Planning Partnership is supportive of these outcomes in principle and of the overall direction of CaSPlan. Individual CPP partners and other agencies have had an ongoing role to advise and comment on CaSPlan as it has been prepared and will have in implementing the Plan. The Partnership will play a key role in monitoring actions, set out in the associated Action (Delivery) Programme, that will assist delivery of the plan's vision.

A number of other pieces of work have fed into the Plan. These include:

- A Monitoring Statement - accompanied the Main Issues Report; we subsequently produced an addendum Housing Background Paper alongside the Proposed Plan;
- Strategic Environmental Assessment - carried out and consulted on during the preparation of CaSPlan;
- Habitats Regulations Appraisal - carried out during the preparation of CaSPlan;
- Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) Screening - undertaken twice during the preparation of CaSPlan

We also made available for reference a Statement of Publicity and Consultation undertaken in the preparation of the CaSPlan.

'Appendix 1 - Schedule of Land Ownership | Èarr-ràdh 1 – Clàr de Shealbh Fearainn' contains a schedule of land that is owned by the planning authority (the Council) and affected by any of the policies, proposals or views expressed in the Plan which relate to specific built developments on specific sites. 'Appendix 2 - Glossary | Èarr-ràdh 2 – Beag-fhaclair' contains a glossary of terms used in CaSPlan.

CaSPlan is to be accompanied by an Action (Delivery) Programme which will help deliver proposals set out in the Plan. A Proposed Action Programme was consulted on twice during the preparation of CaSPlan. We will finalise the Action Programme within 3 months of adopting and constituting

CaSPlan, and will publish it on the [Delivery Programme webpage](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/809/delivery_programmes/1)<sup>(1)</sup>, whilst the Highland Community Planning Partnership will have a key role in subsequent monitoring of progress with implementation.

All of these Council documents are available on the [Highland Council website](http://highland.gov.uk/casplan)<sup>(2)</sup>. For more information on why and how we prepare development plans, please read our [Development Plans website](http://highland.gov.uk/developmentplans)<sup>(3)</sup>.

### What is the Status of the Plan?

CaSPlan joins the HwLDP and Supplementary Guidance as part of the Development Plan that will be used to determine planning applications in Caithness and Sutherland. Any allocation and/or text in the HwLDP that relates to sites within this Plan area is updated by this Plan's content. CaSPlan also replaces the following Local Plans:

- Caithness Local Plan (adopted 2002, continued in force 2012);
- Sutherland Local Plan (adopted 2010, continued in force 2012).

It should be noted that the Council has begun undertaking a review of the HwLDP, and a Main Issues Report was published for consultation on 25 September 2015. The HwLDP Main Issues Report proposes to provide consistent planning policies for the whole of Highland, including policies for "Town Centre First" and "Growing Settlements". The review is ongoing. In the meantime CaSPlan contains policies on these two important issues; ultimately however they will be superseded by the new HwLDP policy framework in due course. It may also be noted that a new Housing Need and Demand Assessment has been prepared to feed in to review of the HwLDP and CaSPlan is based on that new assessment.

Elsewhere in this document, CaSPlan is sometimes referred to simply as "the Plan".

### How to Use the Plan

The main parts of the Plan are the Vision, the Strategy and Policies followed by details for the Caithness Settlements and the Sutherland Settlements.

The Plan is made up of maps and text. If you are interested in finding out what the Plan means for your particular area or proposal then you need to read both. To get the complete picture, you need to read this Plan together with the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance.

Development proposals will need to consider the relevance of all the contents of this Plan, including its Vision and Spatial Strategy. Conformity with a single policy or element of the Vision and Spatial Strategy does not indicate conformity with the Plan as a whole.

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1 [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/809/delivery\\_programmes/1](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/809/delivery_programmes/1)

2 [highland.gov.uk/casplan](http://highland.gov.uk/casplan)

3 [highland.gov.uk/developmentplans](http://highland.gov.uk/developmentplans)

Where proposals are for development of land not specifically identified for such development in CaSPlan, the Vision and Spatial Strategy of CaSPlan together with the Highland-wide Local Development Plan provide a basis for assessing the proposals and considering whether, on balance, they can be supported.

In making planning decisions the Council will take account of a wide range of other factors, such as:

- [national planning](#)<sup>(4)</sup>, policy and guidance;
- the [Highland-wide Local Development Plan](#)<sup>(5)</sup> Supplementary Guidance and non-statutory planning guidance;
- other plans, programmes and strategies of The Highland Council and other public agencies.

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4 <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/planning-architecture/legislation>

5 [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/199/highland-wide\\_local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan)



## Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan

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- 1 The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) has already set out a broad vision and spatial strategy for Caithness and Sutherland, which provided a starting point for preparing CaSPlan. Following discussions with a range of communities and partners we considered it also important to agree what outcomes CaSPlan should be aiming to achieve for the Caithness and Sutherland area.
- 2 To do this we took the relevant outcomes and actions from the Highland Community Planning Partnership's [Single Outcome Agreement \(SOA\)](#)<sup>(6)</sup>. We have aimed to ensure that these outcomes reflect the priorities identified by all sectors of the community in Caithness and Sutherland and have checked them against other organisations' priorities, simplifying down to four themed outcomes tailored to CaSPlan.
- 3 Table 1 'Vision Outcomes' highlights the four outcomes, agreed by the Highland Community Planning Partners, where therefore make up CaSPlan's vision for 2035 and will support both the Council's Programme and the SOA, providing a strong connection to the actions outlined in this Plan.

## A Vision for Caithness and Sutherland in 2035

Table 1 Vision Outcomes

**Growing Communities:** A network of successful, sustainable and socially inclusive communities where people want to live, which provide the most convenient access to key services, training and employment and are the primary locations for inward investment.

**Employment:** A strong, diverse and sustainable economy characterised as being an internationally renowned centre for renewable energy, world class engineering, land management and sea based industries and a tourist industry that combines culture, history, adventure and wildlife.

**Connectivity and Transport:** Enhanced communications, utilities and transport infrastructure that support communities and economic growth, with development anchored to existing or planned provision.

**Environment and Heritage:** High quality places where the outstanding environment and natural, built and cultural heritage is celebrated and valued assets are safeguarded.

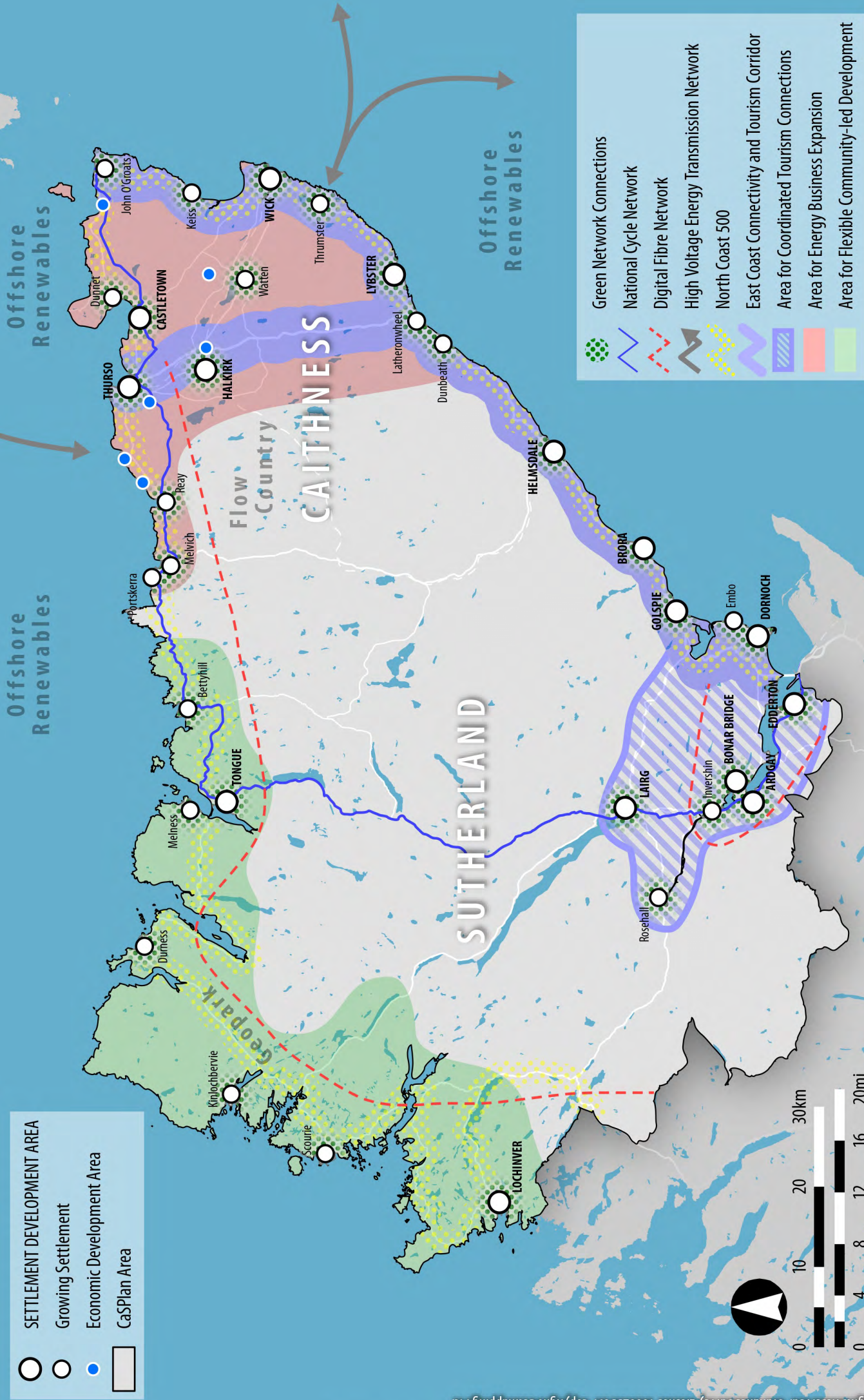
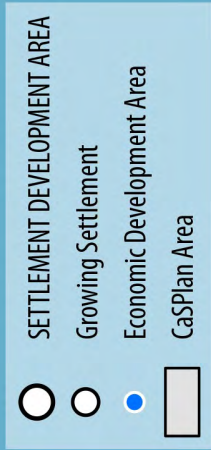
6 <https://www.highland.gov.uk/soa>

## 2 Strategy and Policies | Ro-innleachd agus Poileasaidhean

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- 4 Caithness and Sutherland are the two most northerly parts of Highland and the British mainland and they are characterised by a unique landscape and coastal setting. Their location presents many challenges but make them well placed to take advantage of a number of opportunities. Tourism, aquaculture, renewable energy and the service industry play a strong role in the local job market.
- 5 However, new stable and skilled jobs must be found to replace those lost as Dounreay is decommissioned and new connections set up to the world wide economy. Opportunities for work, training and education must be provided for local people to stay in the area. Development and regeneration cannot take place at a cost to the outstanding built, natural and cultural heritage. New homes also need to be delivered to accommodate demand, including an ageing population, and to build the economy.
- 6 The HwLDP already provides a number of policies which seek to address these priority issues. The spatial strategy for CaSPlan reflects how this can be done at the local level.
- 7 Map 1 'CaSPlan Strategy Map' shows the Spatial Strategy for future development in Caithness and Sutherland, which aims to address the priorities for the area through the Vision's four key outcomes for: growing communities, employment, connectivity and transport, and environment and heritage. Some elements of the strategy and outcomes are inter-related so it will be important to view the Plan as a whole. The Strategy Map does not attempt to identify all development opportunities that may arise to help deliver the Vision to 2035.

# Strategy Map





### The main spatial elements of the strategy are as follows:

#### 8 With a focus on 'Growing Communities':

- Focusing new development mainly within Settlement Development Areas, Economic Development Areas and Growing Settlements to strengthen communities, facilitate access to and provision of services and provide some certainty through a plan-led approach.
- Within remote and rural areas, especially in fragile areas, to take a flexible approach to support communities that are either dispersed or clustered together in settlements offering varying services and facilities. This includes enabling community-led sustainable growth and development as well as growth through inward investment, a particular focus being the Area for Flexible Community-led Development in the north-west.
- Increasing the vibrancy and vitality of town centres (including the defined town centres of Brora, Dornoch, Golspie, Thurso and Wick) by steering a mix of uses to these locations, encouraging reuse of vacant land and buildings and increasing activity and potential custom.

#### 9 With a focus on 'Employment':

- Supporting and enabling the Energy Hub - Area for Co-ordinated Action (as identified in NPF3 for the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters).
- Maximising opportunities arising from offshore renewables and oil and gas, particularly within the Area for Energy Business Expansion in the north east. This includes employment-generating uses to service the sector, through support for harbours, allocation of business and industrial land and a flexible approach to considering the needs of emergent sectors and strategic infrastructure proposals.
- Strengthening links between marine and terrestrial planning, for example by including harbour-related developments in the Plan, providing with the HwLDP a framework for considering proposals for the marine renewables sector and having regard to the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Pilot Marine Spatial Plan and Aquaculture Supplementary Guidance.
- Supporting and enabling a High Voltage Energy Transmission Network (as identified in NPF3), recognising the strategic need and where relevant national priority of some schemes, whilst carefully considering route options and detail of proposals, promoting optimisation of the network to achieve significant benefits with limited impacts through a co-ordinated approach and smart solutions.
- Promoting and supporting Tourism, particularly within the East Coast Connectivity and Tourism Corridor and along the North Coast 500 whilst maximising the reach of the sector inland, for example within the Area for Coordinated Tourism Connections in south-east and central Sutherland and opportunities associated with the National Cycle Network.

### **10 With a focus on 'Connectivity and Transport':**

- Improving the transport infrastructure particularly along the East Coast Connectivity and Tourism Corridor, key for connectivity to and from the larger service centres and providing a foundation for sustainable transport services for the wider area.
- Enabling realisation of a Digital Fibre Network (as identified in NPF3) which supports growing and inclusive communities with sustainable growth of business and employment.

### **11 With a focus on 'Environment and Heritage':**

- Protecting and enhancing the unique natural environment, by focusing development mainly within existing settlements, taking account of key natural features in choosing sites to allocate for development and in setting developer requirements included in this Plan, including consideration of Green Network Connections.
- Safeguarding and promoting appreciation of valued historic environment assets, by taking account of key historic features in choosing sites to allocate for development and in setting developer requirements included in this Plan, and promoting tourism with a historic environment focus.
- Recognising the value of the peatland resource as a vital carbon store and encouraging the area's transition to a low carbon economy.

### **12 The following parts of the Plan provide additional explanation together with policies and proposals for achieving these and delivering the outcomes for Caithness and Sutherland.**

### Growing Communities

**Outcome:** A network of successful, sustainable and socially inclusive communities where people want to live, which provide the most convenient access to key services, training and employment and are the primary locations for inward investment.

- 13** This section outlines the way in which the Plan guides and manages development. It explains the approach taken in terms of identifying an appropriate level of housing land and how the Plan manages growth in particular places and different types of development.
- 14** In general, the Plan directs new development to places which can support community facilities and services that local people regularly use. An ongoing challenge for more rural areas is retaining existing facilities while also attracting additional ones which may be required. This includes services for attracting young people and to support both families and an ageing population. Some of these facilities may be provided by individuals, companies, communities or other organisations and are dependent upon their investment decisions rather than those of the Council. However, the planning system can help to ensure that appropriate sites are identified and that other, supporting development is directed to the right places
- 15** CaSPlan has been prepared to reflect the priorities of other Council services and our partner organisations within the Highland Community Planning Partnership. The Plan is supportive of communities working together to produce and lead on the implementation of their own Community Plans that complement the CaSPlan Vision. If they are aligned this can help when considering planning applications or making development decisions. Community Plans can also help to focus communities to develop local facilities and support networks.

### Housing Land Supply

- 16** A key part of the local development plan is to identify enough land to meet future demand for new housing. Matching housing supply and housing need allows people to live close to places of work and have access to important services. A range of housing options also allows families, young people of working age and elderly people to choose to remain within the area. This can then help address wider issues such as retaining our population and attracting inward migration.
- 17** The housing supply target is a policy view of the number of homes that the Council estimates is required over the period covered by the Plan. It takes into account the 2015 Housing Need and Demand Assessment, the Monitoring Statement (including the Addendum: Housing Background Paper) and wider economic and social factors. The target is founded on an approach of continued economic growth, which is the approach the Council has chosen to follow in its local development plans and is described in the 2015 Highland-wide Local Development Plan Main Issues Report as the 'high' scenario. The approach takes into account the high growth projections set out in the 2015 Housing Need and Demand Assessment. On this basis, the housing supply target for the next 20 years across the Plan area is 1140 houses (530 in Caithness and 610 in Sutherland).
- 18** The Council's reasons for adopting the continued economic growth approach are:

- Additional new housing is required, despite an expected fall in population, in order to meet the demand generated by falling household sizes, and to eradicate the backlog of affordable housing need (predominantly in Sutherland).
- The approach is closely aligned to the objectives of the Council and its Community Planning Partners, which seek to realise the area's economic potential, including the delivery of market and affordable housing.
- The nature of the area's economy is changing, with several emerging growth industries being identified. In particular, the waters around Caithness and north Sutherland have significant offshore renewable energy generation potential, and there are positive signs of increasing activity in the sector, with a number of developments proceeding. Additionally, the area's remoteness means that it has potential for various scales of location sensitive development, such as the nuclear energy development at Dounreay, which has reshaped the local economy over the last 60 years. Also a delay is now expected in the substantial decline of Dounreay dependent jobs because the decommissioning timescales for reaching the Interim End State have been extended to 2030-2033.
- The continuing diversification of the area's economy is sought. Growing the tourism industry is a key objective both regionally and nationally. It is an under developed asset which could generate significant numbers of jobs. Initiatives such as the North Coast 500 and Venture North are helping to promote and co-ordinate tourism in the north of Highland area, and there is potential for various scales of tourism/leisure development in more rural areas.
- Growing these sectors would bring new investment and job opportunities which could have significant effects on retaining young people and helping to reverse population decline.
- The housing supply target equates to an average of 57 house completions across the Plan area each year between 2016 and 2035, but the actual annual house completion rates in recent years have been typically well above that number.

**19** The housing land requirement ensures that a generous supply of land for housing is provided. The Council has set the requirement at 1368 houses (636 in Caithness, and 732 in Sutherland). It has been obtained by increasing the housing supply target figure by 20%, which is at the top end of the 10-20% range referred to in Scottish Planning Policy. The Council has applied a 20% increase in order to add a suitable level of flexibility to the housing land supply in this large, rural Plan area, and to allow an appropriate range of development opportunities to be spread across the Settlement Development Areas.

**20** Table 2'Housing Supply Targets and Housing Land Requirements' shows the Housing Supply Targets (separated into affordable and market sector housing) and the Housing Land Requirements. With regard to affordable housing provision, the Highland-wide Local Development Plan contains the affordable housing policy and our overall development plan policy framework provides the means for considering the merits of any particular proposals that come forward, be they sites allocated for housing or not.

**Table 2 Housing Supply Targets and Housing Land Requirements**

Housing Market Area	Housing Supply Target			Housing Land Requirement (1)
	Affordable	Market	Total	
2016 - 2020				
Caithness	138	132	270	324
Sutherland	140	104	244	293
Total (high scenario)	278	236	514	617
2016 - 2035				
Caithness	272	258	530	636
Sutherland	348	262	610	732
Total (high scenario)	620	520	1140	1368

1. Housing Land Requirement = Housing Supply Target + 20% flexibility allowance.

- 21** To deliver the Growing Communities Outcome the Plan directs most new housing land towards allocated sites in the main settlements. This ensures that new development builds on a network of successful, sustainable and socially inclusive communities which are accessible to key services.
- 22** The Plan contains a generous housing land supply in total and for each Housing Market Area. Based on the indicative housing capacities for each site (shown in the Settlement sections) the total land allocated for housing units is 1616 (Caithness 888 and Sutherland 728). The main reasons for this level of housing land supply, particularly in Caithness, are:
- Many larger housing sites already have planning permission and on some of these developments have either stopped or are progressing very slowly. As the permissions are live, and to ensure the effective planning of settlement expansion areas in bringing forward a variety of uses and delivering infrastructure improvements, it is important to allocate them for development, phased where appropriate.
  - The Council has allocated many brownfield opportunities to help promote regeneration and bring vacant and derelict sites back into use. They often have prominent locations and their redevelopment can have wide ranging positive impacts on the settlement. To encourage their redevelopment, and because their regeneration is a priority, the Council has been flexible in the list of acceptable uses.
  - The rural nature of the area means that due to viability and the need for choice, a greater selection of sites is necessary to ensure that an effective supply is identified. It is essential that the key settlements are supported and strengthened to be more sustainable. This helps to ensure that housing demand is met and supports young people, families, and the elderly to remain in the area.



- 23** However, not all houses will be built on land allocated for housing. Where housing is built on land which is not allocated, it is referred to as 'windfall' housing development. The Monitoring Statement indicates that out of 2111 house completions from 2000 to September 2013, 63% of all completions were effectively windfall. It also showed that the windfall rate varied across the Plan area. The majority of development has been in broadly sustainable locations, with the majority of completions in Thurso (74%) and Wick (62%) being on allocated sites, and a significant proportion being on non-allocated land in Settlement Development Areas.
- 24** The Council is now renewing its focus on tightening up housing development in the countryside, and is considering a new approach as part of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan review. It promotes a proactive approach to the delivery of allocated housing sites, and to this end is setting up a 'Delivering Development Forum', and has established the 'Highland Housing Hub'. The former will support the delivery of development and infrastructure, the latter helps to better co-ordinate housing investment opportunities, making best use of Council assets and opening up sites for housing development. While the new approach may mean that the contribution to the housing land requirement from 'windfall' development could decrease over time, it is likely to continue to have an ongoing important role in the development of the area and the number of housing completions achieved annually. This is particularly so when account is taken of the remote, rural character of the Plan area, and the absence of significant volume house building pressures.
- 25** "Long term" sites have also been identified in the Plan to indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. These are particularly important where it is connected with more strategic expansion plans or areas which comprise the logical direction for expansion for settlements. More information about long term sites is available under the Delivering Development section.

### Managing Growth

- 26** Scottish Planning Policy and the Highland-wide Local Development Plan favour new development in and around existing settlements and town centre locations. This approach has a number of benefits including:
- reducing the need to travel;
  - making the best use of capacity in existing infrastructure;
  - supporting community facilities and services; and
  - minimising the impacts of development on the natural and historic environment.
- 27** CaSPlan provides clarity about how places can grow in the future and presents a proportionate policy framework for guiding development to the correct locations.
- 28** Development will be managed through a three tiered approach:
- Settlement Development Areas (SDAs) and Economic Development Areas (EDAs);
  - Growing Settlements;
  - Wider Countryside.

### Settlement Development Areas (SDAs) and Economic Development Areas (EDAs)

- 29** Development allocations help provide certainty that an adequate supply of suitable land is available for development in locations that are considered to be most suitable for it. Table 3 'Settlement Development Areas', lists the settlements that have boundaries – Settlement Development Areas – and contain allocations for development:

**Table 3 Settlement Development Areas**

Ardgay	Bonar Bridge	Brora
Castletown	Dornoch	Edderton
Golspie	Halkirk	Helmsdale
Lairg	Lochinver	Lybster
Thurso	Tongue	Wick

- 30** Other small-scale infill developments may also be suitable as well as these allocations, if they are within the SDA boundary.
- 31** Maps of these settlements, Placemaking Priorities which will help guide development and information on the site allocations are available in 3 'Caithness Settlements | Tuineachaidhean Ghallaibh' and 4 'Sutherland Settlements | Tuineachaidhean Chataibh'.
- 32** The Plan also identifies Economic Development Areas (EDAs), as listed in Table 4 'Economic Development Areas'. These are places, outwith the main settlements, which either already are or have the potential to become important economic centres. A set of guiding principles is included for each EDA identified in the Plan to guide future development in that area, which will assist in determining the extent and location of suitable opportunities. For two of the EDAs (Dounreay and the Seater Waste Management Facility) the Plan additionally identifies site boundaries.

**Table 4 Economic Development Areas**

Dounreay	Forss Business and Energy Park	Georgemas Junction
Gills Harbour	Janetstown Industrial Estate	Seater Waste Management Facility

### Growing Settlements

- 33** For the Growing Settlements identified in Table 5 'Growing Settlements', development allocations are not provided. Planning applications for development are guided by a criteria based Growing Settlements Policy, which provides a series of factors for assessing development proposals on matters such as the type, scale, siting and design of development. Issues and Placemaking Priorities are also identified for each Growing Settlement, in 3 'Caithness Settlements | Tuineachaidhean Ghallaibh' and 4 'Sutherland Settlements | Tuineachaidhean Chataibh'.

**Table 5 Growing Settlements**

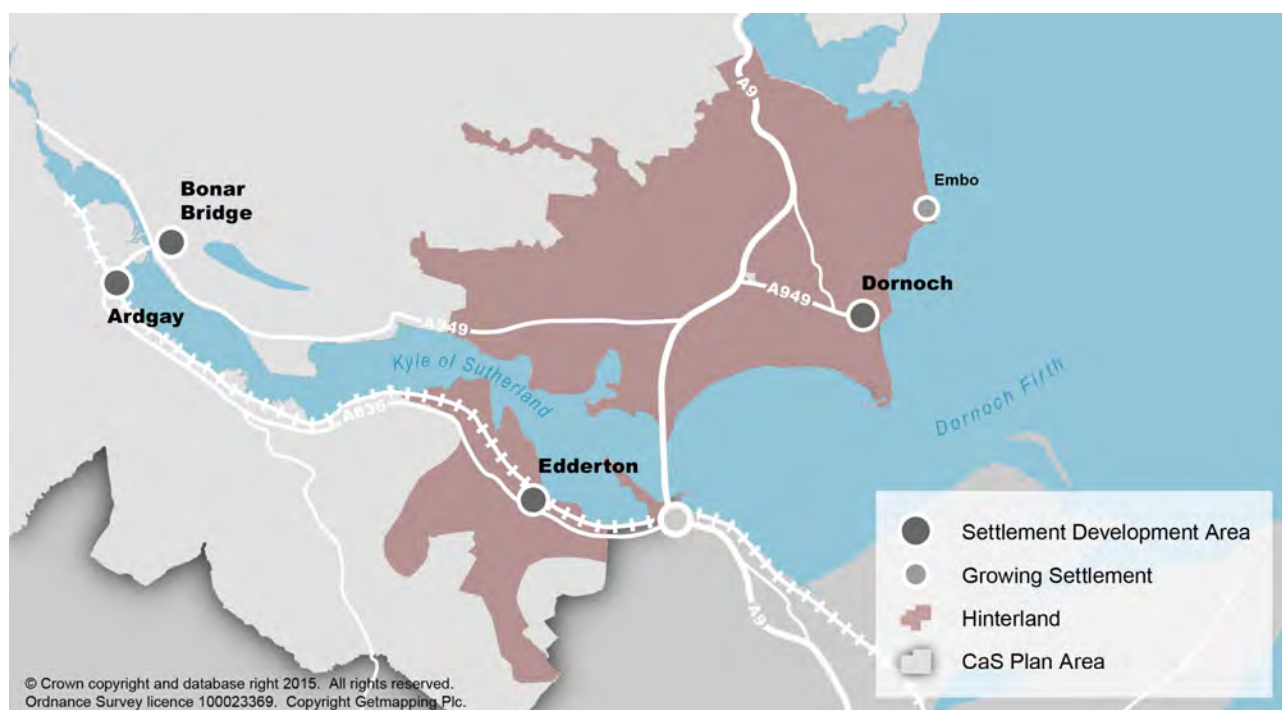
Bettyhill	Dunbeath	Dunnet
Durness	Embo	Invershin
John O' Groats	Keiss	Kinlochbervie
Latheronwheel	Melness	Melvich
Portskerra	Reay	Rosehall
Scourie	Thrumster	Watten

- 34** The Placemaking Priorities can also be used as the framework for the community and partners to work together in preparing any future community plan, development brief or masterplan.

### Wider Countryside

- 35** Within other parts of the Plan area including the smallest housing groups or open countryside, planning applications for development will be assessed under HwLDP Policy on Development in the Wider Countryside. This policy provides a checklist of considerations to make sure new development does not harm the character of rural areas.
- 36** The exception to this approach is that within the area designated as Hinterland of Tain, housing proposals will be assessed under the HwLDP Policy on Housing in the Countryside in Hinterland areas. This sets out a more restrictive approach and includes the areas around Dornoch, Embo and Edderton as shown in Map 2'CaSPlan Hinterland'.

**Map 2 CaSPlan Hinterland**



### Policy 1: Town Centre First

- 37** Town centres are at the heart of communities and should be hubs for a wide range of activities. In order to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of these centres a Town Centre First policy is set out below. This provides support for town centre living and seeks to attract a mix of uses which are active throughout the day and evening. This reflects the latest [Scottish Planning Policy \(2014\)](https://beta.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/)<sup>(7)</sup> and the Scottish Government's [Town Centre Action Plan](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/11/6415)<sup>(8)</sup>.
- 38** The centres of Brora, Dornoch, Golspie, Thurso and Wick play particularly key roles within the settlements and the surrounding areas. For these settlements town centre boundaries are identified and shown on the maps in the Settlements section. Development which generates significant footfall will be directed to the identified town centres in the first instance. A list of uses which this covers together with other considerations are outlined within the Policy below. For proposals of this kind a sequential assessment may be required to demonstrate that the proposal could not be located within a town centre. The Council may also request a retail impact assessment to be carried out to assess whether a proposal may have an undue impact on the viability and vibrancy of a town centre.
- 39** In principle the Council encourages services and facilities to be located centrally in all settlements not just those with town centre boundaries. This helps to ensure that they are in relatively accessible places and that settlement centres are the main hubs for social and business activity in that area.
- 40** For those settlements with town centre boundaries defined on the maps in the Settlements section, the Council intends to undertake town centre health checks, and use their findings to develop town centre strategies which deliver improvements. The health checks and strategies will be used as a baseline for future monitoring and updating. The Council also intends to use the health checks and strategies to provide further information and guidance, including the spatial elements of the town centre strategies, in Supplementary Guidance.
- 41** The current review of the HwLDP provides an opportunity to introduce a single Highland-wide Town Centre First policy which it is expected, when adopted, would supersede the policy in this Plan.

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7 <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/>

8 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/11/6415>

### Policy 1: Town Centre First

Development that generates significant footfall will firstly be expected to be located within the town centres as identified by town centre boundaries. When identifying sites a sequential assessment will be required demonstrating that all opportunities for regeneration through reuse or redevelopment of existing sites or buildings have been fully explored. Should the scale and type of proposal not be suitable for these locations, edge of town centre locations are favoured second, and then out of centre locations that are, or can be made, easily accessible by choice of transport modes. This sequential approach does not apply to established uses and land allocations.

Significant footfall developments include:

- Retail
- Restaurants
- Commercial leisure uses
- Offices
- Hotels
- Community and cultural heritage facilities
- Public buildings, including libraries, education and healthcare facilities

If the Council considers that a proposal may result in an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of any defined town centre, the developer will be required to produce a retail or town centre impact assessment, tailored to reflect the scale and function of the town centre in question. The Council will only support proposals accompanied by competent assessments that demonstrate no significant adverse impacts.

A flexible and realistic approach will be required when applying this sequential assessment, however, developers need to consider how appropriate the nature of their proposal is to the scale and function of the centre within which it is proposed. Exceptions may be made for any ancillary uses that support existing and proposed developments.

The Council intends to undertake health checks and develop town centre strategies for the defined town centres of Brora, Dornoch, Golspie, Thurso and Wick, and to use these to provide further information and guidance, including the spatial elements of the town centre strategies, in Supplementary Guidance."

Proposals for conversion of buildings to residential use in town centres may be supported, providing there is no loss of existing or potential viable footfall generating use(s). Proposals for conversion to residential use must demonstrate that the property has been marketed for its existing use at a reasonable price / rent without success for a minimum period of 12 months. For vacant upper floor conversions (excluding hotels) support may be given without the requirement for marketing where it can be demonstrated that the proposals would contribute towards a balanced mix of uses.



### Policy 2: Delivering Development

#### Site Capacities

- 42** Indicative housing capacities for each site are shown within the site allocation details in the Plan. Planning applications are expected to be generally consistent with the indicative capacities specified. However a different capacity than that specified may be acceptable subject to detailed design that demonstrates efficient use of land and a satisfactory site layout.
- 43** These indicative capacities were calculated having regard to the requirement for housing land, to the need to promote the efficient use of land and to take account of: any mix of uses specified, relative accessibility of the site, character of the place and the site's locality, general site conditions and constraints and the specified developer requirements, including any infrastructure to be included in the site. Where available any planning history of the site and information provided by landowners or developers of the site was also taken into consideration.

#### Long Term Sites

- 44** Sites identified in the Plan as "Long Term" indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the period covered by this Local Development Plan. The suitability of these sites for development has been subject of initial consideration through the preparation of this Plan. However, they are not being invited for development within this Plan period and allocated sites are expected to be developed before any long term sites can be considered. During future reviews of the Plan we will consider bringing forward any of those sites as allocations (subject to further assessment and identification of any developer requirements) or whether they still reflect the likely preferred direction for growth and should remain proposed as long term sites. We review the Plan at least every five years.

#### Implementation

- 45** To help deliver the proposals set out within the Plan we have prepared and will maintain an Action (Delivery) Programme. It sets out who is responsible for the delivery of development sites, improved infrastructure, their priority, a broad indication of when it will need to be installed/completed by. Where possible and necessary, it will also include details of infrastructure proposed through national plans, such as the National Planning Framework and the Strategic Transport Projects Review, that are also relevant to the area's growth in order to provide as complete a picture as possible. All parties referred to in the Action Programme have a key role in the implementation of the Plan and the Council will, in conjunction with Community Planning Partners, monitor progress.
- 46** The provision of infrastructure is fundamental to the delivery of development and to create communities served by an appropriate level of services and facilities and more efficient forms of travel. The Council has taken a proactive partnership approach to identifying infrastructure requirements for new development and considering future transport needs when preparing the strategy and site allocations for the Plan. Where possible we have indicated specific requirements in the Plan. The majority of these requirements relate to the impact of new developments allocated in the Plan and therefore generally will be delivered by private sector investment. This will be secured using tools such as conditions on planning applications or

planning obligations. Public funding may also be required to help deliver certain projects. Developer requirements set out in this plan may be subject to change following the detailed assessment of proposals through the pre-application and application processes, having regard to the Developer Contributions provisions of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and related Supplementary Guidance.

- 47** In preparing planning applications, developers should therefore not only have regard to the requirements set out in this Plan but also to the policies of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and related Supplementary Guidance. This includes, for example, the requirement that most new development must connect to the public sewer and that alternative sewerage arrangements will only be acceptable in specific circumstances and subject to stringent requirements being met.
- 48** Masterplanning of larger developments can make a positive contribution to the creation of high quality, sustainable and successful places. It is an effective tool for engaging the community and others in the planning process to deliver high quality environments, good transport connections and well designed homes. As such, the Plan encourages a masterplanned approach to new developments which should be carried out at the earliest possible opportunity and taken into consideration at all stages of the planning application process. Each phase of development will need to show its relationship to the overall masterplan and demonstrate how the required infrastructure will be delivered.

### **Policy 2: Delivering Development**

Development of the locations and uses specified in the settlements section of the Plan ( 3'Caithness Settlements | Tuineachaidhean Ghallaibh' and 4'Sutherland Settlements | Tuineachaidhean Chataibh') will be supported subject to provision of the necessary infrastructure, services and facilities required to support new development as indicated in this Plan or identified in accordance with the Development Plan as more detailed proposals are brought forward.

Larger sites must be appropriately masterplanned. Each phase of development will need to show its relationship to this overall masterplan and demonstrate how the required infrastructure will be delivered.

However, sites identified in the Plan as "Long Term" are not being invited for development within this Plan period and allocated sites are expected to be developed before any long term sites can be considered.

### Policy 3: Growing Settlements

- 49** Our policy for guiding development in the Growing Settlements is set out below.
- 50** The Growing Settlements in the CaSPlan area are: Bettyhill, Dunbeath, Dunnet, Durness, Embo, Invershin, John O'Groats, Keiss, Kinlochbervie, Latheronwheel, Melness, Melvich, Portskerra, Reay, Rosehall, Scourie, Thrumster, Watten.
- 51** It is expected that the current review of the HwLDP provides an opportunity to introduce a single Highland-wide Growing Settlements policy which, when adopted, would supersede the policy in this Plan.

### Policy 3: Growing Settlements

Development proposals that are contained within, round off or consolidate the Growing Settlements (listed above) will be assessed against the extent to which they:

- take account of the issues and placemaking priorities identified for the individual Growing Settlements in 'Caithness Growing Settlements' and 'Sutherland Growing Settlements';
- are likely to help sustain, enhance or add to facilities with proposals being located within active travel distance of any facility present;
- are compatible in terms of use, spacing, character and density with development within that settlement and demonstrate high quality design;
- can utilise spare capacity in the infrastructure network (education, roads, other transport, water, sewerage etc.) or new/improved infrastructure can be provided in a cost efficient manner, taking into account the Council's requirement for connection to the public sewer other than in exceptional circumstances;
- avoid a net loss of amenity / recreational areas significant to the local community; and
- would not result in an adverse impact on any other important heritage feature (including natural or built), important public viewpoint/vista or open space.

Proposals which demonstrate overall conformity with the above criteria will be in accordance with this policy. These criteria will also be used to determine the suitability of development proposals and as the framework for preparing any future Development Briefs or Masterplans for development for Growing Settlements.

### Employment

**Outcome:** A strong, diverse and sustainable economy characterised as being an internationally renowned centre for renewable energy, world class engineering, land management and sea based industries and a tourist industry that combines culture, history, adventure and wildlife.

- 52** One of the aims of this Plan is to ensure that development helps to maintain and grow a strong and diverse Caithness and Sutherland economy. This is fundamental to continuing to create long-term employment opportunities and attract inward investment. In the north the decommissioning of Dounreay has been seen as the main reason for a decline in overall job numbers within the Plan area over recent years. There are signs that efforts to diversify the economy are working as the percentage of jobs dependent upon Dounreay decreased from 15% to 10% between 2006 and 2011, and the number of new businesses being created is on the rise.
- 53** Investment in renewable energy generation in North Highland is not only helping to meet Council and national climate change targets but it has also delivered economic benefits for the area. Onshore wind energy has grown significantly over recent years, particularly in the south and north-east of the Plan area.
- 54** This Plan recognises the potential for marine renewable energy generation, particularly in the north-east of the Plan area which is identified in the Spatial Strategy for Energy Business Expansion. This reflects the [National Planning Framework 3 \(NPF3\)](#)<sup>(9)</sup> which designates the Orkney, Pentland Firth and North Caithness as an Area of Coordinated Action. The Plan aims to maximise the benefits to the local economy by adopting a more targeted, but still flexible, approach to identifying business and industrial land. It builds on the work carried out as part of the North Highland Onshore Vision (NHOV) which identified land use planning actions to support the growth of marine renewables. Several of the actions identified in the NHOV are being carried forward within the CaSPlan Action Programme.
- 55** The tourism sector is considered as an increasingly important component of the economy. The Plan supports suitable opportunities throughout Caithness and Sutherland including in more rural and remote locations. As shown within the Spatial Strategy the East Coast Connectivity and Tourism Corridor is considered as having particular development potential. Proposals will be assessed against the CaSPlan's vision and strategy, as well as the general policies set out in the HwLDP.
- 56** The historic environment already plays an important role within the tourism industry and the wider economy of Caithness and Sutherland. The Plan supports the principle of taking further advantage of the rich and diverse heritage for economic and cultural benefits. The [Caithness Broch Project](#)<sup>(10)</sup>, for example, aim to preserve and promote historical sites in Caithness and their plans for an archaeological trail and reconstruction of a broch could boost tourism and raise awareness of the area's heritage.

9 <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/NPF3-SPP-Review/NPF3>

10 <http://www.thebrochproject.co.uk/>

- 57** The Plan supports appropriate developments which build on existing assets, such as the [North West Highlands Geopark](https://www.nwhgeopark.com/)<sup>(11)</sup>. The [North Coast 500](https://www.northcoast500.com/)<sup>(12)</sup> is fast becoming established as an internationally renowned tourist route. This could have wide-ranging benefits across the larger settlements and for the small and more rural communities across the whole of the CaSPlan area. Communities are encouraged to work together to formulate a tourism plan for their own area that makes the most of their natural and cultural heritage and complements the CaSPlan Vision. This includes areas which are not necessarily along the actual North Coast 500 route.
- 58** As well as providing support for the renewables and tourist sectors, CaSPlan recognises that much of the Plan area, particularly in Sutherland, is centred on land and marine management, including agriculture, estate management, forestry, aquaculture and fishing. CaSPlan supports the growth of skills and employment opportunities within these industries. Proposals within the wider countryside will also be set against the general policies of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. This ensures that the sectors grow in balance with the protection of the wider environment.
- 59** Partnership working is essential to support existing businesses to grow, attracting new businesses to the area and maximising inward investment, for example Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership (CNSRP) and the North Highland Initiative (NHI).
- 60** The [Dounreay Planning Framework](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712051/dounreay_planning_framework)<sup>(13)</sup> provides a land use development brief against which to regulate and control future decommissioning and restoration works. Going forward, this is continued with CaSPlan indicating the main principles of the Framework. Options for future use of land within or adjoining the Dounreay site will be limited due to the previous activities and ongoing decommissioning. The framework suggests some potential future uses.
- 61** The adjacent Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment (NTRE) site is also due to be decommissioned in coming years. The Council would be supportive of a similar framework for setting out the phased decommissioning and future uses of the site. As a valued employer, who have designed and managed the Vulcan facility for over 50 years, the Council would encourage opportunities for Rolls Royce to continue a strong presence in the area.
- 62** In Caithness and Sutherland many of the town and village centres play an important role in the economic and social fabric of the area. A vibrant and viable town centre is fundamental to a strong and diverse economy and provides a hub for a wide range of activities. To help protect these centres the Plan includes a 'Town Centre First Policy' (shown in 'Policy 1: Town Centre First'). This directs development which generates significant footfall towards the settlement centre and avoids inappropriate out-of-town developments.

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11 <https://www.nwhgeopark.com/>

12 <https://www.northcoast500.com/>

13 [https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory\\_record/712051/dounreay\\_planning\\_framework](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712051/dounreay_planning_framework)



- 63** Improvements in internet connections are important for helping to encourage inward investment. This ranges from large multi-national companies monitoring new renewable energy technologies to home-working, live-work units, micro businesses and community hubs. The Scottish Government's National Digital Fibre Network project is currently delivering enhanced digital infrastructure across much of the Highlands.

### Marine Planning

- 64** Highland has a range of marine activities including commercial shipping through established ports and harbours, fishing, aquaculture, tourism, leisure and recreation activities. Some of these industries are thriving and they all rely on the quality of our marine waters and coastal environment; they also have a role in maintaining these qualities to support sustainable economic development.
- 65** The policy framework for marine planning is evolving at both national and regional levels with the publication of the National Marine Plan (March 2015) and the development of Regional Marine Plans. The National Marine Plan applies from Mean High Water Springs and covers both Scottish inshore waters (out to 12 nautical miles) and offshore waters (12 to 200 nautical miles). The National Marine Plan has statutory effect for any public authority taking decisions which can affect the marine area. Statutory Regional Marine Plans will be delivered by Marine Planning Partnerships once established. The Council, in partnership with Marine Scotland and Orkney Islands Council, has finalised and adopted the non-statutory Pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan which is a material consideration in assessing relevant planning applications along the north Caithness and Sutherland coastline. Key elements of the National Marine Plan include the full integration of the Western and Northern Isles into the UK electricity network, which will include an AC connection between Orkney and Caithness and a high voltage DC connection between Spittal, Caithness and Blackhillock, Moray. The National Marine Plan also recognises the Caithness and Sutherland Coast's coastal and marine tourism assets.
- 66** Given the growth of various maritime industries around our coasts, including offshore renewable energy in Caithness and Sutherland, and the timescales for national and regional policy development, some policy steer is required at the local level to shape where growth sectors can develop. CaSPlan supports the integration of marine and coastal development. This is achieved by the approach to supporting employment-generating uses like offshore industries, encouraging growth of the area's ports and harbours, supporting key infrastructure, and identifying business and industrial land. The HwLDP includes policy in support of marine renewables, aquaculture, the integration of coastal and marine planning and links to relevant supplementary guidance.

### Connectivity and Transport

**Outcome:** Enhanced communications, utilities and transport infrastructure that support communities and economic growth, with development anchored to existing or planned provision.

- 67** To be a competitive and successful place, Caithness and Sutherland need to be well connected. This will enable people and businesses to transport and communicate their goods and services, as well as making it easy for people to live, work and visit.
- 68** There are a range of key assets that the Plan area already has that CaSPlan recognises and aims to support, like improving transport infrastructure along the East Coast Connectivity and Tourism Corridor, to connect the larger service centres and provide a foundation for sustainable transport services for the wider area.
- 69** However, for some parts of the CaSPlan area, there remain some fundamental challenges:
- Some areas have limited transport options and higher dependency on car ownership, and many people travel by car to access services, education, training and employment.
  - Other areas have limited road infrastructure, with communities reliant on single-track roads as their main routes. Communities can play a key role in addressing this issue, for example, by providing community transport solutions, like Transport for Tongue.
  - Key growth sectors, like the renewables industry, may put increased pressure on the road network. In some cases renewable energy projects may result in repairs and upgrades but it is essential that the Council ensures that there is no net degradation to infrastructure from these projects.
  - In some parts of the CaSPlan area there is limited connectivity to water, waste water treatment and high speed internet, all of which could potentially limit opportunities for growth and achieving the outcomes of the plan.
  - The continued growth of the tourism industry may put increased pressure on the road network, particularly in rural areas.
- 70** CaSPlan addresses these challenges by:
- Aligning with the Highland Local Transport Strategy and supporting projects to be delivered by partner agencies, for example, Transport Scotland's planned improvements for Berriedale Braes on the A9, Network Rail's enhancements to the Far North Line, and measures addressing the challenges in the provision of public transport.
  - Supporting National Planning Framework's national development of a Digital Fibre Network. For example, by supporting Highlands and Islands Enterprise's roll out of superfast broadband and by capitalising on such opportunities to reduce the need to travel.
  - Promoting active travel opportunities, particularly between settlements such as Brora and Golspie, and within Thurso and Wick. The existing Core Path network is identified and safeguarded from inappropriate development. There are developer requirements to safeguard and/ or enhance the core path network for relevant site allocations. Proposed paths are also identified and may be included as Core Paths through the Core Path Plan

review process. Developer requirements and mapping are used in the Plan to maximise opportunities for green network improvements and enhancements.

- Directing development to locations easily linked to existing connections in the transport network, and utilities and communications infrastructure. Development in such locations can attract investment to upgrade these networks.

### Environment and Heritage

**Outcome:** High quality places where the outstanding environment and natural, built and cultural heritage is celebrated and valued assets are safeguarded.

- 71** CaSPlan is home to a diverse range of renowned and celebrated built and cultural assets. The Plan balances the need to capitalise on these assets for social, economic, environmental and other needs, whilst safeguarding their unique character and qualities.
- 72** The natural and historic environment is rich, containing: internationally and nationally recognised sites, species and habitats; locally valued sites and landscapes; dramatic landforms, and a diverse cultural heritage. HwLDP policies provide safeguards for these features.
- 73** Special Landscape Area (SLA) boundaries have been revised for the CaSPlan area to ensure key designated landscape features are not severed and that distinct landscapes are preserved (see 'Special Landscape Areas').

### Conservation Areas

- 74** In 3'Caithness Settlements | Tuineachaidhean Ghallaibh' and 4'Sutherland Settlements | Tuineachaidhean Chataibh', CaSPlan identifies where there may be potential for designation or review of Conservation Areas for the following places:
- Dornoch Conservation Area (review)
  - Golspie's historic core (potential future designation)
  - Helmsdale's historic core (potential future designation)
  - Lybster Conservation Area (potential extension to harbour)
  - Thurso Conservation Area (review)
  - Wick Pultneytown Conservation Area (review)
- 75** There may be other areas with special architectural or historic interest that merit Conservation Area designation, and these may be appraised and considered in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.
- 76** Appraisals for Conservation Areas may be undertaken and Management Plans prepared. These Management Plans will include details on the following issues for each Conservation Area (as set out in [Planning Advice Note PAN71: Conservation Area Management](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/12/20450/49062)<sup>(14)</sup>):
- Opportunities for development in the Conservation Area (e.g. preparing design statements for sensitive sites)
  - Opportunities for Planning action (e.g. identifying need for urgent works, building repairs etc.)
  - Opportunities for enhancement (e.g. identifying opportunity for new or restored surfaces, planting and street furniture)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/12/20450/49062>

- Conservation strategy (providing guidance on key aspects of the Conservation Area)
- Monitoring and review (e.g. creating monitoring indicators and mechanism for review).

### Green Networks and Green Space

- 77** CaSPlan's geography is made up of a large rural area, much of which is of high nature conservation value, has a range of natural heritage assets and provides good access to the countryside. Green networks offer great opportunity for the Plan to reinforce links between settlements and the natural environment and to enhance this already well-connected network.
- 78** Green networks do not prevent development but their integrity must be maintained and opportunities for enhancement considered, as shown on Map 1 'CaSPlan Strategy Map'. Safeguarding and enhancement opportunities are identified in Placemaking Priorities for Settlements and in Developer Requirements for sites. As Green Networks comprise multiple functions including open space, core paths, forests and woodlands, coastal zones, allotments and private green spaces (etc.), there may be additional opportunities for enhancements that are not outlined in the Plan.
- 79** There are important Green Spaces in and around the settlements in the Plan area. HwLDP policies safeguard these networks of sustainable, accessible and fit for purpose green spaces including sports facilities. Therefore as well as identifying Green Networks, CaSPlan also identifies important green spaces in settlement development areas to be safeguarded from inappropriate development and enhanced where appropriate.

### Climate Change

- 80** The Council is committed to working with communities, businesses and partners to mitigate our impact on climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, maximising renewable energy contributions, taking steps to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of a changing climate and to working with communities to respond to climate change. This commitment is reflected in the Council-led Carbon CLEVER initiative which aims for a "carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands" by 2025.
- 81** The area has a vital contribution to make towards achieving the Council's ambitious aim of a low carbon Highlands by 2025 and is already playing a significant part in this. Alternative fuels and heating options are important and the district heating scheme in Wick and the biomass boilers being widely implemented in Council buildings are examples of what is already being achieved. Developers are encouraged to consider options for low or zero carbon heating and district heating schemes by making use of the [Scotland Heat Map](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/Energy-sources/19185/Heat/HeatMap)<sup>(15)</sup> which provides information on heat demand and supply opportunities.
- 82** The area also has a substantial renewable energy resource, with onshore wind and hydro energy sectors well established and offshore and marine energy developments currently emerging.

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15 <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/Energy-sources/19185/Heat/HeatMap>



- 83** Peatland is a vital carbon store and Caithness and Sutherland's peatland resource is of international importance. Through the policies in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) we can help safeguard important peatland resources.

### Special Landscape Areas

- 84** Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are regionally valuable landscapes identified to protect and enhance landscape qualities and promote their enjoyment. HwLDP policy safeguards these areas and is accompanied by a background paper "The Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas".

### Special Landscape Area Boundary Revisions

- 85** Through the preparation of CaSPlan the Council consulted on the revision of SLA boundaries to better reflect the landforms identified, to avoid severing landscape features, and to ensure any extensions reflected similar special landscape characteristics.

- 86** Map 3 'CaSPlan Special Landscape Areas' indicates the extent of the revised SLAs within the Caithness and Sutherland area and detailed maps are available on our [website](#)<sup>(16)</sup>. The following boundary revisions have been made:

**87 Dunnet Head SLA:**

- The western boundary has been extended to include all of Dunnet Bay to avoid bisecting Dunnet Bay, a self contained landscape feature within the SLA.

**88 Oldshoremore, Cape Wrath and Durness SLA:**

- Firstly, the eastern boundary has been extended to include: the promontory at Rispond; Rispond Bay; Eilean Cluimhrig and An Dubh-sgeir islands. This is to avoid bisecting the beach Traigh Allt Chailgeag, incorporate key landscape and visual characteristics described in the SLA citation (rocky promontories, skerries and lower lying sheltered bays) and because the coastline changes at the southeast edge of the extension.
- Secondly, important landscape features in the seascape are included: Duslic off the coast at Cape Wrath; Am Baig off the coast at Am Buachaille; Eilean a' Chonnaidh. This is because the extension incorporates key landscape and visual characteristics described in the SLA citation (skerries) and to avoid severing Eilean a' Chonnaidh, a self contained landscape feature within the SLA.

**89 Eriboll East and Whiten Head SLA:**

- The western extent of the SLA boundary has been extended to include the entire island Eilean Choraigh. This is to avoid bisecting the island, a self contained landscape feature within this SLA.

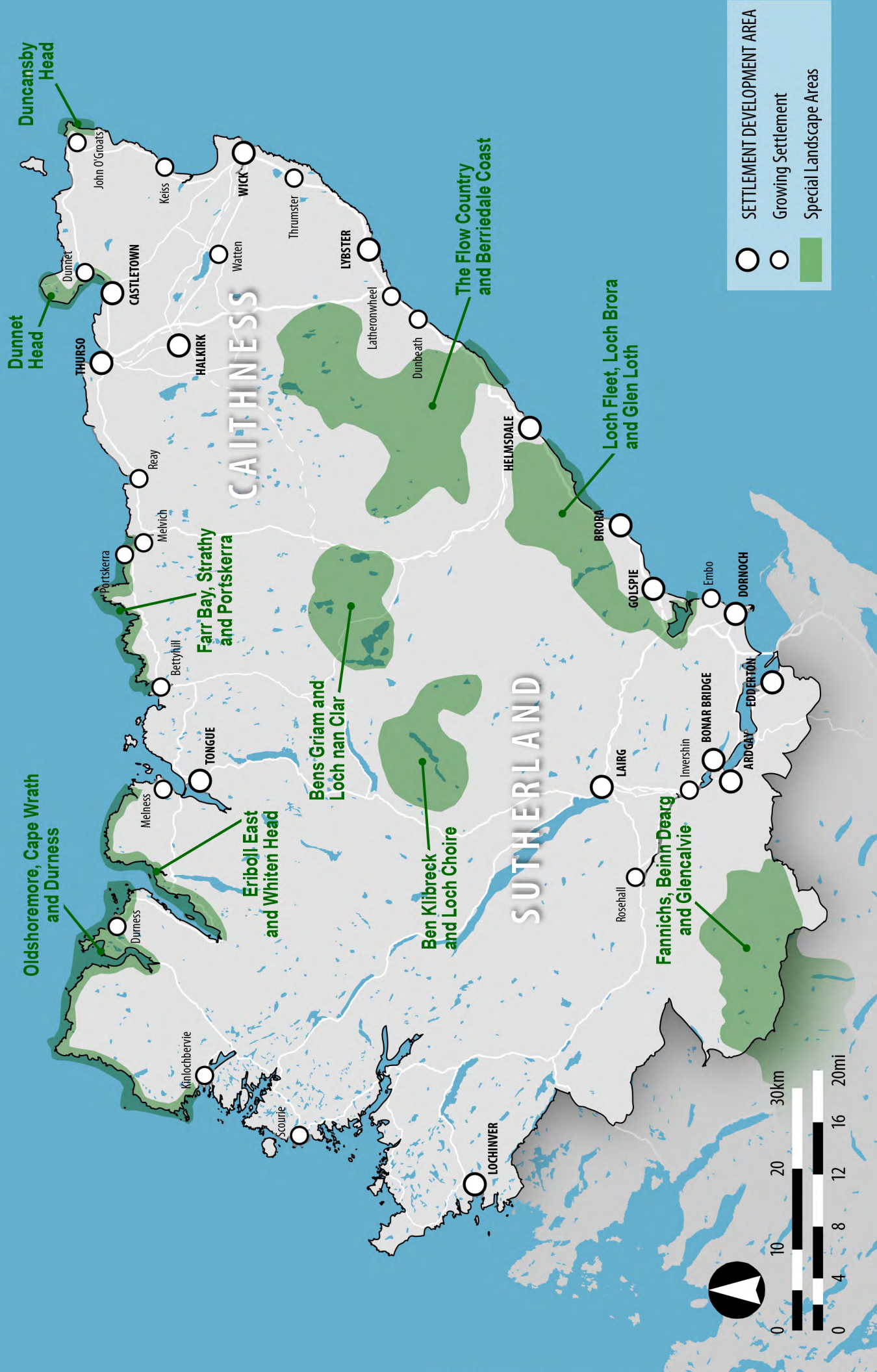
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16 [https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory\\_record/712044/special\\_landscape\\_area\\_citations](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712044/special_landscape_area_citations)

### 90 Farr Bay, Strathy and Portskerra SLA:

- The eastern boundary has been extended to include Rubh Bra promontory and Melvich Bay. This is because Melvich Bay shares landscape characteristics with Armadale and Strathy Bays which both lie within this SLA, Melvich Bay reflects a key landscape and visual characteristic of the SLA citation (fine sandy beaches in the largest and most sheltered bays which form foci that contrast in colour, form and texture to the rocky coastal cliffs), the land between the SLA boundary and bay reflects one of the key landscape and visual characteristics of the SLA, (elevated areas on the intervening high ground between the bays close to the sea provide expansive views both along the coast and out to sea) and because beyond the extended boundary there is a change in the character of the coastline so this provides a more appropriate boundary for this SLA.

# Special Landscape Areas



**91** In this section of the Plan you will find the detail for the following places.

<b>Settlement Development Areas</b>	<b>Economic Development Areas</b>	<b>Growing Settlements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Castletown'</li> <li>• 'Halkirk'</li> <li>• 'Lybster'</li> <li>• 'Thurso'</li> <li>• 'Wick'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Dounreay'</li> <li>• 'Forss Business and Energy Park'</li> <li>• 'Georgemas Junction'</li> <li>• 'Gills Harbour'</li> <li>• 'Janetstown Industrial Estate'</li> <li>• 'Seater Waste Management Facility'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Dunbeath'</li> <li>• 'Dunnet'</li> <li>• 'John O' Groats'</li> <li>• 'Keiss'</li> <li>• 'Latheronwheel'</li> <li>• 'Reay'</li> <li>• 'Thrumster'</li> <li>• 'Watten'</li> </ul>

### Castletown

- 92** Much of Castletown was planned on a grid pattern and built during its time at the centre of a thriving flagstone industry in the 19th Century. The shore front at Castlehill was pivotal to the production and transportation of the flagstone which was exported all over the world. Nowadays the harbour is only used by several small boats and many of the buildings along the coast line have fallen into ruin. This rich history remains clearly visible in the landscape and there is great potential to convert and redevelop the area into a well defined tourism destination.
- 93** In 2007 The Prince's Foundation for Building Community (PFBC), in consultation with the local community, prepared the [Castletown Village Masterplan](#)<sup>(17)</sup> which included proposals to reconnect the village with the historic shorefront. Work has already been carried out to establish heritage trails to the north-west. The former dairy and steading at Castlehill has also recently been renovated and is now home to the heritage centre which provides a high quality visitor experience and educational resource.
- 94** The PFBC masterplan provides a useful illustration of housing and commercial development and regeneration opportunities across the village. It also recognises the mature woodland, good quality agricultural land and watercourses which provide important green corridors that need to be protected and where possible enhanced.
- 95** The former freezer manufacturing site has remained largely vacant since the closure of Icetech in 2013 and offers a wide range of business and industrial opportunities.

17 [www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1789/castletown\\_reportpdf.pdf](http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1789/castletown_reportpdf.pdf)





















#### Placemaking Priorities

- Promote opportunities for redevelopment, renovation and infill development within the village centre and other brownfield sites.
- Better connect the village with Castlehill and the harbour with long term potential for a mixed use expansion extending from the centre of Castletown connected via a new, wide tree-lined street and green corridors.
- Develop high quality leisure and tourism facilities along the shore front which could provide an anchor for further development.
- Enhance access to green corridors surrounding the village and protect these areas from development.

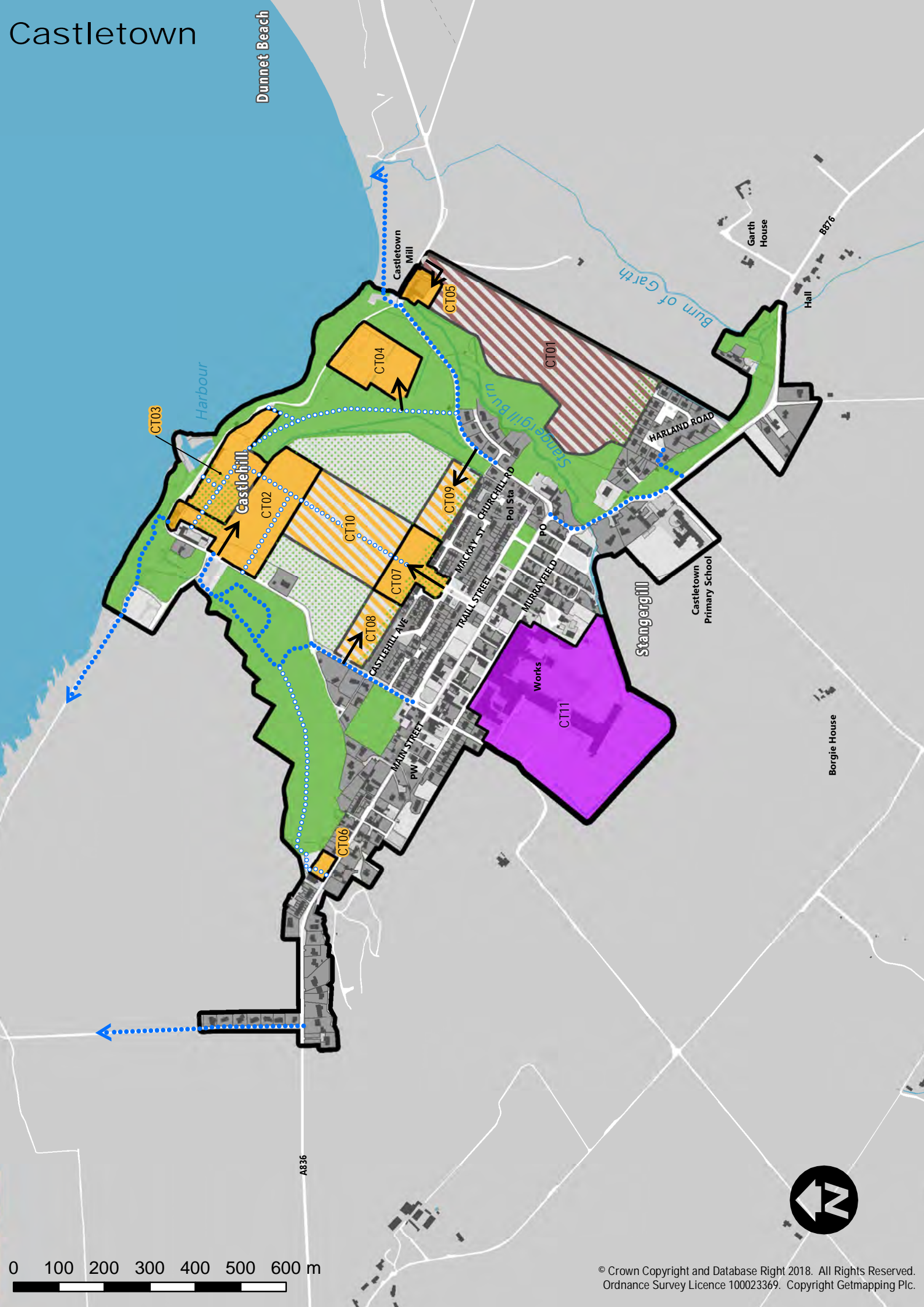
**96** The following map and table show the site allocations for Castletown.

#### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend

Settlement Development Area	Allocations	Town Centres
	 Housing	
<b>Long Term Sites</b>	 Mixed Use	<b>Paths and Access</b>
 Long Term Housing	 Community	 Site Access
 Long Term Mixed Use	 Business	 Indicative Road
 Long Term Business	 Industrial	 Long Term Potential Distributor/Relief Road Routes
 Long Term Industrial	 Greenspace	 Core Path (existing)
	 Expansion of Green Network	 Proposed Path



# Castletown



0 100 200 300 400 500 600 m

### Housing

#### CT01: Land North of Harland Road

**Use:** Long Term Housing

**Area (ha):** 8.4

This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary.

### Mixed Use

#### CT02: Castlehill Steading and adjoining land

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Tourism)

**Area (ha):** 3

**Indicative Housing Capacity:** 69

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with planning permission 16/00927/FUL including carrying out a Programme of Archaeological Work; Tree Protection and Management Plan; Protected species walkover survey; Waste Management Plan; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Deliver or fund section of tree lined boulevard connection between Traill Street and Castlehill which lies within the boundary of the allocation.

#### CT03: Former Castlehill House site

**Use:** Mixed Use (Business, Tourism)

**Area (ha):** 2.3

**Indicative Housing Capacity:** N/A

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Programme of Archaeological Work; Tree Protection and Management Plan; Protected species walkover survey; Waste Management Plan.

#### CT04: Former Castlehill Gardens

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Tourism)

**Area (ha):** 2

**Indicative Housing Capacity:** 12

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Woodland protection and setback; upgrades to local road network - preferred access from Harbour Road; Upgrades to active travel routes through Castlehill estate; Sensitive siting and design required due to proximity of Listed Buildings; Early engagement with Scottish Water is recommended to determine potential requirement for pumped water supply; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required.

#### CT05: Castlehill Mill

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Tourism, Leisure, Community)

**Area (ha):** 0.5

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
4

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Preferred access via the existing farm track to the east; Respect for the fabric and setting of the Listed Building; Bat survey may be required.

#### CT06: Former Free Church, Main Street

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community)

**Area (ha):** 0.2

**Indicative Housing Capacity:** 4

**Developer Requirements:** The retention and renovation of the existing building is preferable; Protect stone dyke; If feasible, provide access through the site to allow for connections with the Core Path network within the former quarry.

#### CT07: North of Mackay Street

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

**Area (ha):** 1.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
30

**Developer Requirements:** Deliver or fund section of tree lined boulevard connection between Traill Street and Castlehill which lies within the boundary of the allocation.

#### CT08: North of Castlehill Avenue

**Use:** Long Term Mixed Use

**Area (ha):** 1.2

This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary.

#### CT09: North of Churchill Road

**Use:** Long Term Mixed Use

**Area (ha):** 1.2

This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary.

#### CT10: Land at Shelley Hill

**Use:** Long Term Mixed Use

**Area (ha):** 3.3

This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary.

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#### Industry

#### CT11: Former Icetech Site

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 11.5

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Protect and enhance watercourse; Potential protected species surveys; Enhance pedestrian access along Murrayfield road.

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### Halkirk

- 97** Halkirk is one of Scotland's oldest planned villages, established on a grid-iron pattern. Despite additional siting and design guidance within the Caithness Local Plan (2002), development over more recent times has often been haphazard and inconsistent.
- 98** Land west of Bridge Street has been allocated for housing due to relatively high levels of housing development in Halkirk over recent years and active landowners in the area. The site is also close to services and development could help to regenerate the village centre. Development will, however, be required to have shared access and be designed to allow further expansion (including into neighbouring land) in the future. This will ensure that it is delivered in a coordinated and consistent way.
- 99** The River Thurso runs through the village and is an important feature which must be safeguarded from development. Opportunities may exist to improve access along the riverfront, which would be beneficial as there is limited recreational space in the village. The local waste water treatment works has very limited supply due to both increased housing development and surface water drainage issues. This could restrict development in the future.
- 100** The siting and design of housing developments have not always been complementary to the distinct character of the village. This Plan seeks to reinforce the importance of high quality siting and design for maintaining the distinct and valued qualities of the village, for example encouraging traditional scale and form of buildings, off street parking preferably being behind the building line and maintaining established street frontage lines including the traditional streetscape relationship of footpath, grass strip, house and rear garden.
- 101** Development in Halkirk has the potential to have an adverse effect on the River Thurso Special Area of Conservation (SAC) alone or in combination. The following site allocations have been identified as potentially having an effect HK01, HK02, HK03 and HK04. Any development of these sites will be required to assess and demonstrate appropriate mitigation measures which ensure avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC.

### Placemaking Priorities

- Insist on higher quality of design than has often been accepted in the past, to preserve the distinct and attractive qualities of the village.
  - Continue to focus development towards infill opportunities to help consolidate the village.
  - Improve access to and along the riverside for recreational purposes while safeguarding the area from intrusive development.
  - Avoid uncoordinated and fragmented expansion on the fringes to help protect the setting of the village.
  - A coordinated approach must be adopted by landowners and developers in relation to any development west of Bridge Street.
  - Support the proposal by Halkirk Community Sports Foundation to provide a healthy living centre in the village.
- 102** The following map and table show the site allocations for Halkirk.



# Halkirk

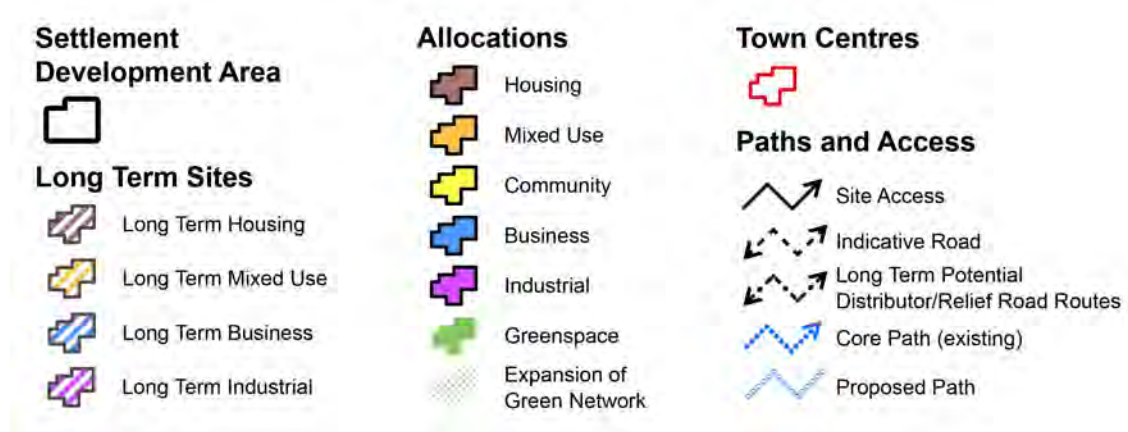


Milton Farm

Moss of Halkirk



#### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend



#### Housing

##### HK01: Comlifoot Drive

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 3.2

**Indicative Housing Capacity:** 28

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with planning permission 07/00133/FULCA including preparation of a Design Brief, creation of playpark, active travel link from Comlifoot Terrace to the riverside. In addition, Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown at risk of flooding); Extend 30 mph zone; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention).

##### HK02: West of Bridge Street

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 3.5

**Indicative Housing Capacity:** 35

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Shared access onto Bridge Street and avoidance of ransom strips to adjoining land; Contaminated land survey may be required; Vegetation survey may be required; High standard of siting and design; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention); Peat assessment and management plan.

### Community

#### HK03: North East of Old Parish Church

**Use:** Community

**Area (ha):** 2.3

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Otter survey may be required; Access and openspace provision to riverside; Built development must have sensitive siting and design due to proximity to B-Listed former parish church; Adequate provision must be made for parking; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention).

### Business

#### HK04: South West of Ulbster Arms Hotel

**Use:** Business /Tourism

**Area (ha):** 1.1

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with 15/01745/FUL including SUDS and protection/retention of trees. In addition, Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Shared access onto Bridge Street and avoidance of ransom strips to adjoining land; Contaminated land survey may be required; High standard of siting and design; Improvements to junction and pedestrian facilities; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention).

### Industry

#### HK05: Site at Camilla Street

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 1.3

**Developer Requirements:** Improve pedestrian facilities on Sinclair Lane within the vicinity of the main entrances.

#### Lybster

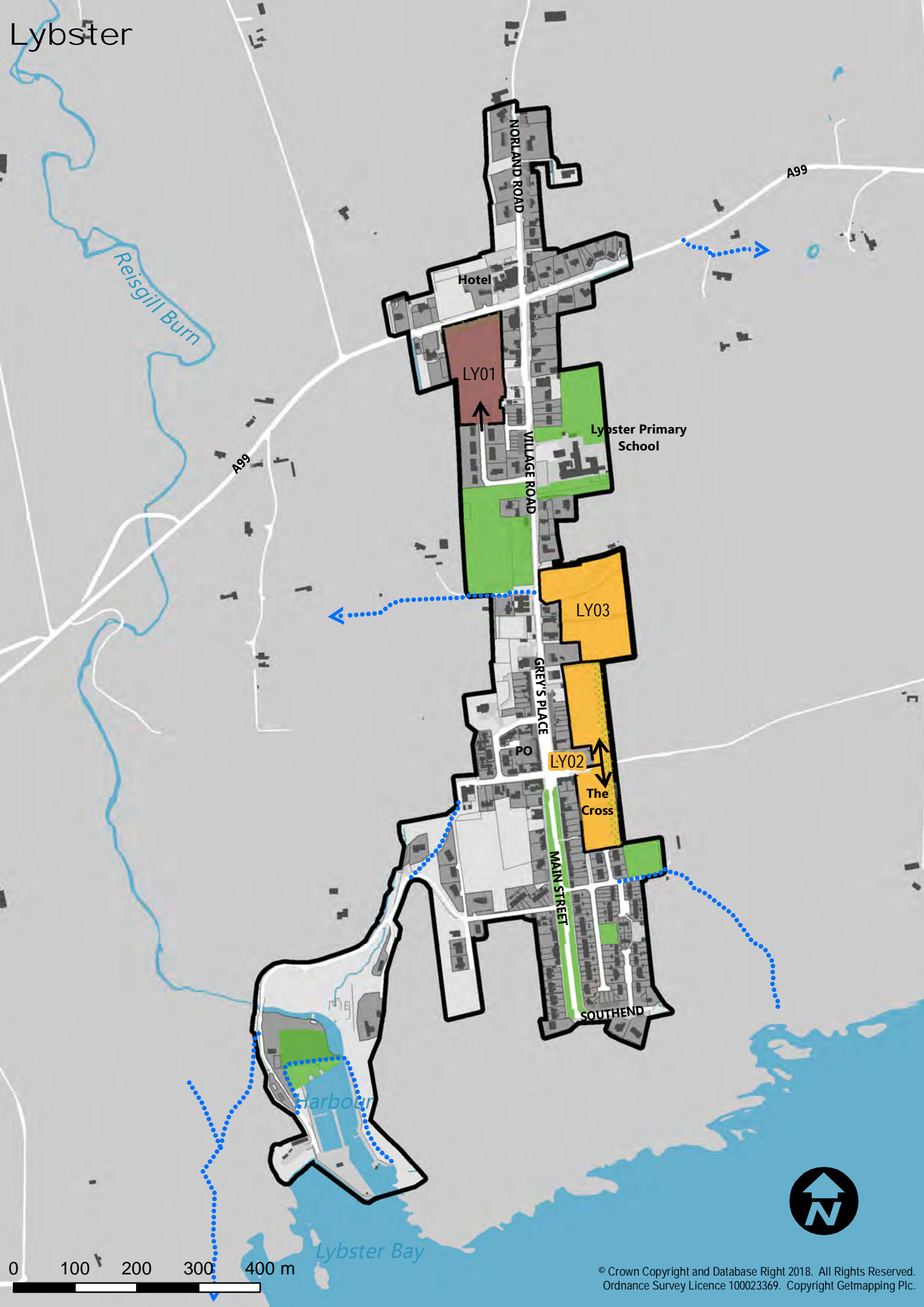
- 103** Lybster is a key settlement on the A99, providing a range of services for the immediate community as well as for the wider area. The settlement's facilities and strategic location on the A99 that leads south and to the northern isles makes it a desirable place to live and for passing trade.
- 104** The settlement is made up of an early 19th Century planned village that has a coherent structure with a traditional centre and more recent expansion south towards the coast. The main entrance to the settlement is from the A99 where a series of listed buildings are present in proximity to the cross roads of the A99, Norland Road and Village Road. This entrance creates a sense of arrival, particularly from the south, and has gateway qualities that should be respected.
- 105** The harbour provides visitor and community attractions and has strong historic and cultural links. Future extension of the Conservation Area to include the harbour may be considered.
- 106** Future development should complement and add to the distinct linear built form of the settlement and help to promote tourist, cultural and heritage assets.
- 107** Recent development at Young Crescent has raised issues with flooding and foul water drainage issues that should be addressed with future development.
- 108** There are a range of key designations along the coast at Lybster including the East Caithness Cliffs Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation, as well as the Dunbeath to South Gaps Geo Site of Special Scientific Interest.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Support settlement centre uses by encouraging business development.
  - Encourage development of the tourism and service industries to take advantage of the settlement's location and heritage assets.
  - Promote the linear pattern of development to consolidate the built-form of the settlement.
  - Avoid and adverse impacts on the designated sites and features.
- 109** The following map and table show the site allocations for Lybster.



# Lybster



Reisgill Burn

A99

A99

NORLAND ROAD

Hotel

LY01

VILLAGE ROAD

Lybster Primary School

LY03

GREY'S PLACE

PO

LY02

The Cross

MAIN STREET

SOUTHEND

Harbour

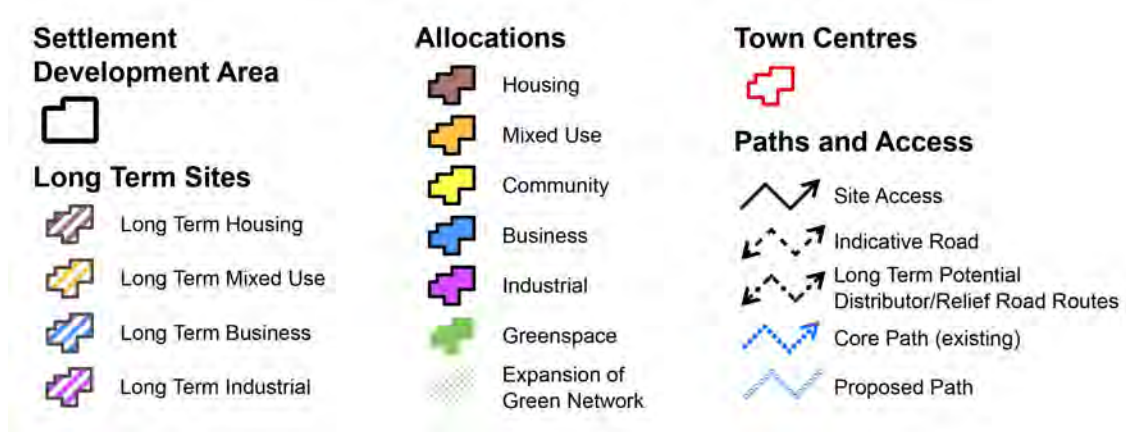
Lybster Bay



0 100 200 300 400 m



### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend



### Housing

#### LY01: Young Crescent

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 1.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
16

**Developer Requirements:** Sensitive siting and design to safeguard nearby historic environment features and capitalise on gateway location; Green network enhancements to north, adjacent to A99; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Drainage issues to be addressed- SuDS may offer a solution but further discussion with Scottish Water required; Consider open space provision at northern end of site; Preferred access from Young Crescent.

### Mixed Use

#### LY02: The Cross

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing and Business)

**Area (ha):** 1.8

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
20

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Sensitive siting and design to safeguard setting of Conservation Area, including ensuring development fits the linear development pattern; Consider connecting access to Golf View Place; No development over culverts and no further culverting; Traffic calming may be required.

#### LY03: South of Golf Club House

**Use:** Mixed Use (Business and Community)      **Area (ha):** 1.9

**Developer Requirements:** Consider potential for impacts on new development from neighbouring golf course and any necessary mitigation; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Sensitive siting and design to safeguard setting of Conservation Area, including ensuring development fits linear development pattern; No development over culverts and no further culverting; Traffic calming on Village Road may be required; Preference for access to be taken from the unclassified road from Lybster to Hillhead; Green network enhancements along the eastern boundary to soften development edge.

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#### Thurso

- 110** Thurso is the principal market, service and social centre for west and central Caithness and an area reaching into north Sutherland. The strategy for Thurso aims to maintain this position and strengthen the range of services and facilities which it provides.
- 111** The Settlement Development Area includes Thurso and Scrabster both of which have important heritage value to the area. In Thurso the historic built environment is a major asset to the town and this is reflected in a Conservation Area designation covering much of the town centre and containing a number of important listed buildings. The Conservation Area may be reviewed in future (see 'Environment and Heritage' for more details).
- 112** The town centre remains the economic, social and cultural focal point of the town. The new Town Centre First Policy directs all significant footfall generating developments towards the area included within the identified Thurso town centre boundary and encourages a wide range of uses including promoting those which are active during the daytime and evening. Land uses which compete with town centre businesses and risk impacting on the vibrancy and vitality will be restricted by the new Town Centre First Policy.
- 113** The town sits at the mouth of the River Thurso and the south of Thurso Bay. Despite the river setting being one of its greatest assets, some of the uses along it detract from its amenity. Redevelopment opportunities exist which would help open up the riverfront for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.
- 114** Dounreay has played a pivotal role in the development of Thurso over the past 60 years. However, with decommissioning expected to be completed by 2030 it is essential that new opportunities for inward investment and job creation are identified and supported. The marine renewables sector has been identified as a significant growth sector due to the significant potential for generating energy from wave, tidal and off-shore wind in the northern Highlands.
- 115** Improving the tourism experience is one of the Plan's main aims. Although there have been many improvements in Caithness over recent years, such as the redevelopment of John O' Groats and the successful promotion of the North Coast 500, there are many opportunities which still exist.
- 116** The western expansion of the town continues to be a central component of the long term plan for Thurso. Since the last local plan was adopted in 2002 most of the other allocated sites have been built out. With the recently designated Scrabster Renewable Energy Enterprise Area and upgrades to the harbour facilities it continues to be the logical direction of growth for the town. It is anticipated therefore that attention will now focus on the housing and mixed use allocations at Pennyland and High Ormlie.

- 117** The Plan incorporates some of the key outputs of the 'Charrette' (an interactive design workshop) which was held in Thurso over the course of a week in February 2013. Urban designers, architects, planners and the public came together to explore ideas and aspirations for Thurso's future. This fed into [Masterplan and Charrette Report](#)<sup>(18)</sup> which brought together all the ideas and issues which were raised.
- 118** The cliff top land on the north side of the A9, between the housing at Burnside to the west and the Thurso Bay Caravan and Camping Park to the east is important to the character and identity of Thurso, and its distinctive sense of place. This is because of the land's openness, the views from and of it, and its location within the settlement boundary between different built up areas of the town. In order to safeguard it from inappropriate development, it has been designated as Greenspace on the Settlement Map.
- 119** Strategic transport improvements have been a priority in Thurso for several decades. Traffic congestion in the central area is a major problem at certain times and is exacerbated by there only being one river crossing. HGVs often struggle to travel through the town centre's narrow streets and sharp corners, particularly while transporting large haulage items. The Council considers that improvements to the road network are vital to unlocking the full potential for development sites and job creation at Scrabster and the business and industrial parks.
- 120** The Plans for expansion of the town to the west present an ideal opportunity to deliver at least some improved transport infrastructure. In particular, a local distributor/link road, funded by developer contributions, will be provided between Ormlie, Pennyland and Upper Burnside as a part of the development of Thurso West (TS04). This road requires to be capable of upgrade because, in the long term, it could potentially be extended to form a distributor/relief road around the western edge of Thurso, which would connect to the A9 north and south of the town, crossing the A836, the B874, the railway, and the river. There are 2 options for such a route, one to the west of Thurso Business Park, which emerged from the Thurso Charrette, and the other through Thurso West (TS04), which is proposed in the 2003 Thurso Western Expansion Area Development Brief and the previous Local Plan. At present, there is no funding commitment for such a distributor/relief road, or support from Transport Scotland, but its provision is an aspiration of the Council.
- 121** Development in Thurso has the potential to have an adverse effect on the River Thurso Special Area of Conservation (SAC) alone or in combination. The following site allocations have been identified as potentially having an effect TS01, TS06, TS07 and TS08. Any development of these sites will be required to assess and demonstrate appropriate mitigation measures which ensure avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC. Similarly, any future proposal for a crossing over the River Thurso as a part of a distributor/relief road would also be required to demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC (through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan [including pollution prevention]).

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





18 [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/283/caithness\\_and\\_sutherland\\_local\\_development\\_plan/3](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/283/caithness_and_sutherland_local_development_plan/3)

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Support the expansion of Scrabster Harbour, development of the Enterprise Area, and extension of the Business Park to attract energy related opportunities which will create new employment opportunities
- Promote and enhance the built heritage of the town.
- A masterplanned approach is needed to set out a strategy for the long term western expansion of the town. Land is identified for a range of uses including housing, business, leisure, petrol station and open space together with important transport and connection improvements.
- Establish a green network stretching from the coastline at Victoria Walk, through Pennyland and the Ormlie moors and out to a new community woodland north of the golf course.
- Regeneration of the settlement centre by directing all significant footfall generating uses towards the town centre which will help to enhance its vitality and vibrancy.
- Regeneration and redevelopment of Thurso Harbour area for tourism and recreational uses including new high quality water sports facilities.
- Relocate industrial uses along the riverfront and replace them with residential and mixed use development to make the most of the river corridor setting.
- Improve connections to the wider green network including a footpath from Thurso along the Mall walk and extending southwards.
- Development should contribute towards the delivery of the priority actions identified in the Council's [Thurso Active Travel Audit](#) <sup>(19)</sup>.

**122** The following map and table show the site allocations for Thurso.

#### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend

Settlement Development Area	Allocations	Town Centres
	 Housing	
<b>Long Term Sites</b>	 Mixed Use	<b>Paths and Access</b>
 Long Term Housing	 Community	 Site Access
 Long Term Mixed Use	 Business	 Indicative Road
 Long Term Business	 Industrial	 Long Term Potential Distributor/Relief Road Routes
 Long Term Industrial	 Greenspace	 Core Path (existing)
	 Expansion of Green Network	 Proposed Path

19 [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/775/thurso\\_active\\_travel\\_audit\\_050811\\_app\\_part3](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/775/thurso_active_travel_audit_050811_app_part3)



#### Housing

##### TS01: East of Juniper Drive

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 4.8

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
50

**Developer Requirements:** Enhance the Juniper Bank Core Path; Setback from the eastern slope and railway line; Existing field track/core path should be retained and made into a positive environmental and recreational feature; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention).

##### TS02: Site at Mountpleasant

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 5.6

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
25

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with 09/00300/FULCA and other relevant planning permissions.

##### TS03: West of Upper Burnside

**Use:** Long Term Housing

**Area (ha):** 8.3

This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary.

#### Mixed Use

##### TS04: Thurso West

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail [petrol station only], Openspace)

**Area (ha):** 61.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
200

**Developer Requirements:** The Council will prepare a masterplan/development brief which will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance. Applications on TS04 may be supported prior to the development brief being prepared if the developer includes a masterplan with their application which addresses the points below. The Brief should include/address: Provision of approximately 12ha of Business land adjoining the existing business park; Land for 180 homes west of Pennyland Drive/north of Provost Cormack Drive; 1ha of land adjoining the new A836 junction for a petrol station and small business units; Additional long term potential for low level/low density housing development and amenity openspace east of proposed petrol station (to be treated as a long term site as per the definition in the Glossary); Safeguard and enhance 8ha of moorland at High Ormlie for recreational use and green network purposes; Potential for additional long term housing to the west of Wolf Burn (to be treated as a long term site as per the definition in the Glossary); Transport Assessment including single, shared access taken from A836 to form local distributor/link road within TS04, with capability of upgrading to distributor/relief road status; Enhancement of active travel connections through the site; Areas of openspace and creation of positive environmental and recreational features of Wolf Burn and connections to potential community woodland to the south west; At least a 40 metre amenity/openspace corridor alongside the A836/A9; High quality siting and design especially around more visually prominent; Sensitive siting and design to safeguard residential amenity; Phasing strategy from A836 southwards. To inform the development brief/masterplan the following need to be addressed: Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding) and Drainage Impact Assessment; The Wolf Burn should be protected by a 25 metre development exclusion buffer (note that discharges to this watercourse are unlikely to be acceptable); Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Protected species survey; contaminated land survey; Agreement of a Developer Contributions Protocol in advance of any development.

#### TS05: Former Mart Site

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Tourism, Leisure, Community, Retail)

**Area (ha):** 3.7

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
30

**Developer Requirements:** Planning permissions 07/00038/OUTCA [PPA/270/459] (and 08/00494/REMCA), and 15/4656/FUL (expires 31 July 2020) are live; Planning applications are to be accompanied by a developer led masterplan; High quality siting and design, including sympathetic streetscape siting and design and street frontage, particularly on the northern part of the allocation, all to reflect the prominent location, the immediate surroundings, and the proximity to heritage features; Transport Assessment; Improvements to the current access and parking arrangements associated with the High School and Ormlie Road; Active travel route to be established along the east side of Ormlie Road and through the site from Janet Street as part of Safer Routes to Schools; Retail Impact Assessment and/or Town Centre Impact Assessment for a hotel may be required.

#### TS06: Former Mill Site At Millbank

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Tourism, Community, Retail )

**Area (ha):** 0.7

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
7

**Developer Requirements:** Access via Mill Terrace; Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); protected species survey; Respect for the fabric and setting of the Listed Buildings; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC and SSSI through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention).

#### TS07: Land at Sir Archibald Road

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail)

**Area (ha):** 2.2

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
25

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); protected species survey may be required; Enhance active travel connections through the site, including providing a footpath to help connect footpath provision along the coast; Contaminated land survey; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC and SSSI through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention).

#### TS08: Land at Bridgend

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community, Retail)

**Area (ha):** 1.3

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
16

**Developer Requirements:** Possible access from Sir Archibald Road; Flood Risk Assessment required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Protected species survey may be required; Enhance active travel connections, including providing a footpath to help connect footpath provision along the coast; Contaminated land survey; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso SAC and SSSI through submission of a satisfactory Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention).

#### TS09: North of Scrabster Community Hall

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

**Area (ha):** 0.9

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
10

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Maintain access to Core Path; Extend St Clair Avenue public road and footway along frontage of site; Road to terminate in a turning area; Provide bus stop Clett Terrace end of St Clair Avenue.

#### TS10: North West of Dunbar Hospital

**Use:** Long Term Mixed Use

**Area (ha):** 3.8

This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary.

### Community

#### TS11: Viewfirth Park

**Use:** Community

**Area (ha):** 2.5

**Developer Requirements:** Transport Assessment with particular focus on impact on local transport network; Access arrangements and parking issues; Careful siting and design of development to safeguard residential and visual amenity, and avoid overdevelopment of the site; Development proposals to show the general measures to be taken in the operation of the facility to avoid unacceptable effects on the surrounding residential area.

#### TS12: Thurso Harbour

**Use:** Community (recreation facilities)

**Area (ha):** 1.6

**Developer Requirements:** Community facilities will be supported alongside the existing businesses; Drainage Impact Assessment; Flood Risk Assessment required to inform layout and design (only low vulnerability uses or operationally essential uses in areas shown to be at risk of flooding, to be accompanied by resilience measures); Protected species survey may be required; Improve signage to and from harbour and define parking spaces.

#### Industry

#### TS13: Scrabster Harbour

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 28.1

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment required to inform layout and design (only low vulnerability uses or operationally essential uses in areas shown to be at risk of flooding, to be accompanied by resilience measures); Protect Core Path to Holborn Head; Enhance watercourse; Potential protected species surveys; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Sensitive siting and design due to proximity to Listed buildings; Bird survey work may be required for major or significant development proposals; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the North Caithness Cliffs Special Protection Area; Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Thurso Special Area of Conservation through, for example (but not limited to), noise and vibration caused by major construction activities, such as piling.

#### TS14: Land at Scrabster Mains Farm

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 14.1

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with 14/00418/FUL planning permission including archaeological watching brief; Noise Impact Assessment, Landscaping Plan, Design Brief. In addition, positive features should be made of watercourses and landscaping such as hedgerows; Access arrangements should be compatible with potential future relief road; Access to public transport and need for new infrastructure and/or enhanced services to be considered.

#### TS15: North West Of Thurso Business Park

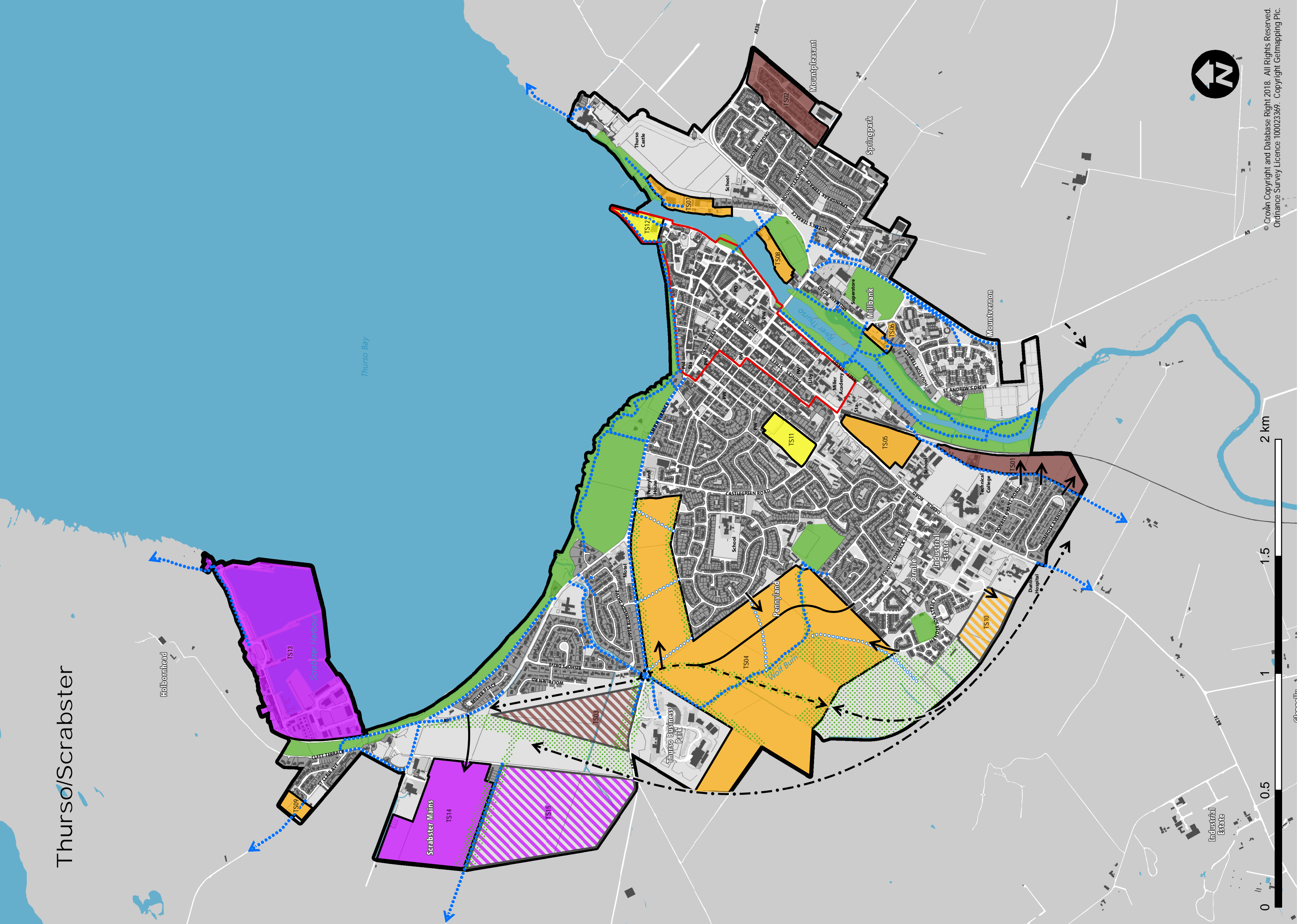
**Use:** Long Term Industry

**Area (ha):** 20.5

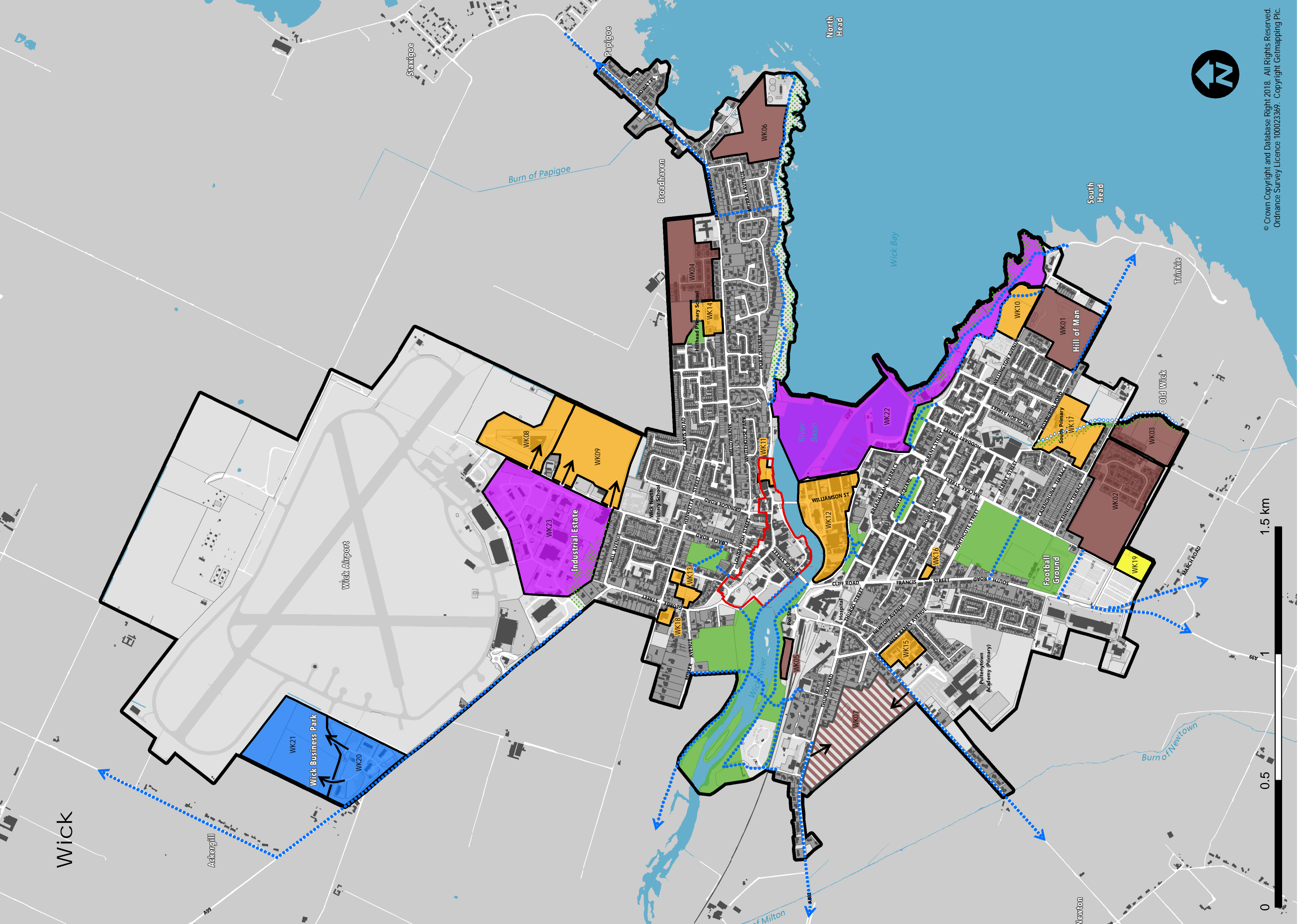
This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary.



# Thurso/Scrabster







### Wick



















- 123** Wick is a regional service and shopping centre and provides the main administrative and medical functions for the wider north Highland area. The strategy for Wick is focused on promoting these existing businesses and facilities while also supporting the growth of new industries.
- 124** Over recent years there has been renewed focus on the harbour and its role in supporting the growth of the renewable energy sector. There is need for the harbour to upgrade and expand its facilities to meet the needs of this growing industry. This is reinforced by the announcement that Wick will serve as the service base for the construction and operation of the Beatrice offshore windfarm. Renewed investment in the harbour may provide significant opportunities to regenerate the more central areas of the town.
- 125** The harbour sits within Pulteneytown which is a key part of the area's heritage. It is designated as a Conservation Area which may be reviewed in future (see 'Environment and Heritage' for more details). Pulteneytown was designed by Thomas Telford in the early 1800s as a herring fishing town and harbour at the estuary of the River Wick. Many of the historic buildings are empty or derelict and offer opportunities for conversion and redevelopment into commercial, tourism, community or residential uses.
- 126** The town centre remains the economic, social and cultural focal point of the town. The Town Centre First Policy will help to maintain this function by directing development which generates significant footfall towards the centre and restrict competing uses in other areas. Proposals for town centre regeneration and riverside rejuvenation, including greater accessibility, were also identified during the Wick Charrette. The principle of these changes is supported and reflected by sites around the river being allocated for development.
- 127** The Plan incorporates some of the key outputs of the 'Charrette' (an interactive design workshop) which was held in Wick over the course of a week in February 2013. Urban designers, architects, planners and the public came together to explore ideas and aspirations for Wick's future. This fed into Masterplan and Charrette Report which brought together all the ideas and issues which were raised.
- 128** Wick benefits from an established District Heating System which provides a secure, renewable source of hot water and heating to over 200 domestic properties, the Assembly Rooms and Old Pulteney Distillery. Caithness General Hospital has also recently agreed to be linked to the heating system. The Plan supports further expansion of the network and encourages any new developments in the town to consider connecting to the district heating system.
- 129** Development in Wick has the potential to have an adverse effect on the East Caithness Cliffs Special Protection Areas (SPA) alone or in combination. The following site allocations have been identified as potentially having an effect: WK01, WK02, WK03, WK17, WK19 and WK22. Any development of these sites will be required to assess and demonstrate appropriate mitigation measures which ensure avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the East Caithness Cliffs SPA.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Consolidate the existing town with allocations which help to round off or infill rather than expand Wick in any one particular direction.
- Encourage all footfall generating uses towards the town centre to help enhance its vitality and vibrancy.
- Support the expansion of Wick Harbour to attract renewable energy sector opportunities which will help to revitalise the local economy.
- Enhance Lower Pulteneytown through building on the vibrant uses which already exist together with the regeneration of vacant and derelict sites.
- Employ a flexible approach to encourage the reuse/redevelopment of surplus Council owned buildings.
- Conserve and promote the history and heritage of the town and surrounding area to help create a positive image and attract more visitors.
- The creation of a new home for the National Nuclear Archive and North Highland Archive provides a range of wider employment and tourism opportunities.
- Development should contribute towards the delivery of the priority actions identified in the Council's [Wick Active Travel Audit](#) <sup>(20)</sup>.

**130** The preceding map and following table show the site allocations for Wick.

**CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend**

Settlement Development Area	Allocations	Town Centres
	 Housing	
<b>Long Term Sites</b>	 Mixed Use	<b>Paths and Access</b>
 Long Term Housing	 Community	 Site Access
 Long Term Mixed Use	 Business	 Indicative Road
 Long Term Business	 Industrial	 Long Term Potential Distributor/Relief Road Routes
 Long Term Industrial	 Greenspace	 Core Path (existing)
	 Expansion of Green Network	 Proposed Path

20 [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/779/wick\\_active\\_travel\\_audit\\_050811\\_main\\_report](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/779/wick_active_travel_audit_050811_main_report)



## Housing

### WK01: Hill of Man

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 5.5

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
55

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with planning permission 07/00157/OUTCA. In addition, Drainage impact assessment and Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Contaminated land survey may be required; Road widening and footpath provision; Opportunity for permeable layout; Development proposals should be accompanied by recreational management plans, if appropriate; Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the East Caithness Cliffs SPA through increased disturbance caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.

### WK02: South of Kennedy Terrace

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 10

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
44

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with planning permission 98/00349/FULCA. In addition, Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Development proposals should be accompanied by recreational management plans, if appropriate; Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the East Caithness Cliffs SPA through increased disturbance caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.

### WK03: East Of Carnaby Road

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 3.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
23

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with planning permission 03/00054/FULCA. In addition Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); 25 metre development setback from watercourse; Avoid any discharge into the watercourse; Development proposals should be accompanied by recreational management plans, if appropriate; Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the East Caithness Cliffs SPA through increased disturbance caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.



#### WK04: North Of Coghill Street

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 7

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
48

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with planning permission 14/04467/FUL. In addition: Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding) and Drainage Impact Assessment; Open space to be provided through the next phase of development. Open space to be provided on the east of the site; Minimum 20 metre buffer from The Pap Broch Scheduled Monument; Sensitive siting and design due to proximity of Listed Building and Scheduled Monument; Connections into existing/future streets (east and west) to create permeable layout; Increase in vehicles may require mitigation on Broadhaven Road/Willowbank to address traffic speeds/volumes.

#### WK05: West of Police Station

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.5

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
6

**Developer Requirements:** Safeguard existing woodland adjoining the site; Contaminated land survey; Enhance path network to the north and west of the site; Sensitive siting and design due to proximity of Listed Building; Junction of Bankhead Road/Station Road requires improvement, including formalisation of high levels of on-street parking and improved facilities for pedestrians; Extension of adoption on Creamery Road may be required; Part of Active Travel Network.

#### WK06: East of Murray Avenue

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
40

**Developer Requirements:** Ensure the provision of suitable open space; Safeguard a development buffer of at least 100 metres from the Waste Water Treatment Works.

#### WK07: West of Coronation Street

**Use:** Long Term Housing

**Area (ha):** 8.1

This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary

### Mixed Use

#### WK08: South East of Terminal Building

**Use:** Mixed Use (Community, Business, Industrial)      **Area (ha):** 5.5      **Indicative Housing Capacity:** N/A

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with planning permission 15/00346/FUL, including landscaping scheme, drainage impact assessment, and travel plan.

#### WK09: North of Wick North Primary School

**Use:** Mixed Use (Business, Industrial)      **Area (ha):** 8.3      **Indicative Housing Capacity:** N/A

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Increased traffic on Ackergill St may require mitigation in residential areas especially within vicinity of school; Preferred access through Industrial Estate rather than through residential area; Part of Active Travel Network; Consider Safe Routes to Schools audit.

#### WK10: North of Wellington Avenue

**Use:** Mixed Use (Business, Industrial)      **Area (ha):** 2.2      **Indicative Housing Capacity:** N/A

**Developer Requirements:** If taken forward as part of harbour-related expansion then the developer must prepare a masterplan/development brief for this site and Wick Harbour (WK22), in consultation with environmental agencies and other stakeholders. This should be agreed with the Council who may adopt this as Supplementary Guidance. This should address: Safeguard the existing South Head core paths; Sensitive siting and design due to proximity of Listed Building; Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Drainage impact assessment; Coastal protection works; Demonstration that there will be no adverse effect on the East Caithness Cliffs SPA and MPA; Local road upgrades and footpath provision; Construction and Environment Management Plan; Contaminated land and protected species surveys may be required depending on the nature of the proposal.

#### WK11: Site at The Shore

**Use:** Mixed Use (Business, Tourism, Retail)      **Area (ha):** 0.5      **Indicative Housing Capacity:** N/A

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Proposals to maintain the stability of the embankment to the rear, and not to protrude higher than the top of the bank; Environmental and recreational improvements to the land south of The Shore; Sensitive redevelopment due to the heritage value of the site; Contaminated land survey; Consider potential parking issues depending on use and density; Possible visibility issues at existing entrance to site.

#### WK12: Lower Pulteneytown

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Tourism, Leisure, Industrial, Retail)

**Area (ha):** 5.9

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
25

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Sensitive siting and design due to being within a Conservation Area and due to the proximity of Listed Buildings and residential properties; Contaminated land survey and protected species survey may be required for specific sites; Part of Active Travel Network.

#### WK13: Land West of Green Road

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

**Area (ha):** 0.8

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
12

**Developer Requirements:** Contaminated land survey may be required; Bat survey.

#### WK14: Hillhead Primary School

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

**Area (ha):** 1.3

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
18

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Play ground should be retained for public access; Sensitive siting and design due to proximity to Listed Buildings; Connections into existing and future streets to create permeable layout; Bat survey may be required for demolition.

#### WK15: Wick High School Building

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business)

**Area (ha):** 1.5

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
12

**Developer Requirements:** Local road improvements; Contaminated land survey may be required; Sensitive redevelopment which respects the fabric of the Listed Building; Bat survey.

#### WK16: Land at Francis Street

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

**Area (ha):** 0.2

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
8

**Developer Requirements:** Footpath provision.

### WK17: South of Roxburgh Road

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business)

**Area (ha):** 4.1

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
10

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Protected species survey; 25m development setback from watercourse; Avoid any discharge into the watercourse; Provision of areas of openspace and creation of positive environmental, heritage and recreational feature of the mill lade/watercourse; Opportunity for multiple accesses into site; Development proposals should be accompanied by recreational management plans, if appropriate; Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the East Caithness Cliffs SPA through increased disturbance caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.

### WK18: West of George Street

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

**Area (ha):** 0.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
6

**Developer Requirements:** Safeguard woodland (TPO) on adjoining land; Prefer redevelopment of existing building rather than demolition; Improved pedestrian footpath on George Street; Contaminated land survey; Bat survey may be required; Part of Active Travel Network.

## Community

### WK19: East of Wick Burial Ground

**Use:** Community

**Area (ha):** 1.1

**Developer Requirements:** Land allocated for expansion of the adjoining cemetery; Investigation into impact on groundwater conditions may affect suitability of land for cemetery extension; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Development proposals should be accompanied by recreational management plans, if appropriate; Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the East Caithness Cliffs SPA through increased disturbance caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.

## Business

### WK20: Wick Business Park

**Use:** Business

**Area (ha):** 5.4

**Developer Requirements:** Installation of covered long stay cycle parking as well as a bus shelter/bus information/real time information; Part of Active Travel Network.

### WK21: North Of Wick Business Park

**Use:** Business

**Area (ha):** 8.8

**Developer Requirements:** Extension required to connect to Wick waste water treatment works; Installation of covered long stay cycle parking as well as a bus shelter/bus information/real time information; Part of Active Travel Network.

### Industry

### WK22: Wick Harbour

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 21.1

**Developer Requirements:** Developer to prepare masterplan/development brief in consultation with relevant environmental agencies and other stakeholders, to be agreed with the Council who may adopt this as Supplementary Guidance. This should address: High quality siting and design; Safeguard and improve core path where possible, re-routing may be appropriate; Formalise car parking; Ensure Harbour Quay is an adaptable space for recreational uses; Sensitive siting and design due to being within a Conservation Area and proximity of Listed Buildings; Drainage impact assessment; Flood Risk Assessment required to inform layout and design (only low vulnerability uses or operationally essential uses in areas shown to be at risk of flooding, to be accompanied by resilience measures); Coastal protection works may be required; Demonstration that there will be no adverse effect on the East Caithness Cliffs SPA and MPA; Construction and Environment Management Plan; Development proposals should be accompanied by recreational management plans, if appropriate; Contaminated land and protected species surveys may be required depending on the nature of the proposal.

### WK23: Wick Industrial Estate

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 16.8

**Developer Requirements:** Installation of covered long stay cycle parking as well as a bus shelter/bus information; Improve pedestrian facilities through the site; Consider restricting vehicular access to industrial sites to A99 only with no access from residential area (Ackergill Street); Part of Active Travel Network; Development at the southern part of the WK23 must avoid and where appropriate enhance the woodland area as part of the Green Network.



### Caithness Economic Development Areas

#### Dounreay

##### Issues

- The Dounreay Nuclear Research Facility is being decommissioned to what is known as the Interim End State by around 2030.
- The Council has a role in regulation and control of the decommissioning and restoration works.
- Options for future use of land within or adjoining the Dounreay site will be limited due to the previous activities and ongoing decommissioning.

##### Placemaking Priorities

The Dounreay Planning Framework 2 (DPF2) will guide decommissioning of the site. The main principles of DPF2, which we consulted on through preparation of the HwLDP and DPF2, are:

- the timely, safe and environmentally acceptable decommissioning, restoration and after-use of the Dounreay site;
- phasing through to the interim end point, setting out the developments required for decommissioning and restoration towards achieving the site end state, including new build, adaptation, demolition and remediation;
- sufficient flexibility to respond to changing constraints whilst not placing undue restrictions on the site operator;
- indication of potential new interim uses and end uses for parts of the site in support of economic development of the area; and
- developer requirements that were identified when we prepared the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP).

DPF2 indicates that the Council's vision for the end use of the Dounreay Site is to see it as far as practicable redeveloped for employment uses and suggests some potential opportunity sectors. The Council will continue to review potential options for the re-use of the Dounreay Site with the site owner, regulators, the local public and stakeholder groups. This Plan does not identify specific future uses beyond what is set out in DPF2, but we remain open minded to considering suggestions of and proposals for uses, particularly ones that would support the economic regeneration of the area.



### Forss Business and Energy Park

#### Issues

- Existing business park with office, workshop and storage space available.
- The Park has potential to provide further support to the decommissioning of Dounreay and the growth of the renewable energy industry.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- High quality siting and design is required.
- Expansion opportunities may exist to the west between the business and energy park and the wind turbines.
- Visual impact from the A836 needs to be considered as part of any expansion proposals.
- Consideration is required of the use of the site by geese connected with the Caithness Lochs SPA. Ensure the maintenance of the Scottish Primrose (*Primula scotica*) population found at this location.





### Georgemas Junction

#### Issues

- Strategic rail freight and transport hub.
- Modern purpose built railhead freight terminal.
- Biomass fuel processing and energy plant supported in principle by the Council (planning consent granted (14/04545/FUL) for combined heat and power (CHP) plant with a capacity to generate 15MWe of electricity and 6.5MW of heat).

#### Placemaking Priorities

- The area offers significant potential to increase rail freight to and from Caithness which would take pressure off the A9 trunk road.
- Potential opportunities for high heat demand developments to be co-located with the biomass energy plant.
- Early engagement with Transport Scotland advised given the location adjacent to the A9 Trunk Road.



### Gills Harbour

#### Issues

- Gills Harbour is well placed to become an important service base for the marine renewables sector over the coming years but to attract marine renewables business the harbour will likely need to invest in upgrading and expanding the services which it can offer.
- Steep slopes on the landward side of the harbour limit terrestrial development.
- Potential access constraints due to topography and depending on uses at the harbour. Current access arrangements may need to be addressed to accommodate the expansion of harbour facilities.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Improve harbour facilities to help support the growth of the offshore renewables sector.
- Protect the surrounding landscape from inappropriate development including unsuitable land uses and poor layout and design.
- Avoid any adverse effect on North Caithness Cliffs SPA.





### Janetstown Industrial Estate

#### Issues

- Long term established industrial site.
- Potential for large scale external storage purposes in the former quarries, such as stock piling for the energy sector.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- New built-development should be directed to the existing undeveloped serviced plots before other greenfield land is considered.
- Landscaping and screen planting may be required to reduce the visual impact.



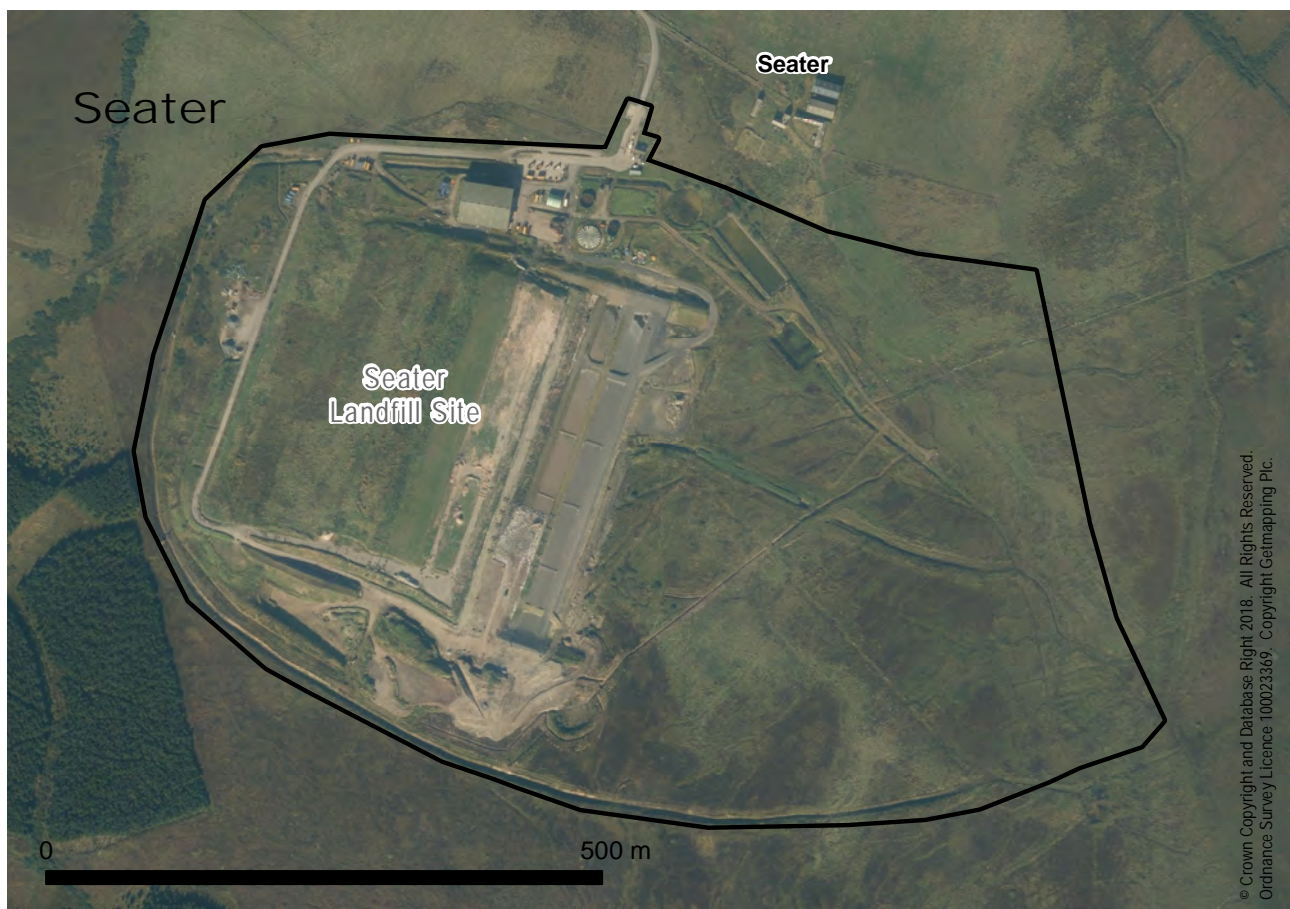
### Seater Waste Management Facility

#### Issues

- The Highland Council operates two landfill sites: Seater in Caithness being one and the other being Granish in Badenoch and Strathspey.
- Area LDPs need to identify and allocate any strategic waste management sites in that area.
- Legislation currently states that the Council cannot landfill municipal waste after the end of 2020 but treatment/disposal facilities will still be required.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- The site at Seater benefits from existing infrastructure, existing waste management permissions and Council landownership.
- Significant remaining licenced landfill capacity and existing large transfer building for recyclables.
- Prime location for future waste management transfer and/or treatment infrastructure.
- Potentially suitable site for energy from waste (EfW) if it was associated with high heat demand development that would make use of heat generated.





### Caithness Growing Settlements

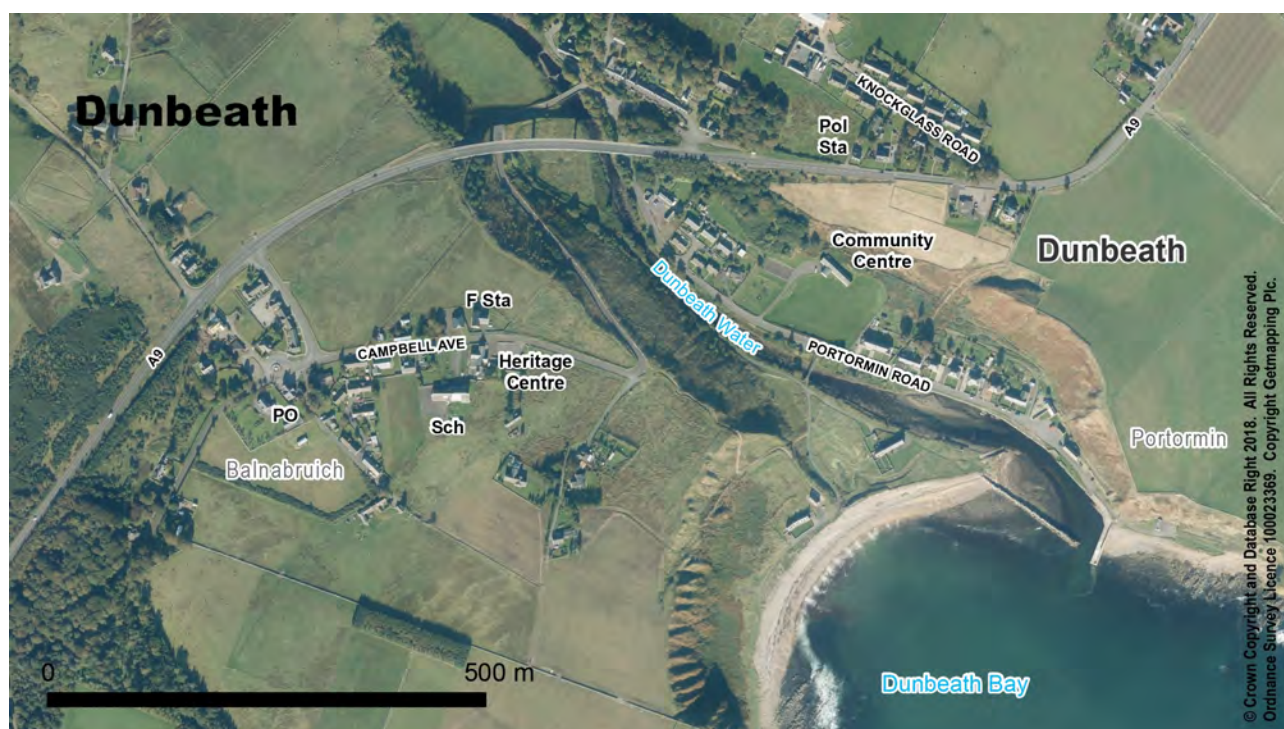
#### Dunbeath

##### Issues

- The harbour and Dunbeath Heritage Centre are key assets that provide attractions for visitors.
- A range of community facilities are concentrated along Portormin Road.
- The settlement straddles both sides of Dunbeath water, with services and residential properties bisected by steep terrain and the A9, which forms a disjointed settlement pattern.
- Capacity at Dunbeath waste water treatment works is limited to 17 housing units.
- Previous masterplans have been prepared for parts of the settlement south of Dunbeath Water.

##### Placemaking Priorities

- The strategic A9 location should be capitalised on to maximise the benefits of the settlement's cultural and heritage tourism potential, particularly at the harbour and heritage centre.
- Support reuse of brownfield land at the former quarry site next to the tennis courts on Portormin Road.
- Support housing development along the east side of Neil Gunn Road.
- Safeguard and enhance the unique wooded strath along Dunbeath Water.
- Protect natural heritage features along the north bank of Dunbeath Water, development should avoid any adverse effect on East Caithness Cliffs SPA, MPA and SAC or Dunbeath Water SSSI.



### Dunnet

#### Issues

- Development to the west has been mostly of ribbon form and resulted in some traffic problems due to the narrow, single track roads and a lack of pavements for pedestrians, especially on the road to Dwarwick.
- Drainage issues westwards of the A836 and the prevalence of soft rush vegetation suggests wider drainage issues along the B855.
- Access constraints for former commercial allocation between the A836 and the playing fields.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Focus future development close to the traditional settlement centre at the A836 cross roads.
- Protect and enhance the setting of the A-listed Dunnet Parish Church.
- Restrict development further southwards to protect the setting of Dunnet Beach.
- Take advantage of Dunnet's strategic position on tourist routes including the North Coast 500 and John O' Groats to Lands End.
- Avoid any adverse effect on North Caithness Cliffs SPA or Dunnet Links SSSI.





### John O' Groats

#### Issues

- A renowned tourist attraction which suffered from a lack of investment and coordination during the second half of the 20th Century.
- Significant investment in the area is transforming it into a high quality visitor destination with award winning architectural design.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Support appropriate expansion of the John O' Groats tourist site in line with the principles set out in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) masterplan (2009) which include providing a diverse range of uses and activities, improving and expanding local public services and creating a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Future development of the tourist destination needs to be well integrated with the local community to create a coherent place and sustainable community rather than resulting in a detached and standalone commercial facility.
- The restoration of John O'Groats Mill has the potential to form the focus for a range of cultural, commercial and community activities.
- Avoid any adverse effect on North Caithness Cliffs SPA or John O'Groats SSSI.





### Keiss

#### Issues

- Reasonable level of existing services and facilities within the village.
- Significant housing development taken place in wider crofting community rather than within Keiss.
- Cultural and natural heritage are important features to the setting and character of the village.
- Limited waste water treatment capacity may restrict future development.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Further development and other works which will help to improve the appearance of the centre of the village.
- Promote and enhance the historic harbour.
- Take advantage of the archaeological heritage of Keiss and the surrounding area e.g. broch remains in the village and at the shore.
- Exploit the potential economic benefits of Keiss's strategic position along the main John O' Groats to Land's End route and the North Coast 500.
- Focus future development within or close to the existing village to safeguard the surrounding croftland from ad hoc development, unless there are justifiable reasons in terms of croft management.
- Protect and restrict further built encroachment along the strand line of Sinclair's Bay at Stain.



### Latheronwheel

#### Issues

- Latheronwheel is a distinct settlement on the A9 comprised of a single linear built form leading south from a small cluster of buildings along the A9, including B and C listed, to a small harbour at the shore.
- Older buildings at the north end of the settlement create a sense of enclosure and lead to an open street layout of more modern buildings south.
- The settlement of Latheron is approximately 1km north, and is linked by the A9 road and partially by a footpath. Latheron and Latheronwheel share some services and community facilities but for most the community must travel to neighbouring settlements.
- There is limited road capacity, and access at the A9 junction is constrained.
- Current wastewater treatment capacity is for an additional 20 housing units.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Support future development that compliments and consolidates the existing settlement.
- Encourage growth that supports existing services and community facilities.
- Promote the range of tourist and heritage assets present and take advantage of the settlement's strategic position on the A9 tourist corridor.
- Avoid any adverse effects on East Caithness Cliffs SAC and SPA and Dunbeath to Sgaps Geo SSSI.





### Reay

#### Issues

- Reasonable level of existing services and facilities which need protected and enhanced.
- The village has benefited from relatively high levels of renovation of historical buildings in recent years.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Opportunities for better interpretation of historical and archaeological assets in and around the village.
- Take greater advantage of the village's location on the North Coast 500 route.
- Safeguard the edges of the village and the south side of the road between New Reay and Old Reay to protect the character of the area.
- To ensure road safety maintain the need for house developments to have shared access onto the main public road.
- Avoid any adverse effect on North Caithness Cliffs SPA or Sandside Bay SSSI.



### Thrumster

#### Issues

- Wide variety of existing facilities in the village including the recently restored railway station into a venue for themed exhibitions and community woodland garden.
- Ribbon development pressure over recent years in certain areas.
- Countryside around Thrumster is rich in cultural heritage.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Development potential to the north of Stewart Crescent which benefits from good road and footpath connections and being close to the village centre.
- Avoid inappropriate ribbon development to the south-east of Thrumster.





### Watten

#### Issues

- Recent ribbon development along the B870 is not of particularly high quality siting or design and is disjointed from the village.
- Reasonable level of existing services and facilities which need protected and enhanced.
- Limited waste water capacity (up to 35 additional housing units). Further development should await completion of sewage treatment works.
- Low water pressure in some areas.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Safeguard the countryside around the village which is relatively high quality agricultural land.
- Seek to maintain and enhance the hedgerows in and around the village.
- Protect the setting of Loch Watten and improve recreational facilities and tourist appeal, subject to no adverse effect on its site integrity as SPA, SAC and SSSI.
- Prohibit further linear development along the B870 past Henderson Square.
- Housing opportunities may exist on the east side of Station Road, land immediately north west of the primary school, and east of Bain Place.
- Potential opportunity for village hall car park extension to the south of the existing hall.
- Avoid any adverse effect on Loch Watten SAC/SSSI and Caithness Lochs SPA.





**131** In this section of the Plan you will find the detail for the following places.

### **Settlement Development Areas**

- 'Ardgay'
- 'Bonar Bridge'
- 'Brora'
- 'Dornoch'
- 'Edderton'
- 'Golspie'
- 'Helmsdale'
- 'Lairg'
- 'Lochinver'
- 'Tongue'

### **Growing Settlements**

- 'Bettyhill'
- 'Durness'
- 'Embo'
- 'Invershin'
- 'Kinlochbervie'
- 'Melness'
- 'Melvich'
- 'Portskerra'
- 'Rosehall'
- 'Scourie'

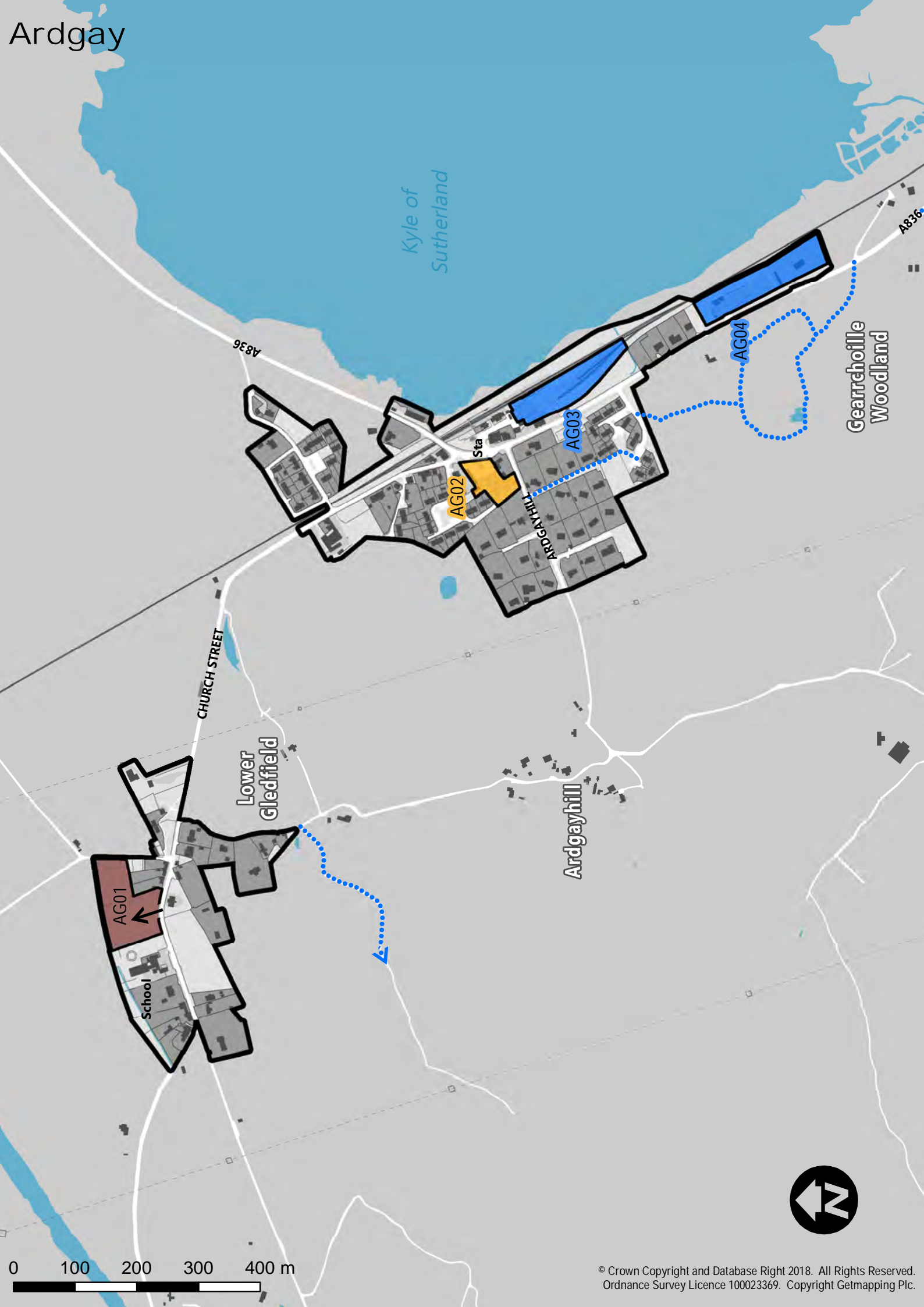
### Ardgay

- 132** Ardgay provides local services including a primary school. There is a railway station in the heart of the village which serves the Far North railway line and it benefits from a commuter train service to Inverness. It is situated on the A836 and National Cycle Route 1 passes through the settlement.
- 133** Land is allocated for housing beside the Primary School and the Lady Ross site has housing as a potential use. Infill opportunities for housing will be supported but piecemeal development between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield will be discouraged. There may be potential for a planned and long term growth in this area. Land at AG03 Ardgay Railway Station Yard North railway yard is allocated for business use and would be suitable for small business units. There is also land allocated for business use at AG04.
- 134** Village centre regeneration, in particular the site of the former Lady Ross will be supported for a variety of potential uses.
- 135** Land behind the public hall could be a potential location for additional car parking to the village, subject to suitable funding being found and having regard to residential amenity and the need for a safe parking layout being accommodated.
- 136** The Gearrhoille Ancient Woodland is owned by and is in the care of the local community. It has a long history of providing recreational facilities for the local community and today it provides opportunities for access via pathways through the woodland. It also provides an attractive entrance from the south into Ardgay. It should be protected from development due to its high value for biodiversity and amenity.

### Placemaking Priorities

- Support village centre regeneration and infill development of housing.
  - Assist and promote economic development.
  - Support additional tourist facilities.
  - Sensitive siting and design that respects the settlement's location partly within the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area.
  - Maintain access to Core Path.
  - Avoid any adverse effect on Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC (including otter).
- 137** The following map and table show the site allocations for Ardgay.

# Ardgay



Kyle of  
Sutherland

A836

A836

Gearrhoille  
Woodland

AG04

AG03

AG02

Sta

ARDGAYHILL

CHURCH STREET

Lower  
Gledfield

Ardgayhill















AG01

School

0 100 200 300 400 m



### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend

Settlement Development Area	Allocations	Town Centres
	 Housing	
<b>Long Term Sites</b>	 Mixed Use	<b>Paths and Access</b>
 Long Term Housing	 Community	 Site Access
 Long Term Mixed Use	 Business	 Indicative Road
 Long Term Business	 Industrial	 Long Term Potential Distributor/Relief Road Routes
 Long Term Industrial	 Greenspace	 Core Path (existing)
	 Expansion of Green Network	 Proposed Path

### Housing

#### AG01: Adjacent to Primary School and North of Church Street

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 1.0

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
6

**Developer Requirements:** Access should be taken from land adjacent to the Primary School, designed to enable safe route to school across the entrance and to allow forward visibility to the junction; To encourage active travel provide an upgraded pedestrian crossing point where the single footway crosses from the south to the north of Church Road; Overhead lines will require diversion/undergrounding; Sensitive siting and design required due to proximity of Listed Buildings; Landscaping/planting on site to provide habitat links to wider countryside.

### Mixed Use

#### AG02: Lady Ross

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Tourism, Community, Open space)

**Area (ha):** 0.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
4

**Developer Requirements:** Masterplan required for site; Potential bat survey required as building has stood empty for a considerable time; Sensitive siting and design; Limit to one access; Improve pedestrian footway along A836 site boundary; Potential for pedestrian access link from Carron Place.

### Business

#### AG03: Ardgay Railway Station Yard North

**Use:** Business

**Area (ha):** 0.9

**Developer Requirements:** Development should be set back from the railway line; Sensitive siting and design required due to location within Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area and proximity to listed railway bridge; Preferred access via existing station road; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); No sewage discharge to land or water; Retain and enhance tree screening; Assessment of potential contamination issues; Development proposals will require to demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC.

#### AG04: Ardgay Railway Station Yard South

**Use:** Business

**Area (ha):** 1.0

**Developer Requirements:** Development should be set back from the railway line; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); No culverting of watercourse and provide buffer between watercourse and development; Sensitive siting and design required due to location within Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area; Trees between the site and the A836 to be retained and additional planting encouraged; A footpath connection to the village should be considered; Assessment of potential contamination issues; Utilise existing access; Development proposals will require to demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC.



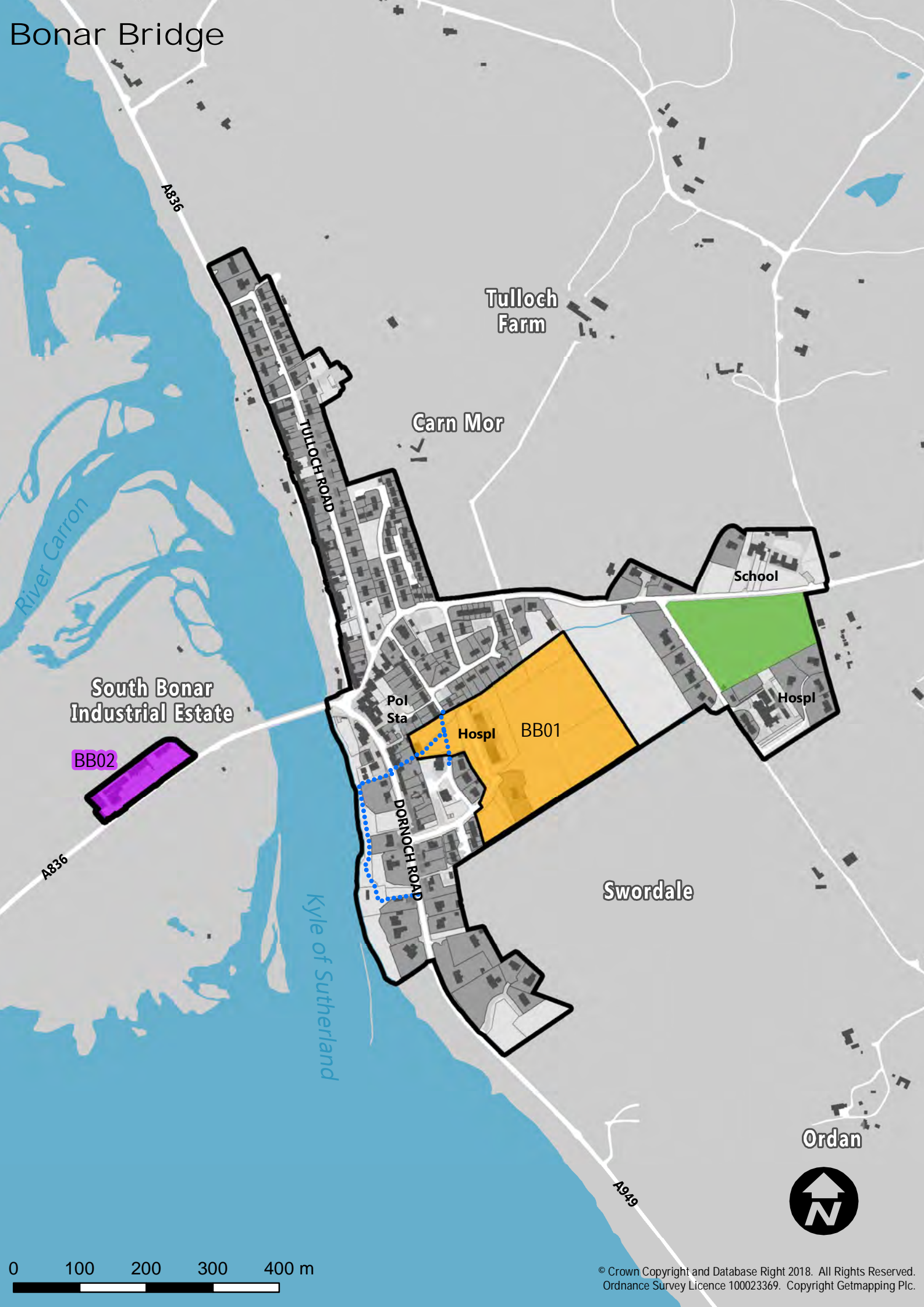
### Bonar Bridge

- 138** Bonar Bridge provides a wide range of local services including a primary school and health care facilities.
- 139** The New Migdale Hospital is now open and the remainder of the Cherry Grove site is allocated for mixed use comprising housing and community uses. Opportunity for redevelopment of the Old Migdale Hospital exists.
- 140** The garden ground and open space between the road and the Kyle of Sutherland are of particular importance in retaining the character of the village and development here will be resisted. Linear development along the A836 is discouraged.
- 141** South Bonar Industrial Estate is located on the A836 between Ardgay and Bonar Bridge. It is an important employment site and its continuation for this use is important to the local economy. Opportunities to enhance the appearance of the site will be encouraged. The site is allocated for industrial use however there is an existing community use on the site and planning permission was granted for a youth and family hub.

### Placemaking Priorities

- Develop remainder of Cherry Grove site
  - Reinforce economic development at South Bonar Industrial Estate which fits with the community uses on the site
  - Protect settlement setting
  - Sympathetic redevelopment of Old Migdale Hospital
  - Avoid any adverse impact on Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC (including otter) and River Oykel SAC
  - Maintain access to Core Paths
  - Sensitive siting and design that respects the settlement's location partly within the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area
- 142** The following map and table show the site allocations for Bonar Bridge.

# Bonar Bridge



A836

Tulloch Farm

Carn Mor

TULLOCH ROAD

River Carron

South Bonar Industrial Estate

BB02

A836

Pol Sta

Hospl

BB01

School

Hospl

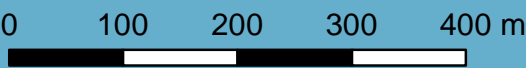
DORNOCH ROAD

Kyle of Sutherland

Sworddale

Ordan

A949



### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend



### Mixed Use

#### BB01: Cherry Grove

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

**Area (ha):** 5.1

**Indicative Housing Capacity:** 30

**Developer Requirements:** Masterplan required; Sensitive siting and design, especially in the eastern section; DesignStatement, which includes a landscaping plan, to be prepared to safeguard the landscape features and setting that contribute to the special qualities of the Dornoch Firth NSA; Retain and integrate watercourses as natural features within the development; Provide buffer strip between watercourses and development; Maintain hedgerows; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Maintain pedestrian link to Swordale Road; Ensure pedestrian links to hospital and GP Surgery; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Development proposals will require to demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC or the River Oykel SAC.

### Industry

#### BB02: South Bonar Industrial Estate

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 0.7

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment required to inform layout and mitigation measures; Development limited to previously developed areas; High standard of design, incorporating landscaping and screen planting; Consolidate access by closing one entrance and improvements made to two remaining accesses; Assessment of potential contamination; Any industrial use must fit with the community uses already on site.

### Brora

- 143** Brora is a key service centre for Sutherland providing education and health services and a variety of local shops. It lies on a main transport route, with the A9 trunk road going through the settlement and a railway station served by the Far North Railway Line which provides services north towards Thurso and Wick and south towards Inverness.
- 144** Brora sits on the coast adjacent to the Moray Firth SAC and straddles the River Brora which provides an attractive backdrop to the settlement.
- 145** Regeneration of the town centre is a key priority, with some prominent vacant buildings that could be redeveloped to provide small units, for example retail units. A civic space would also be beneficial. The new Town Centre First Policy directs all new footfall generating developments towards the area included within the town centre boundary and encourages a wide range of uses including promoting uses which are active during the daytime and evening. Land uses which compete with town centre businesses and risk impacting on the vibrancy and vitality will be restricted by the new Town Centre First Policy.
- 146** Regeneration of the harbour and the adjacent area could help link the centre of the village to the coast and an appropriate visitor attraction at the harbour would be supported. Brora Station and Goods Shed provide opportunities for regeneration and land around them could potentially provide additional car parking for the station.
- 147** Tourism is vital to the local economy as it is a major employer. There are numerous local visitor attractions based upon the town's coastal and countryside setting and its historic heritage, including those recognised as Placemaking Priorities. Such attractions include the Heritage Centre, the historic harbour, coastal and riverside footpaths, the whisky distillery and the golf course. However there is potential to expand on what is offered. There is potential for tourism/recreational related activities at the former Radio Station site, which could be linked in with paths along the coast. Upper Fascally is allocated for recreation/community uses. The site should remain as an outdoor sports facility but there is potential for the current building on the site to be re-used for these purposes and the entire site could be regenerated for recreational uses.
- 148** Land at the former River Fascally recreation area is at high risk of flooding and is therefore unsuitable for most forms of development. However there are opportunities to enhance the existing recreational area by the promotion and maintenance of the adjacent core path, the maintenance of a green corridor along the River Brora and the provision of new or improved changing facilities.
- 149** A variety of housing sites are available, including some on previously used land. BR03 East Brora Muir is allocated for housing and community use. The preferred community use is allotments, potentially at the south western end adjacent to the Day Care Centre. Potential exists at BR05 Scotia House for 10 houses on 0.5ha of land between the existing bund and Dudgeon Drive.
- 150** All development proposals in Brora should have regard to the potential presence of former coal mining activity.

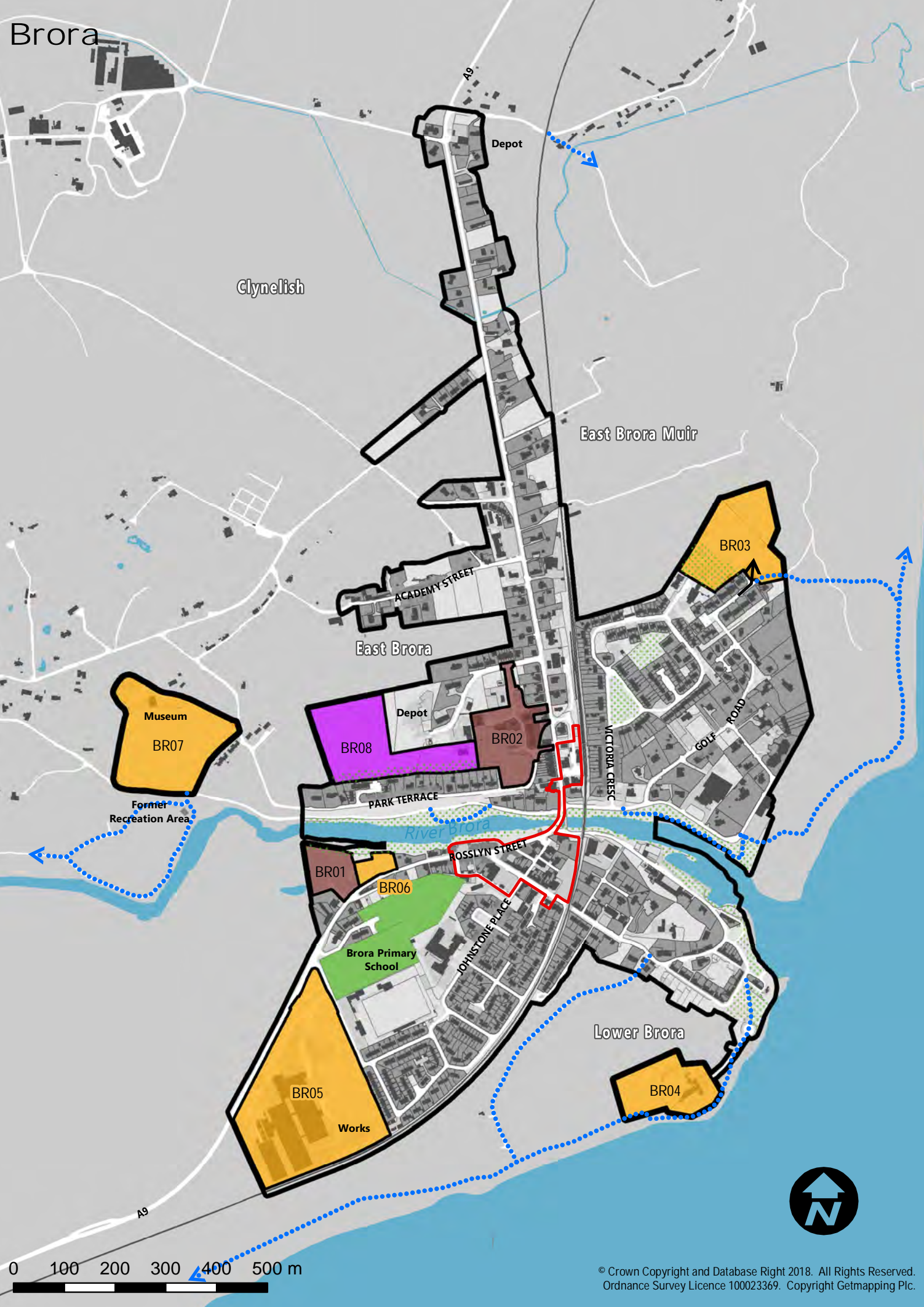
### Placemaking Priorities

- Regeneration of the town centre.
- Re-use of the former Radio Station site for tourism uses.
- Regeneration of harbour and adjacent area.
- Coastal path towards Golspie.
- Delivery of new Heritage Centre at the Old School building to replace the existing one at Upper Fascally.
- Maintain green corridor along the River out towards the coastline.

**151** The following map and table show the site allocations for Brora.



# Brora



Clynelish

Depot

East Brora Muir

East Brora

Museum

BR07

Former Recreation Area

ACADEMY STREET

Depot

BR02

BR08

PARK TERRACE

ROSSLYN STREET

BR01

BR06

Brora Primary School

BR05

Works

VICTORIA CRESC

GOLF ROAD

BR03

Lower Brora

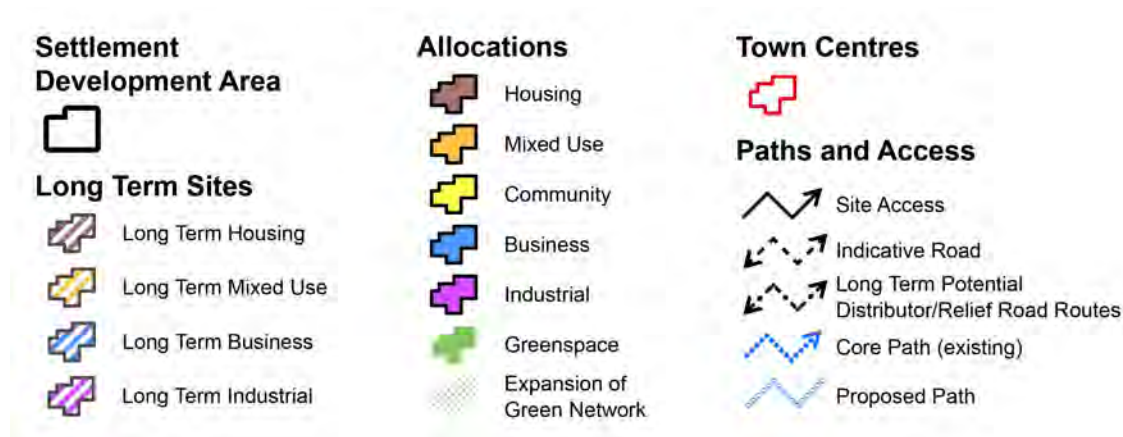
BR04

A9

0 100 200 300 400 500 m

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### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend



### Housing

#### BR01: Rosslyn Street

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.8

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
10

**Developer Requirements:** Link from A9 Trunk Road and internal road layout partially constructed; Retain and reinforce tree buffer between the river and any development; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Provide wildlife corridors into adjacent wider countryside; Avoid intrusion into, and adverse impacts on, the Inverbrora SSSI and the Brora Geological Conservation Review site.

#### BR02: Old Woollen Mill

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 2.0

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
23

**Developer Requirements:** Traffic calming may be required for further development.

### Mixed Use

#### BR03: East Brora Muir

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

**Area (ha):** 2.6

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
25

**Developer Requirements:** Ben Mailey Gardens to serve as main access, with emergency access only to Muirfield Gardens; Transport Statement to assess impact on existing residential streets and extent of any mitigation required; Traffic calming may be required remote from the site; A masterplan is necessary to prevent piecemeal development and it is to set out the future phasing and layout of the site and show a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of any requirements of the Transport Statement and reflect the preferred community use for allotments; Shelterbelt planting to minimise exposure; Maintain access to Core Path; Design sympathetic to landscape setting with regard to proximity to the golf course.

#### BR04: Former Radio Station Site

**Use:** Mixed Use (Tourism, Recreation)

**Area (ha):** 1.8

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
N/A

**Developer Requirements:** Design Statement required with a preference for low rise and low density building design; Transport Assessment to assess the impact of development on the Brora level crossing so that level crossing risk is updated and additional safety measures may be required following the assessment; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Need to address erosion and ground stability issues; Any development should be inland of the coastal footpath; Bat survey; New sewer laid to Sewage Pumping Station; Maintain and improve path link along coast; Maintain access to core path; Promote and maintain active travel links; Incorporate most important historical features of the site into any new development.

#### BR05: Scotia House

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

**Area (ha):** 7.2

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
10

#### **Developer Requirements:**

Any housing development should have a separate access from Scotia House, with access from Dudgeon Park Road and a suitable internal road layout put in place; On site extension of sewer may be required; Incorporate planting and landscaping to address landscape impact; An assessment of contamination issues may be required.

### BR06: Former MacKay's Garage

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

**Area (ha):** 0.3

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
4

**Developer Requirements:**

Formalise appropriate access onto A9(T); Improve pedestrian footway provision along A9 frontage; Retain and reinforce tree buffer between the river and any development; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding) Assessment of potential contamination issues will be required; Sensitive siting and design to ensure no impact on adjacent listed building; Avoid intrusion into, and adverse impacts on, the Inverbrora SSSI and the Brora Geological Conservation Review site.

### BR07: Upper Fascally

**Use:** Mixed Use (Community, Recreation)

**Area (ha):** 3.6

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
N/A

**Developer Requirements:**

Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Encourage links to open space to the south at the Former River Fascally recreation area and the surrounding wider countryside; Access to core path to be protected; Site investigation for potential contamination; Sensitive siting and design; Retain any features linked to coal mining history; Surrounding road network requires upgrading with visibility improvements and passing places; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required.

## Industry

### BR08: Adjoining Industrial Estate

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 3.0

**Developer Requirements:**

Consideration of traffic calming on Stafford Terrace; Incorporate new planting into the development and ensure linkages into wider countryside remain; Landscaping and planting on boundary adjacent to housing; Setback from overhead lines; Connect to footpath network.



### Dornoch

- 152** Dornoch functions as a service centre for the local area providing schools, retail and employment. It is a Royal Burgh with a history stretching back to the sixth century. A Conservation Area covers the historic core and it may be reviewed in the future (see 'Environment and Heritage' for more details). The new Town Centre First Policy directs all new footfall generating developments towards the area included within the town centre boundary and encourages a wide range of uses including promoting uses which are active during the daytime and evening. Land uses which compete with town centre businesses and risk impacting on the vibrancy and vitality will be restricted by the new Town Centre First Policy.
- 153** Tourism is a major source of income for the area with visitors being attracted by the history of the settlement, the quality of the local environment and the Royal Dornoch Golf Club. Facilities for visitors can be found at the links area to the south of the settlement where the caravan park is situated. The Dornoch Economic Masterplan was commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and it highlighted the importance of raising the profile of the town in the tourism industry.
- 154** Dornoch plays an important role in local education providing primary and secondary education and tertiary education at the North Highland College UHI. There is potential in the future for North Highland College UHI to expand at Burghfield. There is also a desire to provide residential student accommodation.
- 155** The delivery of a sports centre for Dornoch is a long held aspiration of the community and a project to do so on a site beside Dornoch Academy is being progressed. Land is allocated adjacent to the Academy for community use. Additional car parking and drop off facilities are required at the school, however it is not intended that the full extent of the allocation is used for additional car parking. Planning permission has been granted for a new community centre on part of Dornoch's Meadow Park.
- 156** There is a significant area for development planned at Dornoch North which will serve the expansion needs of the settlement. A masterplan has been developed which provides guidance on numerous aspects including the phasing of development and green spaces. Planning permission has been granted for 25 houses as part of phase one.
- 157** Dornoch sits adjacent to the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area, Dornoch Firth and Morrich More Special Area of Conservation, Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Special Protection Area/Ramsar and the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation. The sand dunes to the south east of the town provide an essential part of the setting of the settlement and also have great value as a tourist and recreational resource. However increasing pressure on the sand dunes from use by residents and visitors and potential for disturbance to wintering or breeding birds means there is a need to assess any effect arising from new development due to European Protection given to them. Where appropriate, new development proposals on sites allocated for development in Dornoch shall be accompanied by a recreational management plan which examines any likely increased pressures from recreational access of the sand dunes or disturbance to wintering or breeding birds. Appropriate Assessment is required to be undertaken if Natura site interests are likely to be significantly affected. Where necessary, avoidance or mitigation measures should be provided.

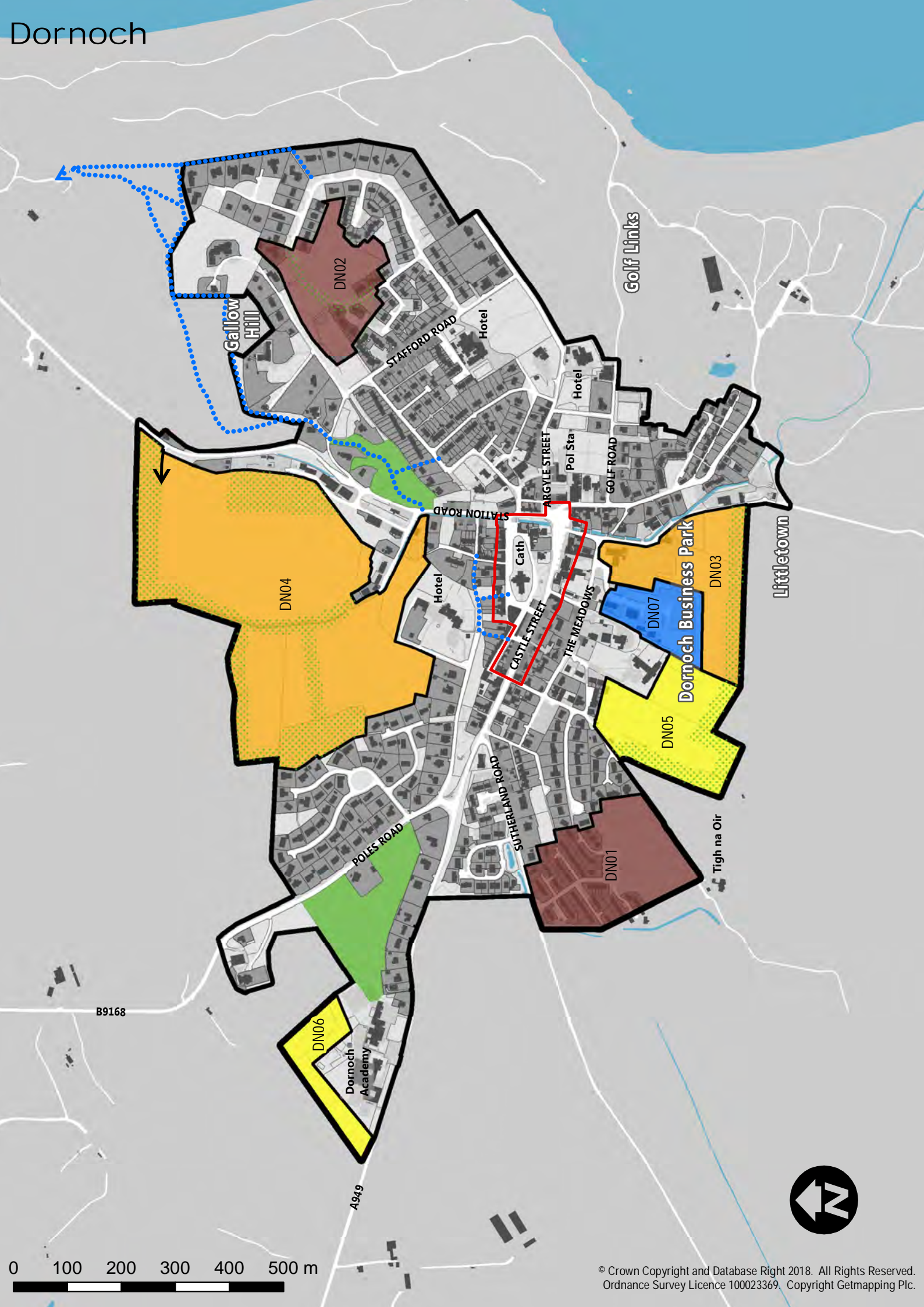


### Placemaking Priorities

- Environmental improvements at The Square.
- Redevelopment of the former abattoir site.
- Assist and promote tourism and additional tourist facilities.
- Support expansion of North Highland College UHI.
- Maintain access to Core Paths.
- Avoid any adverse effect on adjacent European nature conservation sites (individually or cumulatively), including through recreational disturbance/damage.
- Development proposals to be accompanied by a Recreational Management Plan, if appropriate.
- Development proposals must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect in the integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA and Ramsar, by satisfactory submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (including pollution prevention).
- Insofar as otters are a qualifying interest of the adjacent SAC, a survey indicating whether or not otters are present should accompany any planning application, other than for the modest extension or alteration of an existing building, within 250metres of a watercourse, coast, loch or pond.

**158** The following map and table show the site allocations for Dornoch.

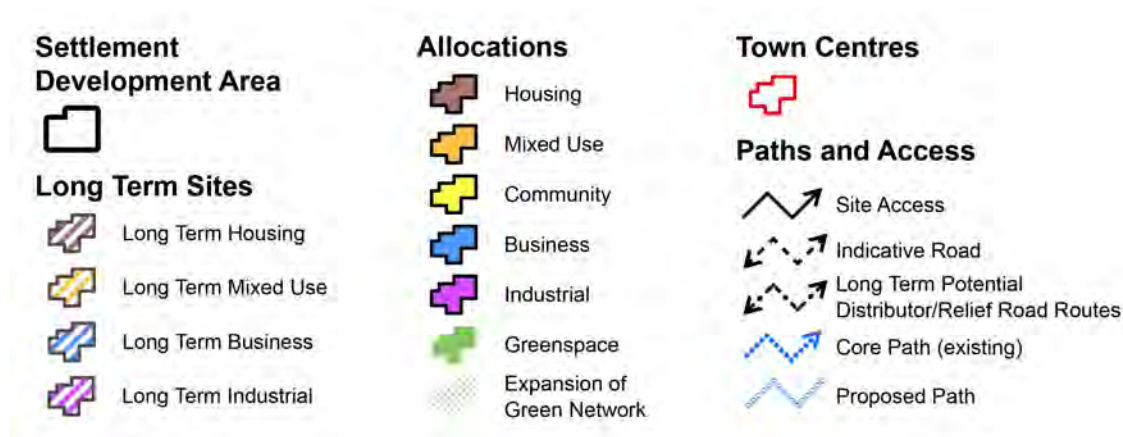
# Dornoch



B9168

A949

### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend



### Housing

#### DN01: Meadows Park Road

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 5.0

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
70

**Developer Requirements:** Planning permission granted and site to be completed under existing planning conditions. However if a new planning application is submitted for the site the following list of requirements would apply: Retain and integrate watercourses as natural features within site; Flood Risk Assessment required and built development should avoid flood risk area; Appropriate disposal of surface water drainage; Establish active travel links towards settlement centre and Meadows Park; Sensitive siting and design including landscape works, stone walls and hedgerows to reflect proximity to Dornoch Firth NSA; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth & Morrich More SAC and the Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet SPA through increased disturbance of species and habitat damage caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.

#### DN02: Bishopsfield

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 3.6

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
40

**Developer Requirements:** Masterplan already in place; Access loop to be completed; Drainage Impact Assessment to address Pluvial Flood Risk; Extra planting on site such as hedgerow planting and trees to help link to adjacent woodland; Provide linkage to nearby core path and ensure links provided to existing play park; Provide footpath linkages towards centre of Dornoch; Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth & Morrich More SAC and the Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet SPA through increased disturbance of species and habitat damage caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.

### Mixed Use

#### DN03: Dornoch South Abattoir Site

**Use:** Mixed Use (Student accommodation, Business, Leisure, Community, Open space, Recreation)

**Area (ha):** 4.1

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
N/A

**Developer Requirements:** Pedestrian linkage to wider area; Promote active travel and links to public transport; Possible access link from Dornoch Business Park road; Provide buffer to watercourse on southern boundary; Sensitive siting, design and scale; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Site investigation for potential contamination from former uses; The site is at risk of flooding which will limit the extent and type of development suitable for the site - a Flood Risk Assessment will be required; (The design and layout of a development would have to comply with the following – (1) Land raising (with appropriate compensatory flood storage capacity) would only be acceptable on the areas of previously developed land to the north and any buildings in this area would have to be demonstrated to be outwith the area at risk of flooding, not create an island of development and be demonstrated to not impact on flood risk elsewhere. Areas of previously developed land which are shown to be at risk of flooding may be suitable for car parking but should not be subject to any land raising. (2) Greenfield areas of the site are only suitable for types of recreation and leisure uses which are less vulnerable to flood risk, such as a golf driving range or car park. Such proposals should not result in a change in ground levels (i.e. no land raising) and be designed so that they are flood resilient and do not impact on flood water flows. An appropriate evacuation procedure should also be prepared); Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth & Morrich More SAC and the Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet SPA through increased disturbance of species and habitat damage caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.



### DN04: Dornoch North

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Open Space)

**Area (ha):** 19.7

**Indicative Housing Capacity:** 200

**Developer Requirements:** Development in accordance with Masterplan and phased approach for the site (10/01185/PIP); 25 houses approved for phase 1 of Masterplan (14/03060/FUL) and access to be taken at north eastern end of site as shown on the access arrow on the settlement map; Development should be in line with existing agreed Flood Risk Assessment, or Flood Risk Assessment work to be extended if proposals vary or site extent is larger. No new development to be located in any areas shown to be at risk of flooding; No culverting for land gain; Retain and integrate watercourse as a natural feature within development; Sensitive layout and design of housing to reflect existing buildings in Dornoch and adjacent Conservation Area; Development will need to be visually contained, taking the esker landform and existing field pattern into consideration; A high quality gateway should be created on the northern approach; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Exclusion zone around cists; Active Travel links into centre of Dornoch and towards the schools; Travel Plan; Safer Routes to School plan; Contributions towards Dial a Bus; Provision of bus stops and shelters; Upgrading of the Embo Road including widening to 5.5 metres and provision of a 2 metre wide footway; SUDs strategy; Layout should acknowledge Designing Streets; Neighbourhood road linking Embo Road and Poles Road; Development proposals will require to identify what measures will be put in place to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth & Morrich More SAC and the Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet SPA through increased disturbance of species and habitat damage caused by increased recreational use of the area by residents of the new housing.

### Community

#### DN05: Meadows Park

**Use:** Community

**Area (ha):** 4.2

**Developer Requirements:** Planning permission granted on part of site for a community centre; New access or an upgrade of the existing access; Drainage Impact Assessment; Encourage and maintain existing pedestrian links to surrounding built up area; Sensitive development of site; High quality design; Appropriate scale; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required.

#### DN06: Adjacent to Dornoch Academy

**Use:** Community

**Area (ha):** 1.5

**Developer Requirements:** No direct access from public road; Review 20mph and 30mph speed limits and consider amending the extent; Safe Route to School audit; Retain existing mature vegetation along boundary with school; Provide landscaping with tree planting along outer perimeters to establish a structured edge; Provide cycle parking; Ensure pedestrian connection to school ground; Sensitive landscaping and boundary planting to reduce impact on settlement setting.



Business

DN07: Dornoch Business Park

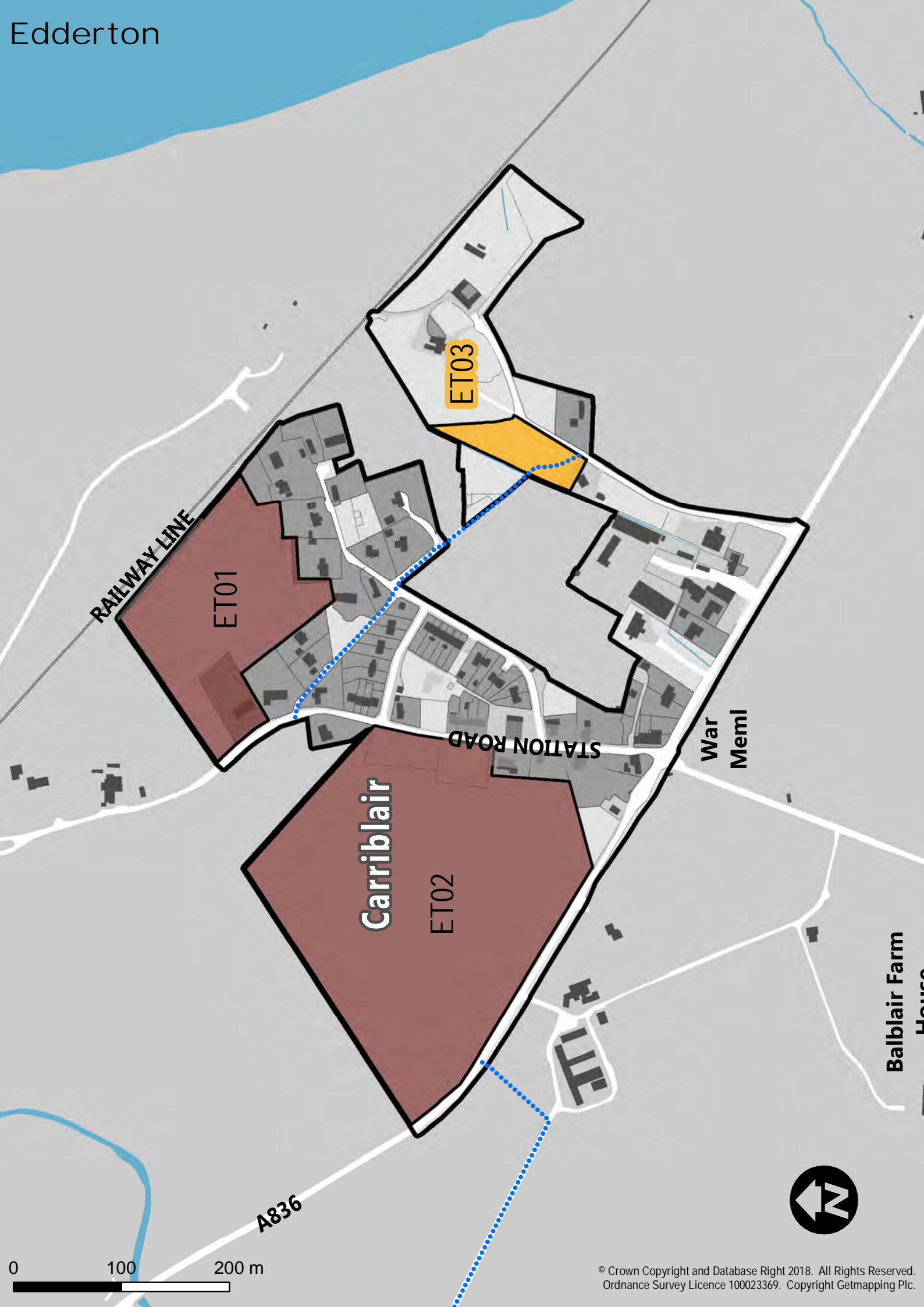
**Use:** Business **Area (ha):** 1.9  
**Developer Requirements:** Retain trees around the boundary; Pedestrian linkage to wider area; Retain recycling facilities already on site.

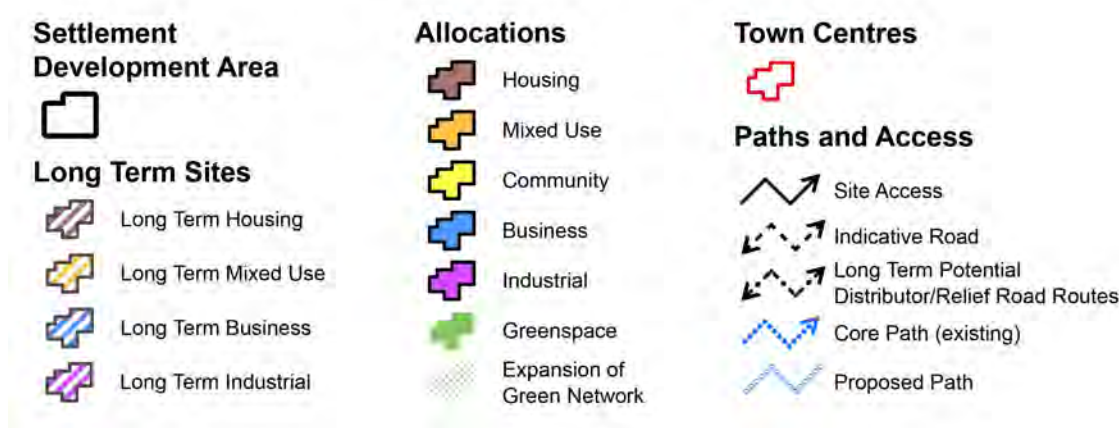
### Edderton

- 159** Edderton lies 6km to the west of Tain and sits on the southern shore of the Dornoch Firth.
- 160** Potential for development in Edderton lies primarily with two sites that already have planning permission for housing - ET01 for 26 houses and for ET02 for 37 houses. Infill opportunities also exist although the settlement boundary is drawn so that the smallholdings towards the centre of the village are excluded, in order to protect what forms an intrinsic part of the character of the settlement. Opportunities exist for small scale business development or home working units on ET03. Longer term expansion to the north is constrained by the railway line. Growth to the south of the A836 could be considered in the longer term.
- 161** Regard needs to be had to the proximity of the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Special Protection Area and Ramsar site, Dornoch Firth and Morrich More Special Area of Conservation, Dornoch Firth SSSI and the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area. There are also significant historic environment assets in the settlement; two Scheduled Monuments sit within the settlement (the Clach Chairidh and the Carrieblair stone circle).

### Placemaking Priorities

- Housing land allocated that will consolidate the settlement.
  - Safeguard natural assets in and around settlement.
  - Safeguard historic environment assets.
  - Explore opportunities to improve interpretation of historic environment assets.
  - Maintain access to Core Paths.
- 162** The following map and table show the site allocations for Edderton.





### Housing

#### ET01: North-East of Haven

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 2.5

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
26

**Developer Requirements:** Access to be taken in accordance with 08/00477/FUL; To protect existing users, discharge to the Craigroy Burn should be avoided; Trees alongside railway line should be kept; Traffic calming on Station Road; Improve pedestrian links outwith the site; Site history to confirm when nearby refuse tips ceased operating; Sensitive design, landscaping and planting to reduce impact on NSA; Sensitive siting and access to site required taking account of Scheduled Monument in north west of site; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required.

#### ET02: West of Station Road

**Use:** Housing

**Area (Ha):** 6.9

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
37

**Developer Requirements:** To protect existing users, discharge to the Craigroy Burn should be avoided; Formal open space within the site; Phased development led by a masterplan for the site; Frontage access on A836 requires traffic calming and careful design to achieve reduced speed limit of 30mph; Frontage access onto Station Road acceptable provided no on-street parking; Position of access from Station Road for majority of site requires safeguarding; Safe Routes To School upgrade; Upgrading of junction with A836 may be required; Active Travel links; Pedestrian/cycle links through site connecting to rest of village; Sensitive landscaping and planting to reduce impact on settlement setting; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Open space around the Clach Chairidh symbol stone (buffer) and no development which would encroach on the line of sight from the Carrieblair stone circle and symbol stone to the hills to the west and south west.

Mixed Use

ET03: Adjacent to Glebe Cottage		
<b>Use:</b> Mixed Use (Business, Homeworking units)	<b>Area (ha):</b> 0.4	<b>Indicative Housing Capacity:</b> 2
<b>Developer Requirements:</b> Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Retain and integrate watercourses as natural features within development; Retain trees in site layout to provide stepping stones for wildlife; Existing access road may require upgrading; Maintain public access through the site; Maintain access to core path; Sensitive landscaping and planting to reduce impact on settlement setting; New boundary planting of appropriate species.		



### Golspie

- 163** Golspie plays an important role in providing a variety of retail and service uses to a large part of Sutherland. A town centre boundary is identified for Golspie. The new Town Centre First Policy directs all new footfall generating developments towards the area included within the town centre boundary and encourages a wide range of uses including promoting uses which are active during the daytime and evening. Land uses which compete with town centre businesses and risk impacting on the vibrancy and vitality will be restricted by the new Town Centre First Policy. The historic core may merit formal Conservation Area status.
- 164** Golspie lies on a main transport route. The A9 trunk road goes through the settlement and there is a railway station which is served by the Far North Railway Line, which provides services north towards Thurso and Wick and south towards Inverness.
- 165** Land for employment uses is important and existing sites at the Business Park and at Drummie have been allocated. At GP03 Drummie the development of the former Technical College to Highland Council offices is complete and the remainder of the site provides opportunities for a variety of uses. The existing [Drummie Development Brief](#)<sup>(21)</sup> provides non-statutory planning guidance on the development potential of the site.
- 166** Tourism continues to be important to the local economy and provides employment. Appropriate tourist facilities that would support the Wildcat bike trails should be encouraged. Land adjacent to this at GP05 Rhives has planning permission for a camping/caravan site with space for up to 30 touring caravans.
- 167** There is a Core Path along the seafront and the open aspect of it around the pier should be maintained. There is potential to extend this coastal path towards Little Ferry and northwards towards Brora.

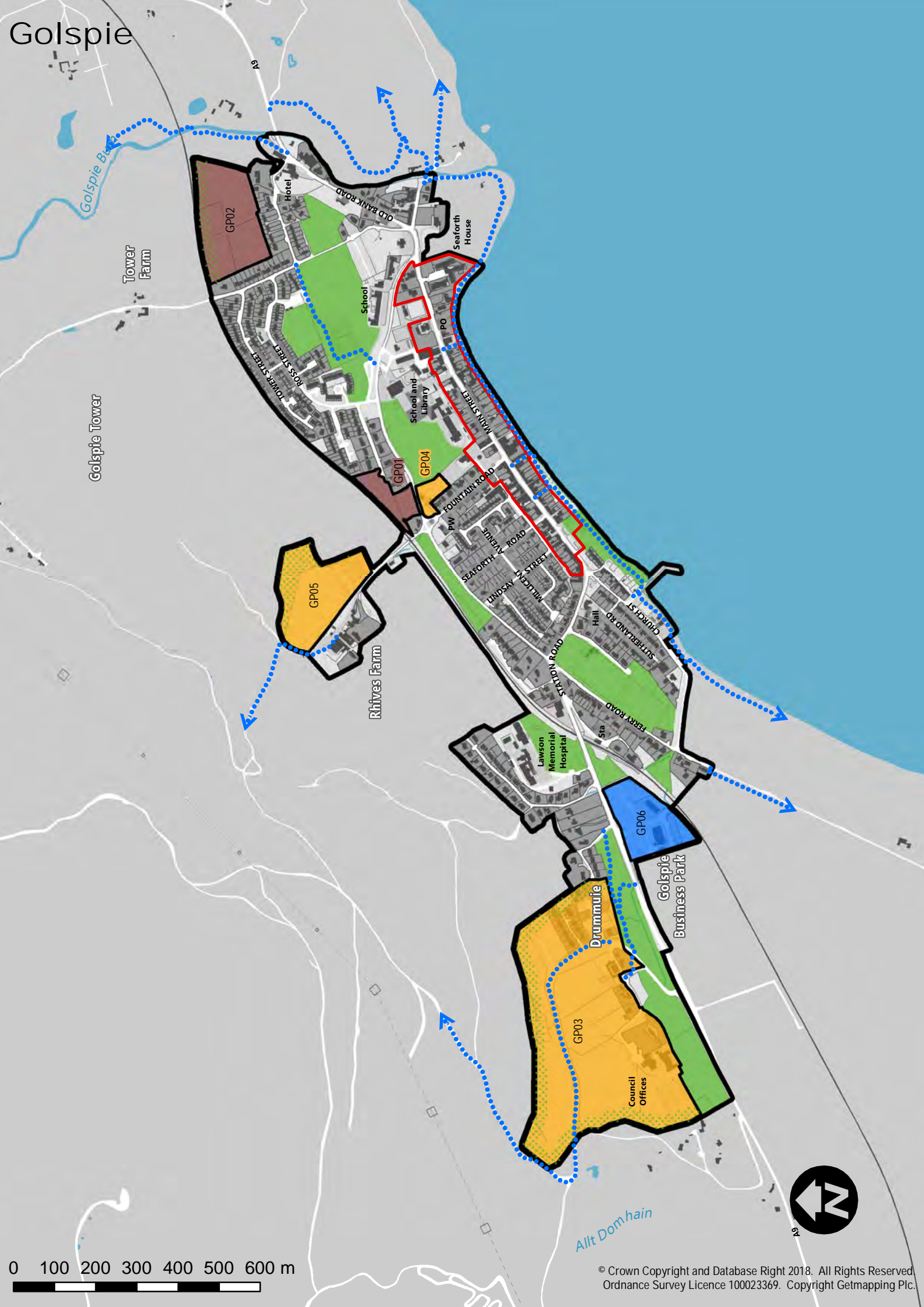
### Placemaking Priorities

- Assist and promote economic development.
  - Assist and promote tourism and tourist facilities.
  - Phased development at Drummie.
  - Safeguard the settlement setting, including the wooded and open seaboard approaches.
  - Maintain access to Core Paths.
- 168** The following map and table show the site allocations for Golspie.

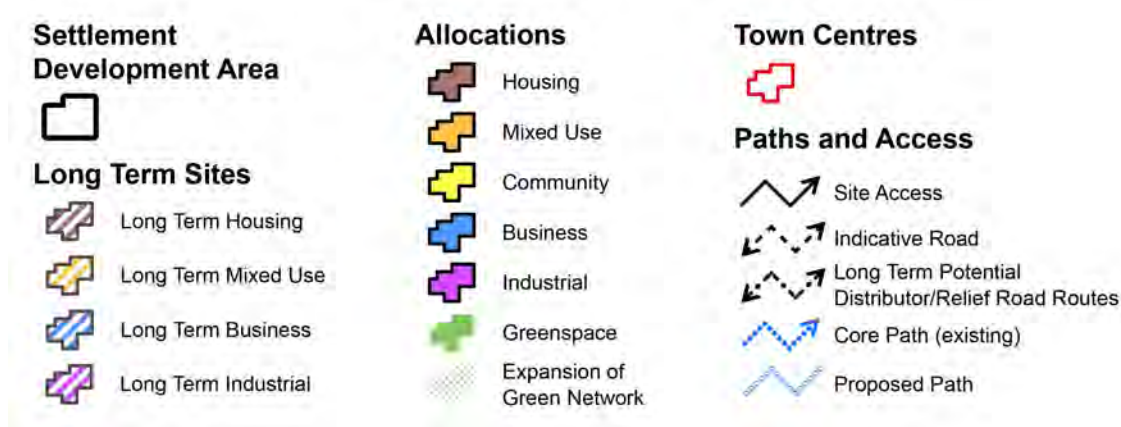
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21 [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1738/drummie\\_golspie\\_development\\_brief\\_january\\_2001](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1738/drummie_golspie_development_brief_january_2001)

# Golspie



0 100 200 300 400 500 600 m



### Housing

#### GP01: Woodland Way

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.9

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
9

**Developer Requirements:** Access to be taken from Woodland Way; Provide pedestrian link to Back Road; Investigate potential of retaining some existing trees on site. If any trees are proposed to be removed a species survey may be required and compensatory planting on site will be required.

#### GP02: Sibell Road

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 3.8

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
34

**Developer Requirements:** Pedestrian provision and upgrade to existing surrounding footways; Scheme of landscaping - investigate potential of retaining some trees on site or if existing trees are proposed to be removed then some replacement planting on site will be required, preferably creating a wildlife corridor in an eastwards direction; Set back development from any remaining semi-natural woodland.

### Mixed Use

#### GP03: Drummie

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Industry)

**Area (ha):** 17.7

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
34

**Developer Requirements:** Scheme of landscaping and planting to provide screening at "gateway" to settlement; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Provide buffers to watercourses on north and west boundaries; Ensure greenspace element of any development provides links to adjacent woodland for pedestrians and wildlife; Have regard to the TPO along the A9 frontage; Maintain access to Core Path; Maintain settings of Listed Buildings.

### GP04: Mackay House Hostel Site

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

**Area (ha):** 0.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
2

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Drainage Impact Assessment to address pluvial flood risk; Upgrade access to Fountain Road by widening it and providing footway provision; Have regard to adjacent listed buildings and their settings.

### GP05: Rhives

**Use:** Mixed Use (Tourism)

**Area (ha):** 3.6

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
N/A

**Developer Requirements:** As per planning permission 13/04772/FUL for a camping/caravan site with space for up to 30 touring caravans; New passing place on Rhives Road; widening footway along Rhives Road; Widen site access; Traffic Management Plan describing measures proposed to manage access to and from the site by caravans; Maintain pedestrian access to the Ben Bhraggie hill path; Design of the site should address any potential impact on the setting of the adjacent chambered cairn which is a Scheduled Monument; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required.

### Business

### GP06: Golspie Business Park

**Use:** Business

**Area (ha):** 2.4

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Provide buffer to the small watercourse adjacent to the site.

### Helmsdale

- 169** Helmsdale converges at the A9 and Far North Railway Line and provides services for the immediate and wider communities. There is potential for the settlement to further capitalise on its strategic location as a service and tourism hub on the A9 corridor.
- 170** The settlement centre has an original planned village with a formal grid pattern that may merit future Conservation Area status. There are a range of heritage and cultural assets, including the A-Listed Helmsdale Bridge, which contributes to the settlement setting, and also compliments the Timespan Heritage and Arts Centre.
- 171** The community has led with initiatives to address housing needs in the area. CaSPlan recognises this and land is allocated to meet future housing needs, enabling the settlement to continue to benefit from community-led development.
- 172** There are key community assets along Helmsdale River including the historic bridge, the original harbour, and the modern harbour at the mouth of the river.
- 173** A range of designations highlight the high quality natural environment Helmsdale sits within, including the East Caithness Cliffs Special Area of Conservation; Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation, and Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth Special Landscape Area.

### Placemaking Priorities

- Support community-driven development by offering a range of well connected sites for housing and employment growth.
  - Promote existing assets around the old harbour and the Timespan centre by enhancing the setting and environment, and by improving green network connectivity.
  - Ensure active travel opportunities are maximised by improving the existing green network routes and establishing new ones.
  - Capitalise on the strategic position of the settlement by ensuring the provision of facilities and a high-quality environment for visitors and the local community.
  - Safeguard key features including natural environment designations.
- 174** The following map and table show the site allocations for Helmsdale.



# Helmsdale



The Light-House

DUNROBIN STREET

STAFFORD STREET

SUTHERLAND STREET

OLD CATHNESS ROAD

Helmsdale  
Primary School

River Helmsdale

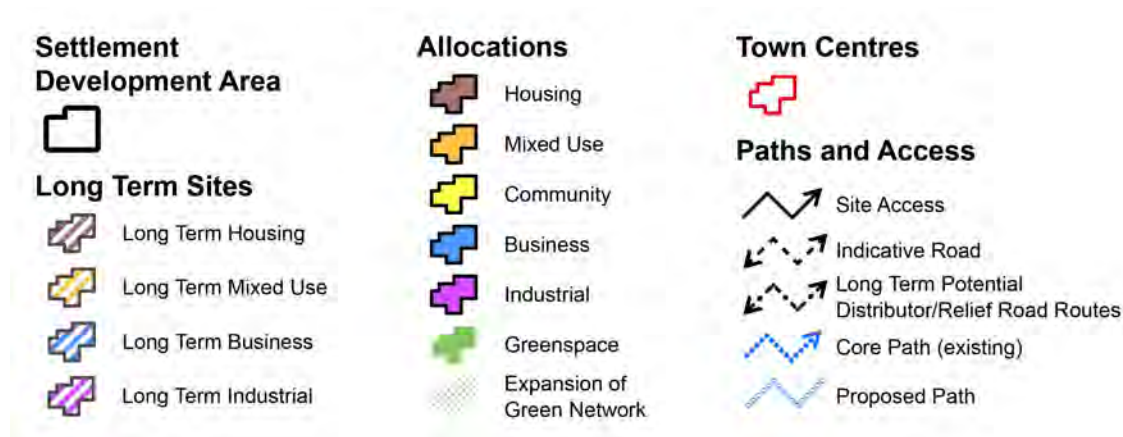
Harbour

A897

A9

0 100 200 300 400 m

### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend



### Housing

#### HD01: St. John's Church

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.1

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
5

**Developer Requirements:** Sympathetic conversion of church building to complement neighbouring Listed Buildings; Improved access and upgraded parking; Bat species/ habitat survey; Landscaping and planting sensitive to the setting.

#### HD02: North of Rockview Place

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 1.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
20

**Developer Requirements:** Existing access should be used; Development in accordance with 12/00444/FUL; Development density and layout consistent with the current development pattern; Active travel routes and pedestrian links enhanced; Landscaping and planting sensitive to the setting.

#### HD03: Simpson Crescent

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 1.3

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
15

**Developer Requirements:** Maintain existing green networks (including informal foot paths and core path) across eastern side of site and enhance connectivity of site including new footway along roadside boundaries; Provide a buffer comprising of an enhanced green network between residential development and the seaward edge of the site; Assessment of potential contamination issues; Landscaping and planting sensitive to the setting; Site layout sensitive to the amenity views from Simpson Crescent.

### Mixed Use

#### HD04: Shore Street

**Use:** Mixed Use (Business and Community) **Area (ha):** 1.0

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
N/A

**Developer Requirements:** No built development west of Shore Street (shore side of site); Flood Risk Assessment required to inform layout and design (only low vulnerability uses or operationally essential uses in areas shown to be at risk from flooding, to be accompanied by resilience measures); Bat species/ habitat survey for redevelopment of garage buildings; Careful siting, design and layout to safeguard A-Listed Helmsdale bridge, the historic harbour and green networks; Otter survey required where river works involved; Assessment of potential contamination issues.

### Industry

#### HD05: East of Industrial Estate

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 1.4

**Developer Requirements:** Access to be taken from existing access to industrial estate from Rockview Place; Access improvements to alleviate parking issues and improve local road network; Landscaping and sensitive siting and design, having regard to residential neighbours and trunk road.

### Lairg

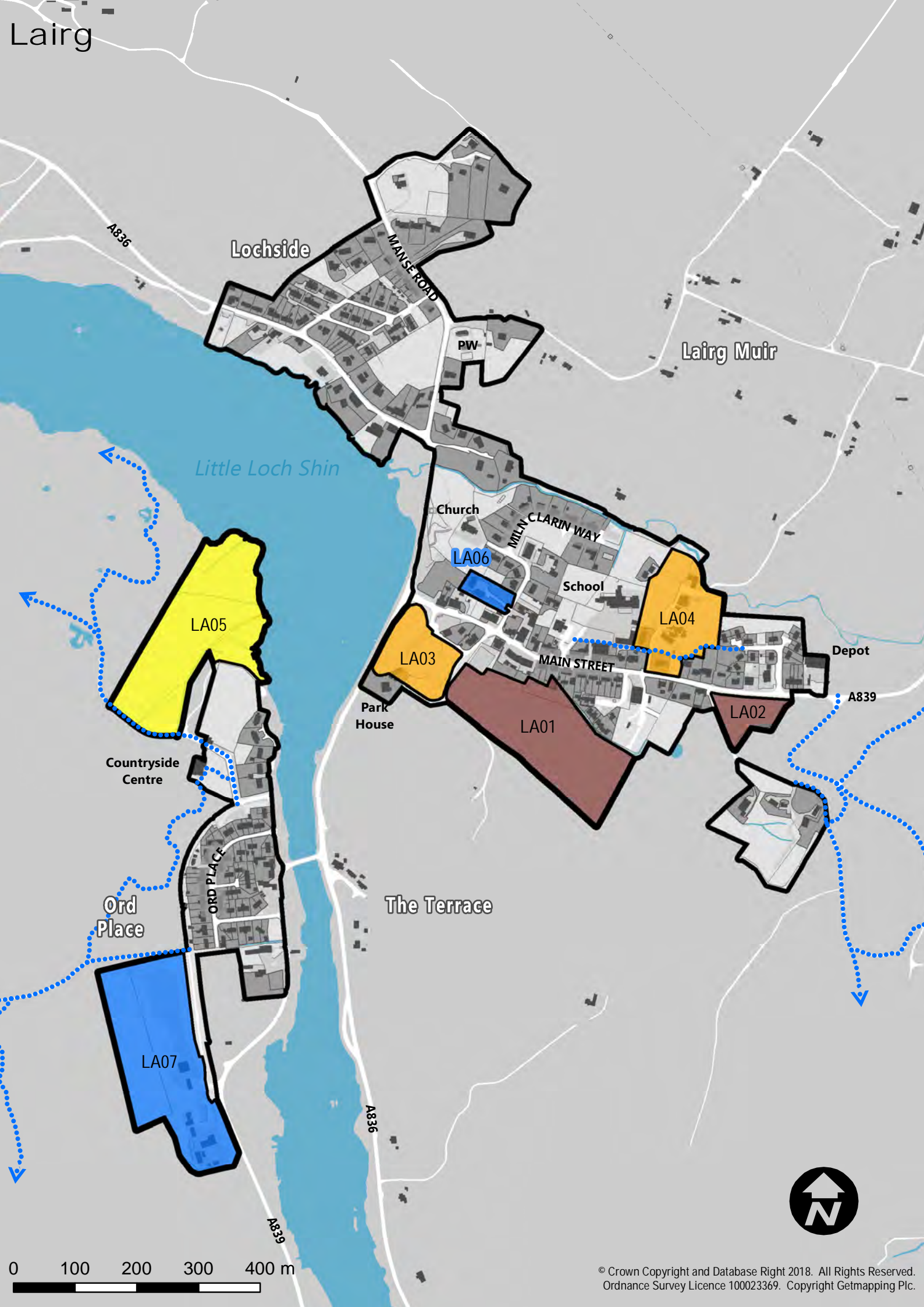
- 175** Lairg is Central Sutherland's largest service, transport and employment centre. It sits next to the attractive man-made Little Loch Shin and is at the gateway where the Far North Rail Line meets cross-County roads.
- 176** Expanded tourist facilities in Lairg would be beneficial to consolidate its role, especially with the loss of facilities at Falls of Shin; tourist footfall around the Ferrycroft Centre should be encouraged. Land North West of Ferrycroft (LA05) is unsuitable for most forms of built development due to high flood risk; however it may be suitable for recreational uses.
- 177** Environmental improvements would be welcomed on the site of the Former Sutherland Transport and Trading Company on the corner of Main Street and the A836. The area is a key focal point for Lairg and the local community is keen to enhance the range of facilities on the site for both the community and tourists. Some car parking should be retained, but there may be potential to provide picnic tables, a children's play area, a tourist information point/interpretation and a local craft hub. The opportunity should be taken to link into the recently improved Church Hill wooded path.
- 178** Land to the south of Main Street is the key site where housing expansion will be encouraged. It is close to local facilities and has access to the Main Street. Development of this site would consolidate the existing built environment and would not have a major impact on landscape. It needs to be developed via a masterplan, which shows phasing of development and take account of the adjacent site of the former Sutherland Arms. The Former Sutherland Arms site (LA03) is a key entrance site to Lairg and is previously used land.
- 179** The Former Laundry site has become mainly residential at the entrance; further residential use to the north east of the site will be discouraged and business use promoted. Any proposed business use must be able to co-exist with the existing residential properties. In addition to land at the Former Laundry LA04, business land is allocated at LA06 West of Church Hill Road and at LA07 Southwest of Ord Place.

### Placemaking Priorities

- Assist and promote economic development.
  - Support additional tourist facilities.
  - Development proposals should have regard to the proximity of the Ferry Wood Ancient Woodland and The Ord Scheduled Ancient Monument.
  - Maintain access to Core Paths.
- 180** The following map and table show the site allocations for Lairg.



Lairg



0 100 200 300 400 m



### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend



### Housing

#### LA01: South-West of Main Street

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 3.4

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
50

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Masterplan required which should take into account the allocation at the former Sutherland Arms Hotel and to ensure houses are carefully designed to fit with the undulating landform and not visually intrusive; Phased development; Suitable access from A839 to be determined; Retain and integrate watercourse as a natural feature within the development; Pedestrian linkages to Main Street to encourage active travel; Ensure improved pedestrian access/links to football pitch and tennis courts; Provide landscaping using a variety of vegetation, as part of the overall design layout and encourage linkages to mature trees on former Sutherland Arms site to create habitat areas and links; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required.

#### LA02: Opposite Fire Station

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.6

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
9

**Developer Requirements:** Suitable access point to be determined; Masterplan required for site; Footways required; Provide pedestrian link to woodland to the east.

### Mixed Use

#### LA03: Former Sutherland Arms Site

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Tourism, Retail)

**Area (ha):** 1.2

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
5

**Developer Requirements:** A masterplan should be prepared for this site taking account of adjacent allocated land; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); The junction at the existing access from A839 is adequate but the access road will need upgrading before further development; Ensure any development does not affect TPOs, retain as many trees as possible; Bat/species survey may be required if any removal of mature trees is proposed; Ensure pedestrian links provided to adjacent sites.

#### LA04: Former Laundry

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

**Area (ha):** 1.9

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
4

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Widen access road and provide footways; Upgrade crossing of Laundry Road at school side entrance; Safe Routes to School audit; Review 30mph zone extents; Retain and integrate watercourses as natural features within development; Provide buffer between watercourse and any development; Provide screen planting along boundary with the school; Pre-determination bat survey, general species survey due to trees and potentially otter survey due to watercourse along boundary; Maintain access to core path at southern end of site; Assessment of potential contamination issues; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Any business use must be compatible with adjacent domestic buildings.

### Community

#### LA05: North-West of Ferrycroft

**Use:** Community

**Area (ha):** 4.0

**Developer Requirements:** A Flood Risk Assessment may be required to inform layout and design of development; Peat Management Plan to show how disturbance of peat has been minimised and how peat will be managed on site and a vegetation survey to demonstrate how impacts on wetlands have been avoided or if necessary, mitigated – these issues may affect the area of the site which can be developed; Restore small watercourses on the site to their more natural form; Provide buffer between site and Little Loch Shin; Re-engineer watercourses to give them a more natural course; Any development should have regard to adjacent Ferrywood ancient woodland; Maintain existing vegetation and wildlife corridors around site; Potential to link access with adjacent woodland; Any development should be of an appropriate design and carefully sited in order to protect the open character and amenity of the site, with particular regard to views from across the loch; Have regard to The Ord Chambered Cairns; Carpark may need extended if recreation provision is increased; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required.

### Business

#### LA06: West of Church Hill Road

**Use:** Business

**Area (ha):** 0.3

**Developer Requirements:** Drainage Impact Assessment required with planning application; Maintain tree line around site.

#### LA07: South-West of Ord Place

**Use:** Business

**Area (ha):** 4.2

**Developer Requirements:** Peat Management Plan showing how disturbance of peat has been minimised and how peat will be managed on site and a vegetation survey to demonstrate how impacts on wetlands have been avoided – these issues may affect the area of the site which can be developed; Retain existing tree belt around site; Any felling of mature trees will require a species survey; Masterplanning required for access roads within the site; Promote track at the rear of Ord Place as an Active Travel route to the site; Programme of archaeological works/mitigation may be required; Have regard to the adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument at The Ord Chambered Cairns.

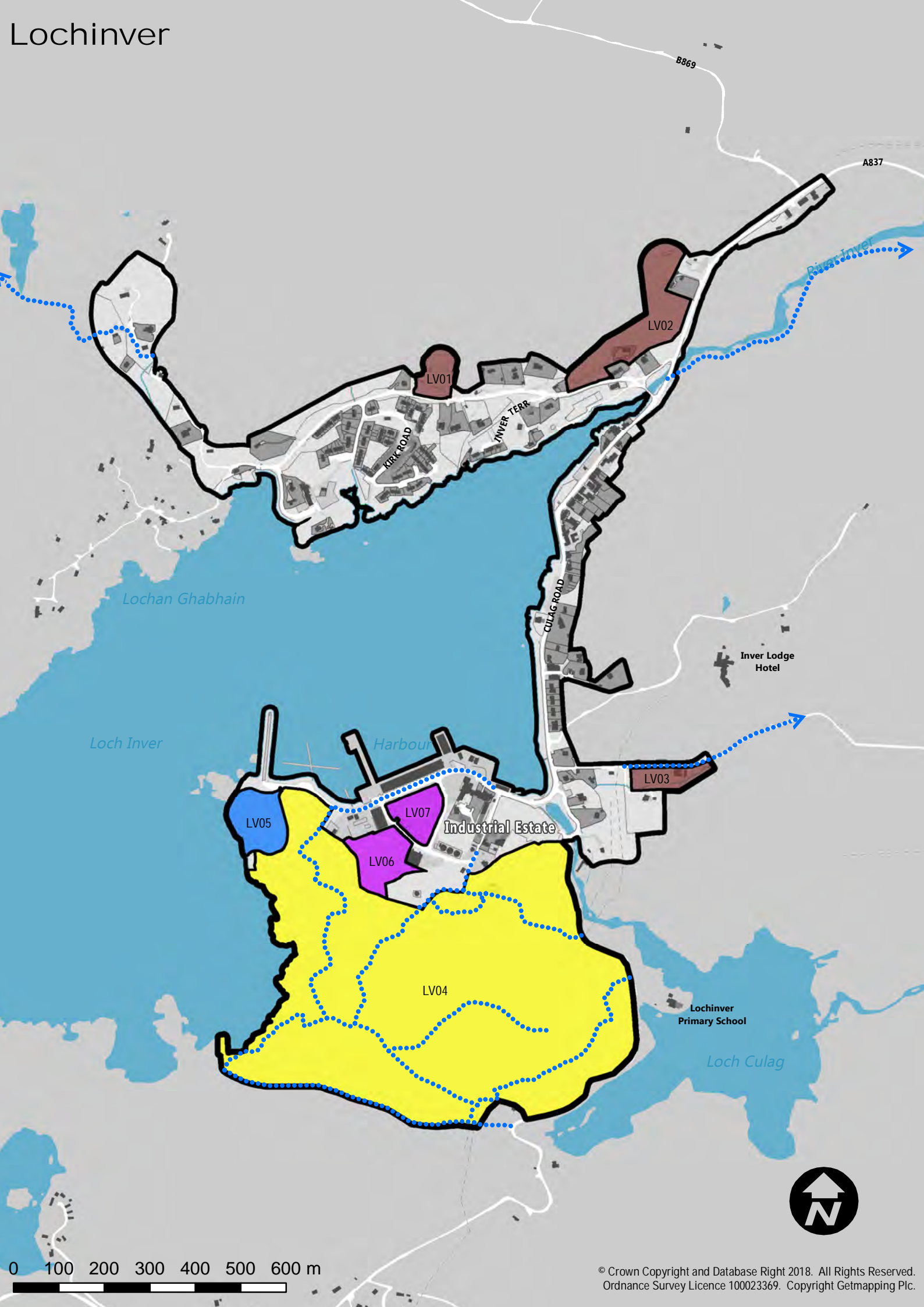
### Lochinver

- 181** Lochinver is the main service, employment and tourist centre for south-west Sutherland. The settlement is known for its role in community ownership, and as such there are a range of active community organisations both within the settlement and in the wider Assynt area.
- 182** The Highland Council's Housing Strategy identifies Lochinver as a longer term priority for housing. The majority of housing developments in recent years have occurred as single plots, mainly on windfall sites. A range of affordable homes were delivered by Albyn Housing Society during the lifetime of the Sutherland Plan. Different options for housing are allocated to give a choice of sites, ownership and developer type.
- 183** There are a range of business and employment focuses that include the fishing port, deep water berth and services in the settlement centre. The role of the harbour and future potential for its expansion, including for commercial fishing and tourism, is recognised with a range of site allocations for business and industry.
- 184** Culag Community Wood is an important asset both for the local community and for visitors to the area. Culag Community Woodland Trust manage the wood and offer a range of services and opportunities including environmental education, training and employment, and enjoyment of the environment. National Planning Framework (2014) highlights the importance of strengthening links between people and the land, and suggest activities like hutting to achieve this. Proposals for woodland hutting community uses are identified for Culag Community Wood.
- 185** Lochinver sits in an iconic landscape that contributes to it being a high quality place to live and visit. This is reflected in the Assynt-Coigach National Scenic Area designation that covers a wide area, including the settlement. The landscape is therefore highly sensitive to development.

### Placemaking Priorities

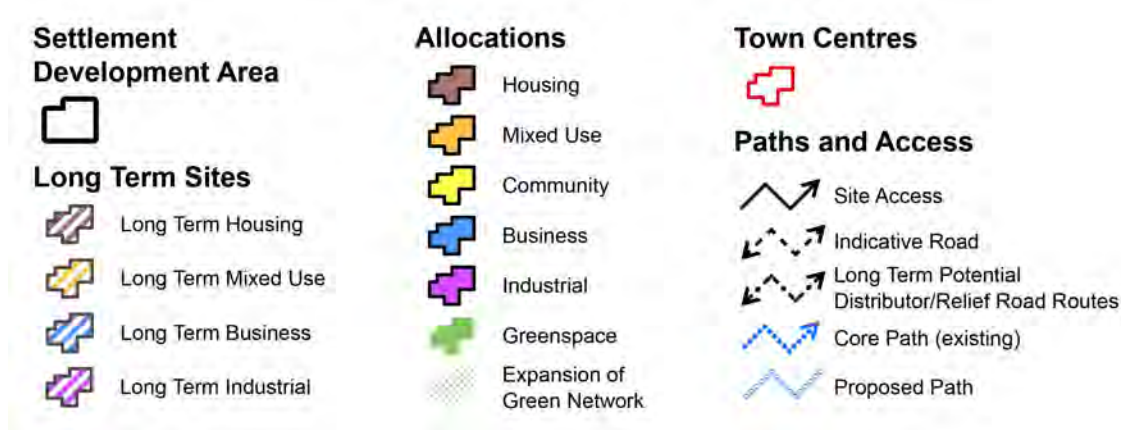
- Encourage housing development to help meet the Council's longer term priority for housing through the range of allocated housing sites.
  - Support and promote economic growth through development on allocated business and industrial sites.
  - Capitalise on opportunities for community-led development including Culag Community Wood.
  - Safeguard the sensitive landscape setting.
- 186** The following map and table show the site allocations for Lochinver.

# Lochinver





### CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend



### Housing

#### LV01: Former Sheep Pens North of Inver Park

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.7

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
6

**Developer Requirements:** Existing access requires upgrading for improved visibility; Flood Risk Assessment and no development should take place in areas shown to be at risk of flooding; No culverting of small watercourse on site; Peat assessment and management plan; Vegetation survey and mitigation to avoid impacts on wetlands; Careful siting, design and layout to safeguard sensitive landscape setting.

#### LV02: Cnoc A' Mhuilin

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 2.9

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
10

**Developer Requirements:** Design statement to be prepared to safeguard the landscape features that contribute to the special qualities of the Assynt-Coigach NSA, in particular the landform and landscape setting of the surroundings; Separately, the design statement should address, to the satisfaction of the Council, the setting in relation to the nearby listed buildings; Peat assessment and management plan; Vegetation survey and mitigation to avoid impacts on wetlands; Housing restricted to maximum of 1.5 storey; Limited existing access at Baddidaroch Road, upgrading required; Access from A837 will require provision of footways, extension of 30mph speed restriction and should not prevent further future expansion of site; Sensitive siting and design to safeguard residential amenity.

### LV03: Canisp Road

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.7

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
8

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Current single-track road access is only partially adopted and requires upgrading to provide suitable passing places and pedestrian links to the settlement; Watercourse on site should not be culverted and should be designed into development with appropriate buffering; Peat assessment and management plan; Vegetation survey and mitigation to avoid impacts on wetlands; Design statement and sensitive layout (including planting) to safeguard sensitive landscape setting; Otter species and habitat survey may be required; Retention of as much of woodland as possible, maximise opportunities for woodland to screen development from surrounding sensitive landscape.

### Community

#### LV04: Culag Wood

**Use:** Community

**Area (ha):** 40.3

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Peat assessment and management plan may be required; Built development is restricted to 'off-grid' structures, for example, woodland huts; Development should safeguard and enhance the existing path network on site and retain as much woodland as possible; Development should not significantly diminish the woodland characteristics, or the contribution it makes to the setting of the settlement; Tree removal in line with Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal Policy; Design statement to safeguard the sensitive landscape setting; Species surveys and mitigation may be required.

### Business

#### LV05: West of the Coastguard Station

**Use:** Business

**Area (ha):** 1.5

**Developer Requirements:** First priority for industrial development should be at sites LV06 and LV07, after which this site may be considered appropriate; Otter species survey; Heron disturbance between March and August should be avoided; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Site history for contaminated land risks required; Careful siting, design and layout to safeguard sensitive landscape setting; Current access track to be upgraded including for pedestrians.

### Industry

#### LV06: Land Adjacent to Assynt Leisure Centre

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 1.4

**Developer Requirements:** Development to remain within extent of old quarry with set back from quarry faces, designed and finished to be sensitive to the old quarry setting; No further quarrying or freshening of rock faces; Protected species and habitat survey may be required; Safeguard ancient woodlands to south of site; Careful siting, design and layout to safeguard sensitive landscape setting.

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#### LV07: Culag Harbour

**Use:** Industry

**Area (ha):** 1.0

**Developer Requirements:** Flood Risk Assessment required to inform layout and design (only low vulnerability uses or operationally essential uses in areas shown to be at risk of flooding, to be accompanied by resilience measures); Careful siting, design and layout to safeguard sensitive landscape setting.

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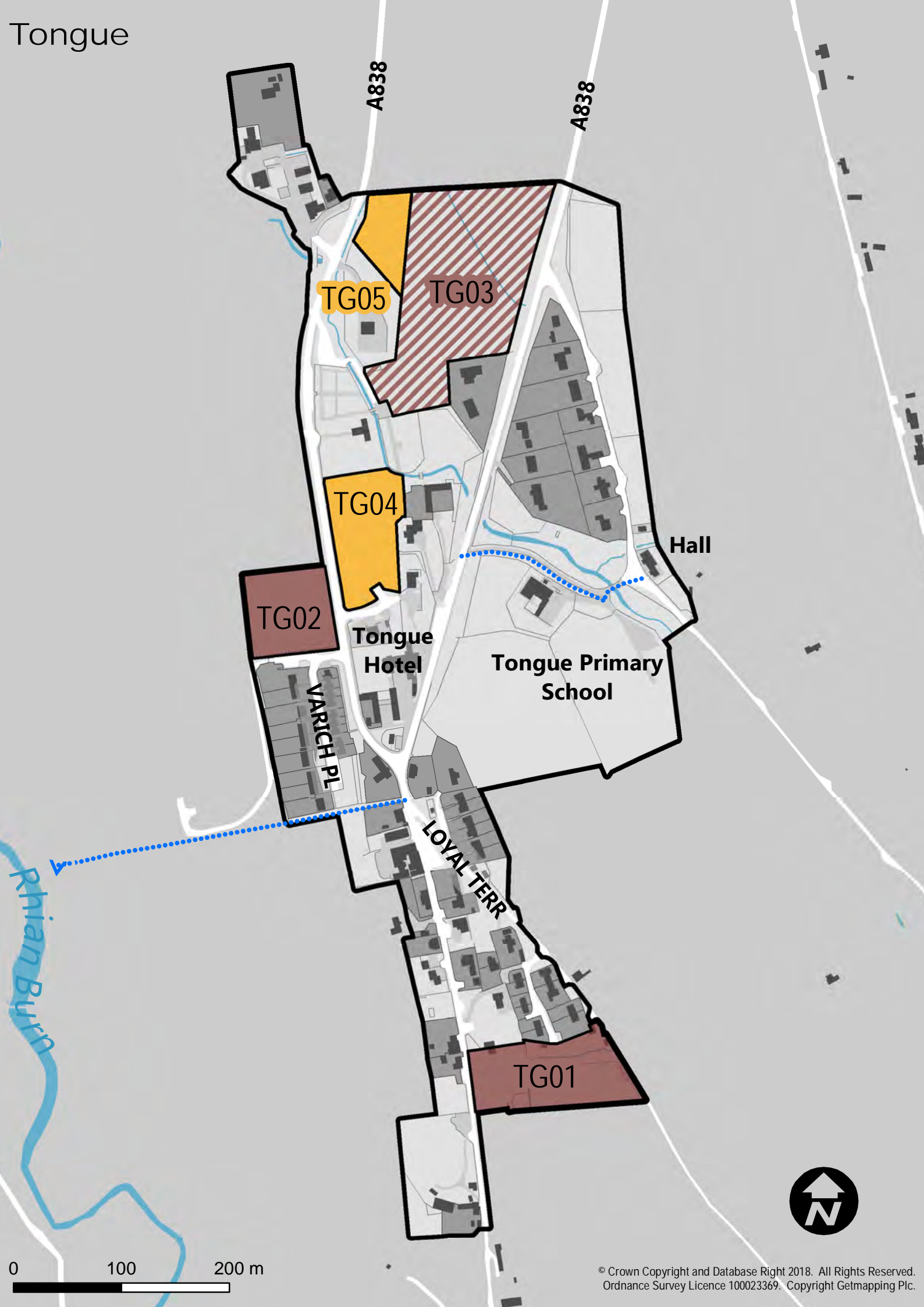
### Tongue

- 187** Tongue is a strategic service and tourist centre for north-west Sutherland. The settlement provides key community services including the Health Centre and Kyle Centre. It also provides the community and visitors with hotels and bars, local stores, post office, and a community transport service, Transport for Tongue.
- 188** Recent development proposals, including emerging industries and a new large-scale tourism development, have introduced the potential to increase demand for housing. To ensure an adequate housing land supply, as well as providing key housing sites, a longer-term housing site is identified.
- 189** Future development should reinforce and complement the existing village setting, which is formed in a north-south oriented linear pattern across the hillside facing the Kyle. Development should also seek to support community growth and safeguard the quality of the multiple natural and built heritage designations.
- 190** The settlement sits within a dramatic and striking landscape, designated as the Kyle of Tongue National Scenic Area.

### Placemaking Priorities

- Promote development by providing a range of options in the north and south of the settlement.
  - Support the potential for future growth by identifying longer term housing sites.
  - Encourage development that reflects the special qualities of the Kyle of Tongue National Scenic Area.
- 191** The following map and table show the site allocations for Tongue.


















# Tongue



0 100 200 m



## CaSPlan Settlement Map Legend

Legend		
<b>Settlement Development Area</b>	<b>Allocations</b>	<b>Town Centres</b>
	 Housing	
<b>Long Term Sites</b>	 Mixed Use	<b>Paths and Access</b>
 Long Term Housing	 Community	 Site Access
 Long Term Mixed Use	 Business	 Long Term Potential Distributor/Relief Road Routes
 Long Term Business	 Industrial	 Core Path (existing)
 Long Term Industrial	 Greenspace	 Proposed Path
	 Expansion of Green Network	

## Housing

### TG01: South of Loyal Terrace

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.9

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
12

**Developer Requirements:** From Loyal Terrace road spurs, access upgrading with passing places and pedestrian footways; Development should not prevent further future expansion south; Design statement required to safeguard the sensitive landscape setting and residential amenity; Flood Risk Assessment and no development should take place in areas shown to be at risk of flooding- no culverting of watercourse on site; Species survey and mitigation plan may be required.

### TG02: North of Varich Place

**Use:** Housing

**Area (ha):** 0.6

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
10

**Developer Requirements:** Layout should reflect building lines of the adjacent Varich Place; Development should be supported by a design statement to safeguard the sensitive landscape setting; Dry stone wall boundary along the A838 should be retained and footway provided; Extension to the 30mph speed restriction may be required.

### TG03: East of the Fire Station

**Use:** Long Term Housing

**Area (ha):** 2.2

This is identified as a 'Long Term Site'. These sites indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the Plan period. They are not being invited for development within this Plan period and therefore developer requirements have not been identified in this Plan. More information about Long Term Sites is provided in the Glossary.

### Mixed Use

#### TG04: South of St. Andrew's Church

**Use:** Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business)

**Area (ha):** 0.7

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
10

**Developer Requirements:** Design statement required to safeguard both the sensitive landscape setting and adjacent A and B-Listed Buildings; Dry stone wall boundary along the A838 should be retained; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding)- no culverting of Kirkiboll Burn and appropriate buffering required; Extension to 30 mph speed restriction may be required.

#### TG05: North of Fire Station

**Use:** Mixed Use (Community, Business)

**Area (ha):** 0.3

**Indicative Housing Capacity:**  
N/A

**Developer Requirements:** Careful siting and design to safeguard sensitive landscape setting and gateway qualities of site; Siting of buildings should reflect linear pattern of existing development; Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Relocation of 40 mph speed limit signage to be sited on the A838 north of the site.

### Sutherland Growing Settlements

#### Bettyhill

##### Issues

- The settlement is a key centre for local services, including Farr Primary and High School, and visitor attractions, for example the Strathnaver Museum and Visitor Information Point.
- Iconic designated landscapes lie to the west and east of the settlement creating a high quality environment for the community and key attractions for visitors, including the Kyle of Tongue
- The development pattern across the settlement is varied due to differences in ground level and slope, historic land uses, land values and ownership (e.g. Crofting).

##### Placemaking Priorities

- Capitalise on the tourism and service potential provided by the settlement's existing assets and proximity to nearby natural and historic environment features.
- Support future development that reflects the existing patterns of development in the settlement, whilst avoiding any areas of good quality peatland or deep peat.
- A key residential development opportunity remains to the west of Munro Place.
- Ensure future development is sensitive to the Kyle of Tongue National Scenic Area and Farr Bay, Strathy and Portskerra Special Landscape Area.





### Durness

#### Issues

- Services for a large rural area are concentrated in Durness, including Durness Primary School and a range of service and tourist related businesses.
- The settlement is situated on level cliff top terrain and has a dispersed development pattern along the A838 road and around its junction with the road to Balnakeil.
- There are multiple natural heritage designations and features including Durness Special Area of Conservation; Oldshoremore, Cape Wrath and Durness Special Landscape Area; Smoo Cave, and Balnakeil.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Continue to support the role of the settlement as a local and visitor service centre.
- Promote Balnakeil Craft village as a tourist destination and local centre for business and employment.
- Support the potential for a community-owned harbour facility on the west banks of Loch Eriboll.
- Celebrate and safeguard the diverse range of natural, cultural and historic environment assets, and ensure development avoids areas of good quality peatland and deep peat.
- Crofting in the parish of Durness should continue to be recognised as playing an important role for the community.
- Development should minimise the loss of traditionally crofted inbye land which provides suitable habitat for corncrake.



### Embo

#### Issues

- Limited development opportunities at Embo Street until significant realignment and widening of existing road and junction with Dornoch-Embo Road.
- Improvements required to the Dornoch-Embo Road.
- Increased pressure on local road network due to traffic from the caravan site.
- Potential for development of new crofts as part of a community led initiative.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Developments should reinforce existing street layout e.g. principal elevation facing the road, similar design/materials.
- Re-use of old school building for community uses.
- Maintain open space to north of the village at the football field.
- Significant developments to be accompanied by a recreational management plan to assess any likely increased pressures from recreational access of the sand dunes or disturbance to wintering or breeding birds.
- Development proposals should have regard to Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA and Ramsar site, Moray Firth SAC and Loch Fleet SSSI.





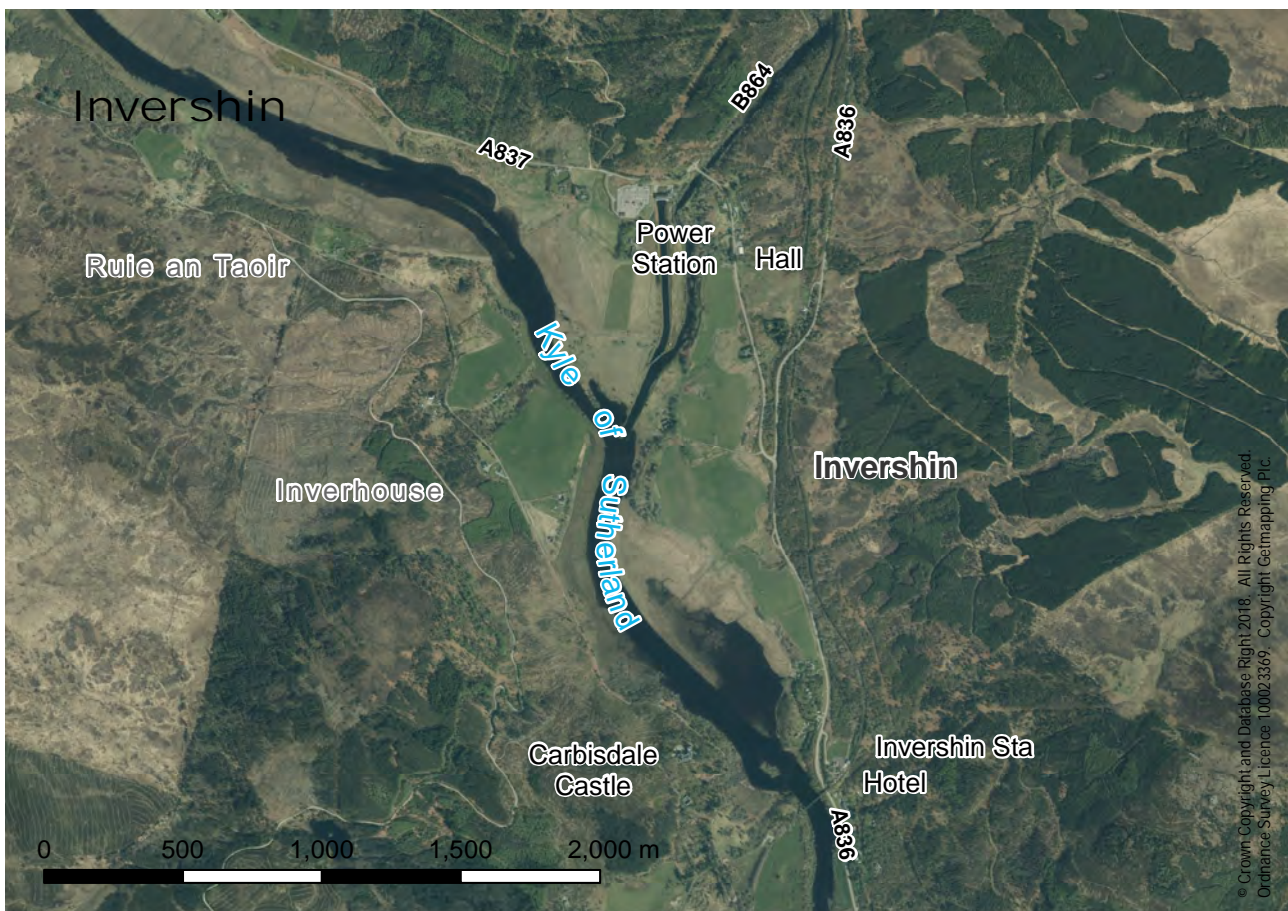
### Invershin

#### Issues

- Existing settlement pattern is one where houses are dispersed in a linear pattern along the A836.

#### Placemaking priorities

- Supportive of growth whilst seeking to avoid proposals that would lead to the creation of numerous new accesses onto the A836.
- Development proposals should have regard to the proximity of the River Oykel SAC, Kyle of Sutherland Marshes SSSI, Shin Viaduct A-Listed Building, areas of Ancient Woodland and Invershin Farm standing stone Ancient Monument.



### Kinlochbervie

#### Issues

- The settlement is a key centre for services for north-west Sutherland, including the High School and fishing port.
- Fishing, aquaculture, the public sector and tourism provide the main employment, with crofting also playing a key role.
- Complex topography and the road pattern around the lochs have contributed to a fragmented development pattern.
- In recent years, almost half of housing completions were outwith the previous plan's settlement boundary (Sutherland Local Plan) on non-allocated sites.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Continue to support the role of marine industries in the local economy.
- Encourage the development of Loch Clash Community Harbour.
- Support the roll-out of broadband to improve connectivity in the area.
- Direct development to infill sites, and prevent sprawl of the settlement into the surrounding countryside, unless there are justifiable reasons in terms of croft management.





### Melness

#### Issues

- The settlement is made up of several small crofting townships along the cliff tops on the west side of Tongue Bay.
- The Melness Crofter's Estate manage the land for crofting, a key source of employment for the community along with aquaculture, public and service sectors and other forms of land management.
- Designations highlight the high quality natural environment that is attractive to live in and visit. Designations include the Kyle of Tongue National Scenic Area; Eriboll East and Whiten Head Special Landscape Area, and Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA.
- Services in the settlement are dispersed due to the traditional crofting land use and community's historic patterns of growth. Talmine Stores and Post Office, the community centre and Caladh Sona care facility are located around Cornhill Road.
- Future replacement of Caladh Sona is being planned by NHS Highland.
- The settlement may be well placed to support emerging industries, including a new tourism development proposal.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Crofting should continue to be recognised as playing an important role for the community.
- Support development that enables the settlement to capitalise on opportunities for future growth and economic development.
- Larger scale residential development proposals (e.g. more than 2 houses) should be located near existing facilities, for example near Cornhill Road.
- There may be opportunity for future residential expansion at Joseph Mackay Court.
- Ensure future development is sensitive to designations in the area.



### Melvich

#### Issues

- Melvich shares local services and facilities with neighbouring Portskerra, but both settlements are discrete and situated at the mouth of the River Halladale.
- The built form is dispersed and linear along the A836 road, with a small back land housing cluster adjacent to the industrial estate.
- There is capacity for less than 10 housing units at Portskerra Waste Water Treatment Works.
- The rigs that run from the road east to the coast are on the boundary of the Strathy Coast SSSI. The settlement overlooks the North Caithness Cliffs SPA, the Farr Bay, Strathy & Portskerra Special Landscape Area lies to the north.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Support use of the industrial estate that still has capacity for further small units.
- Support potential for use of industrial estate as an office hub for small businesses currently working from home and for remote working.
- Support the potential for the settlement to capitalise on its location on the A836 for local and visitor economies.
- Any proposed development should have regard to nearby natural heritage designations.
- Development should seek to preserve the historic crofting settlement pattern.
- Crofting should continue to be recognised as playing an important role for the community.





### Portskerra

#### Issues

- Portskerra shares local services and facilities with neighbouring Melvich, but both settlements are discrete and situated at the mouth of the River Halladale.
- The settlement features traditional Highland buildings concentrated around the junction from the A836 and the junction to the School, with more dispersed dwellings in the north to Berrigoe and at Shore Street.
- There is capacity for less than 10 housing units at the Portskerra wastewater treatment works.
- The western half of the settlement is within the Farr Bay, Strathy & Portskerra Special Landscape Area, and the rigs to the east running to the coast are on the boundary of the Strathy Coast SSSI and near the North Caithness Cliffs SPA.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Promote opportunities to capitalise on trade from local and visitor traffic along the A836.
- The traditional pattern of rigs associated with houses should be maintained.
- Any proposed development should have regard to the nearby natural heritage designations.
- Development should seek to preserve the historic crofting settlement pattern.
- Crofting should continue to be recognised as playing an important role for the community.





### Rosehall

#### Issues

- Development needs to be proportionate to the capacity of the mainly single track A837.

#### Placemaking priorities

- Development close to the River Oykel Special Area of Conservation will be discouraged.
- Development between the road and the river will be required to connect to mains sewerage to avoid impacts on the Special Area of Conservation.
- Concentrate development around the existing facilities in the village.
- Maintain access to Rosehall Trails Path.



### Scourie

#### Issues

- Scourie is a key village in north-west Sutherland that provides a range of services to visitors and the local community.
- The settlement has retained a range of its traditional Highland forms like crofting rigs, but has also developed modern facilities, like the Sports Pavillion.
- There are a range of community-led development initiatives that continue to serve the needs of the local community as well as building on the potential of the tourism industry.
- The settlement is surrounded by natural heritage designations including Handa Special Protection Area and Scourie Coast SSSI and therefore is sensitive to development.
- Capacity for Waste Water Treatment is limited to 10 housing units at Scourie Village Septic Tank, and less than 10 at Scourie Handa Septic Tank.

#### Placemaking Priorities

- Support future development that helps to sustain existing services.
- The traditional crofting landscape in the centre of the village should be safeguarded (bounded by the A894 road to the north and west, and by the road linking the settlement in the north-east to the playing fields in the south-east).
- Development on the land between the village hall and the caravan and camping site should be sensitive to the amenity of coastal views across Scourie Bay.
- Development at Scourie More should not create skylining along the ridge.
- Any proposed development should have regard to the nearby natural heritage designations.



## Appendix 1 - Schedule of Land Ownership | Èarr-ràdh 1 – Clàr de Shealbh Fearainn

This Schedule of Landownership sets out where The Highland Council own land covered by allocations in the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan. This is a requirement of Regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

### Schedule of Landownership

Description of land owned by planning authority	Settlement	Reference to policies, proposals or views contained in local development plan which relate to the occurrence of development of the land
Council roads depot	Ardgay	AG04 Ardgay Railway Station Yard South
Old Migdale Hospital	Bonar Bridge	BB01 Cherry Grove
Former coal yard	Bonar Bridge	BB02 South Bonar Industrial Estate
East Brora Muir	Brora	BR03 East Brora Muir
Fascally Recreation Area	Brora	BR07 Upper Fascally
Castletown Heritage Centre	Castletown	CT02 Castlehill Steading and adjoining land
Bishopsfield	Dornoch	DN02 Bishopsfield
Meadows Park	Dornoch	DN05 Meadows Park
Former agricultural land	Golspie	GP01 Woodland Way
Sibell Road	Golspie	GP02 Sibell Road
Drummuie Farm	Golspie	GP03 Drummuie
Business Park	Golspie	GP06 Golspie Business Park
Coupers Yard	Helmsdale	HD04 Shore Street
Helmsdale New Fire Station	Helmsdale	HD05 East of Industrial Estate
Ord Croft Roads depot and salt store	Lairg	LA07 South-West of Ord Place
Laundry road depot	Lairg	LA04 Former Laundry

## Appendix 1 - Schedule of Land Ownership | Eàrr-ràdh 1 – Clàr de Shealbh Fearainn

Description of land owned by planning authority	Settlement	Reference to policies, proposals or views contained in local development plan which relate to the occurrence of development of the land
Former quarry site	Lochinver	LV05 West of the Coastguard Station
Former quarry site	Lochinver	LV06 Land Adjacent to Assynt Leisure Centre
Vacant industrial land	Lochinver	LV07 Culag Harbour
Viewfirth Park	Thurso	TS11 Viewfirth Park
Council depot	Thurso	TS07 Land at Sir Archibald Road
Old manse	Tongue	TG04 South of St Andrew's Church
Wick Industrial Estate	Wick	WK23 Wick Industrial Estate
National Nuclear Archive site	Wick	WK08 South East of Terminal Building
South Primary School	Wick	WK17 South of Roxburgh Road
Hillhead Primary School	Wick	WK14 Hillhead Primary School
Expansion site for industrial estate	Wick	WK09 North of Wick North Primary School
Council depot	Wick	WK13 Land West of Green Road
Wick High School building	Wick	WK15 Wick High School Building
Land at South Head	Wick	WK10 North of Wellington Avenue
Swimming pool, Council depot and several small properties	Wick	WK12 Lower Pulteneytown
Landfill and waste management facility	Seater	Seater Waste Management Facility EDA

The list below explains some of the terms used in the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan or related material. Please note the explanations given are not intended as legal definitions of the planning terms used.

### A

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**Action Programme:** Prepared alongside the local development plan to help deliver the proposals with the plan by setting out who is responsible for the delivery of development sites, improved infrastructure and a broad indication of when it will need to be installed/completed by. All parties referred to in the Action Programme have a key role in the implementation of the Plan and the Council will, in conjunction with Community Planning Partners, monitor progress.

**Allocations:** Land identified in a Local Development Plan as appropriate for a specific use or mix of uses (see Uses below for further detail).

**Area for Co-ordinated Tourist Connections:** Area where maximising the reach of the tourism sector inland is promoted, for example opportunities associated with the North Coast 500 and the National Cycle Network.

**Area for Energy Business Expansion:** Area within which the Plan seeks to maximise opportunities arising from offshore renewables and oil and gas, including employment-generating uses to service the sector, through support for harbours, allocation of business and industrial land and a flexible approach to considering the needs of emergent sectors and strategic infrastructure proposals.

**Area for Flexible Community-led Development:** A flexible approach in remote and rural areas, especially in fragile areas, to support communities that are either dispersed or clustered together in settlements offering varying services and facilities, by enabling community-led sustainable growth and development as well as growth through inward investment.

### C

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**Carbon CLEVER:** An initiative aimed at achieving a carbon neutral Inverness and a low carbon Highlands by 2025, toward which the Council has committed resources from its capital budget.

**Community Planning Partnership:** The partnership is made up of representatives from each Council Service together with key public sector and third sector organisations. Its purpose of it to provide strategic political leadership and expertise to drive and enable public service reform, including the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement and continuous improvement of partnership working, so as to achieve better and fairer outcomes for the Highland population.



### D

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**Designing Streets:** A Scottish Government policy document that puts place and people before the movement of motor vehicles. Its aim is to promote sustainable development that focuses on creating high quality places. It enables designers and local authorities to unlock the full potential of streets to become vibrant, safe and attractive places.

**Developer contributions:** These planning obligations provide a means of ensuring that developers contribute towards the infrastructure and services needed to make proposed developments acceptable in terms of land use planning. Contributions may be made as financial payments or as direct works.

**Development brief:** Documents which are prepared to provide additional, detailed information on an allocation within a local development plan. They are designed to inform developers and other interested parties of the constraints and opportunities presented by a specific site, and the type of development expected or encouraged.

**Development Plan:** A set of documents that set out the local authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land in their area.

**Developer Requirements:** These are issues which a developer of the site need to address as part of developing the site. These can include survey work to inform a planning application or features which need to be incorporated into the final development.

### E

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**East Coast Connectivity and Tourism Corridor:** This covers an area stretching along the east coast of Caithness and Sutherland where the Council consider as particularly suitable for investment and development which helps to strengthen transport linkages and infrastructure and supports the growth of tourism and the expansion of the energy sectors.

**Economic Development Areas (EDAs):** These refer to places, outwith the main settlements, which either already are or have the potential to become important economic centres. A set of guiding principles is included for each EDA identified in the Plan which will assist in determining the extent and location of suitable opportunities. For two of the EDAs (Dounreay and the Seater Strategic Waste Management Facility) the Plan additionally identifies site boundaries.

### G

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**Green Network:** The network of existing and proposed green spaces and green corridors within and around settlements, linking out into the wider countryside, which help to enhance the area's biodiversity, quality of life and sense of place. Green Networks are made up of woodlands, other terrestrial habitats watercourses, wetlands and other open spaces, such as formal and informal green space in and around urban areas and active travel routes.

**Greenspace:** Important areas of grass, trees, or other vegetation set apart for recreational or aesthetic purposes in and around the settlements to be safeguarded from inappropriate development and enhanced where appropriate. HwLDP policies safeguard these networks of sustainable, accessible and fit for purpose green spaces including sports facilities.

**Greenfield land:** Land (or a defined site) which has previously never been built on.

**Growing Settlement:** These are settlements whereby planning applications will be guided by the criteria based in the Growing Settlements Policy and a list of guiding factors set for each settlement. The Growing Settlements approach is intended to provide some flexibility in these settlements while also ensuring that development is directed to the best locations.

## H

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**Highland-wide Local Development Plan(HwLDP):** This is the overarching Development Plan document which sets the strategy and vision for the whole Highland area (excluding the area covered by the Cairngorms National Park which has its own local development plan) and sets out how land can be used by developers for the next 20 years.

**Hinterland:** Areas of land around settlements that experience the greatest pressure for housing development. There is a general presumption against new housing development within these hinterland areas.

**Housing Needs and Demand Assessment:** Provides the evidence base to inform the policy discussions and decisions in relation to the delivery of affordable housing and market housing. It employs the recommended approach to analysing housing need and demand over the next 10 years and beyond.

**Housing requirement:** The number of housing units for which land must be identified to meet future demand. We work this out by considering market demand, changes in the number of people and households, the existing housing stock and the existing availability of land for housing.

**Hut:** A simple building used intermittently as recreational accommodation (i.e. Not as a principal residence); having an internal floor area of no more than 30m<sup>2</sup>; constructed of low impact materials; generally not connected to mains water, electricity or sewerage; and built in such a way that it is removable with little or no trace at the end of its life. Huts may be built singly or in groups. (SPP, 2014).

## I

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**Infrastructure:** The basic services and facilities needed to support development. These include road access and water and sewerage facilities and green infrastructure, e.g. landscaping, green networks, open spaces, and paths.

### L

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**Local Development Plan:** See Development Plan.

**Long Term Site:** Sites identified in the Plan as "Long Term" indicate the likely preferred direction for growth beyond the period . The suitability of these sites for development has been subject of initial consideration through the preparation of this Plan. However, they are not being invited for development within this Plan period and allocated sites are expected to be developed before any long term sites can be considered. During future reviews of the Plan we will consider bringing forward any of those sites as allocations (subject to further assessment and identification of any developer requirements) or whether they still reflect the likely preferred direction for growth and should remain proposed as long term sites. We review the Plan at least every five years.

### M

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**Marine Renewable Energy:** The generation of electricity from wave, tidal and offshore wind resources.

**Masterplan:** A document that explains how a site or series of sites will be developed. It will describe how the proposal will be implemented, and set out the costs, phasing and timing of development. A masterplan will usually be prepared by or on behalf of an organisation that owns the site or controls the development process. Those preparing masterplans should engage with the Council from the outset and should demonstrate that they have undertaken effective and meaningful public consultation, which has informed the content of the masterplan.

**Material consideration:** Matters we must consider when making a decision on a planning application. Scottish Government guidance states that there are two main tests in deciding whether a consideration is material and relevant and advises as follows:

"It should serve or be related to the purpose of planning. It should therefore relate to the development and use of land; and

It should fairly and reasonably relate to the particular application. It is for the decision maker to decide if a consideration is material and to assess both the weight to be attached to each material consideration and whether individually or together they are sufficient to outweigh the development plan. Where development plan policies are not directly relevant to the development proposal, material considerations will be of particular importance."

Whether a consideration is material is a matter that may ultimately be decided by the courts when required.

**Mitigation:** Actions taken to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate the effects of an adverse impact associated with a development.

**Mixed Use:** The practise of allowing more than one type of compatible Use on a site, e.g. a combination of housing, business, and community uses, or that any of these uses are suitable on the site. If the Plan allocates a site for Mixed Use development, it will specify the particular uses that are considered to be suitable. If the Plan requires that the development of a particular site must deliver a mix of uses then that will be specified as a Developer Requirement for that site.

### O

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**Open Space:** Taken to mean areas of greenspace or civic space which provide public value by offering opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation or visual amenity. These areas are protected from inappropriate development through HwLDP policies.

### P

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**Permeability:** The extent to which there are a number of alternative ways through an environment. A permeable layout allows people to move around with greater ease and more choice of routes.

**Placemaking Priorities:** These are important considerations for how a settlement can grow and be enhanced in order that it functions well and is an attractive place to live. These priorities will help to guide decisions on individual development and investment proposals.

**Proposed Plan:** This is the first main draft of the Local Development Plan and represents the planning authority's 'settled view' as to what the final adopted content of the plan should be.

### S

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**Sequential Approach:** The sequential approach requires developers to search for a suitable site for their proposal following a sequential list of possible locations. For example, developers of large scale retail developments are required to look first of all at city and town centres locations.

**Settlement Development Areas (SDAs):** Reflects the built up area and allocated expansion areas for mapped settlements. These areas are preferred areas for most types of development subject to consistency with HwLDP Policy 34: Settlement Development Areas.

**Spatial Strategy:** Encapsulates the headline changes that the Plan seeks to achieve and provide locational guidance for new development.

**Special Landscape Area (SLA):** These are areas where the scenery is highly valued locally, and have been designated by the Council to ensure that the landscape is not damaged by inappropriate development, and in some cases encourage positive landscape management.

### U

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**Uses:** We have allocated sites for the following different land uses. Where relevant the corresponding permissible use(s) taken from The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes)(Scotland) Order 1997 is/are defined below.

Housing: Class 9 Houses (but may also allow Class 8 Residential institutions)

Business: Class 4 Business (but may also allow ancillary storage or distribution uses)

Tourism: Various Classes, dependent upon site circumstances

Industry: Class 4 Business, Class 5 General Industrial, Class 6 Storage or Distribution

Community: Class 10 Non residential institutions (but may also include other public facilities such as sports pitches)

Retail: Class 1 Shops (but Plan text may restrict scale and type of retailing)

Additional Uses are included for allocations where specific developments are being supported, e.g. student accommodation.

In addition to the allocations above, the Plan mapping shows areas of safeguarded Greenspace. These are areas where the Council does not wish to encourage development because they represent greenspace from which the general public derive an amenity value. The protection of these areas is underpinned by policies within the HwLDP.

### W

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**Windfall sites:** These are sites that have come forward for development that are within areas identified as Allocations within the Development Plan.







T H E  
**F L O W**  
C O U N T R Y



*Neil Cowie RSPB*

**THE PEATLANDS OF CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY  
2021 – 2030**

# Foreword

It is sixteen years since the original Peatlands of Caithness & Sutherland Management Strategy was published. It identified both need and opportunity for people to learn, enjoy and engage with peatlands, and the Peatlands Partnership was established shortly afterwards to oversee its delivery.

Since this time, our understanding of the role of peatlands in carbon storage, climate change and in ecosystem services more generally has grown vastly, which has been reflected by recent changes in attitudes and in national and international policy. This presents us with previously unrivalled opportunities not only to further protect and enhance the special qualities of our peatlands, but also to engage with local communities and businesses, to facilitate greater awareness, understanding and enjoyment, and to support and promote best practice through our monitoring and research work.

The original Strategy recognised the challenges brought about by decades of policy shifts, varied standards of stewardship and uncertainties facing land managers in the peatlands. It was the first time that a clear, shared vision for the future where land uses complement rather than compete with each other was attempted. Our new Strategy recognises the huge strides made by successive projects in recent years to restore the blanket bog habitat and engage with local people and encourages partners to work together to continue with this important work.

Recent developments in public sector policy including the Scottish Government's declaration of a Climate Emergency, the Biodiversity Crisis, and 'green recovery' opportunities emerging from the global Covid-19 pandemic, have led to huge changes in the levels of funding available for peatland work. Through capitalising on initiatives such as the Peatland ACTION Fund and opportunities associated with sensitively planned renewable developments, we have an unprecedented opportunity to affect the landscape-scale change needed to transform the Flow Country into a global example of best practice where new developments can complement improved land management practices to support peatland habitats and wildlife as well as carbon capture and the reduction of emissions.

Our new Strategy also includes the aspiration to secure inscription of the Flow Country as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and we plan to help local people to benefit from this and other opportunities.

As with the original Strategy, we aim to embed the relationship between people and peatlands at the heart of our approach, and one of our first actions will be to broaden our membership to include further representatives from local community, business and land management interests.

**Professor Stuart Gibb, Environmental Research Institute,  
North Highland College - The University of the Highlands and Islands, Thurso  
Chairman, The Flow Country Partnership**

The Peatlands Partnership was set up following the publication of the first Management Strategy for the Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland to oversee delivery of the Strategy and subsequent revisions. Its members include NatureScot (formerly SNH), Scottish Forestry (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland), Forestry and Land Scotland (formerly Forest Enterprise / Forestry Commission), The Highland Council, RSPB Scotland, Plantlife International, The Environmental Research Institute (University of the Highlands and Islands), Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Flow Country Rivers Trust, the Northern Deer Management Group and the Highland Third Sector Interface. In 2021, the members of the Peatlands Partnership agreed to expand its membership and change its name to the Flow Country Partnership.

This is the third edition of the Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland Management Strategy. The first edition of the Strategy (2005-2015) can be downloaded [here](#).



This document was revised and updated by Janet Bromham of Lochside Associates under contract from NatureScot (on behalf of the Flow Country Partnership).



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# PART ONE: MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Caithness and Sutherland contain one of the world's most extensive areas of blanket bog. This peatland resource supports a wide range of wildlife, provides significant ecosystem services such as clean water and climate regulation, and is a vitally important store for carbon. This area requires careful management at the landscape scale to ensure that it remains healthy. The communities and businesses that depend on the peatlands all have a stake in this, co-ordinated through this Strategy.

The Peatlands Partnership was formed in 2006, shortly after the production of the first Management Strategy (2005). Now referred to as the Flow Country Partnership, it comprises a range of organisations involved in the management of the peatlands, who work together to implement the Strategy.

This is the third edition of this Management Strategy. In the fifteen years since the original Strategy was published there have been significant changes in the policy and guidance that influence land use in the peatlands. These changes have been driven largely by growing concerns in relation to climate change and sustainability, and an increasing recognition of the role of both peatlands and forestry as carbon stores. The first Strategy and its 2015 revision (unpublished) have served to direct and guide policy in relation to the balance between forestry and peatland, as well as provide a reference point and influence a range of other strategies, documents, programmes and projects.

In practical terms, there have been major strides in peatland restoration and related research since 2005. Research into the impact of forestry on adjacent peatland has led to the removal of some 3,965 hectares (ha) of forestry without restocking since 2014, and a further 2,300ha have been approved for clearance over the next ten years to enable peatland restoration and address forest edge effects. Research on restoration techniques has guided the blocking of drains and furrows to raise the water table and facilitate bog re-creation, and over 10,500ha of peatland in Caithness and Sutherland have been restored in this way.

The original Strategy identified an opportunity for people to learn, enjoy and engage with the peatlands. In 2014, following several years of planning, the Peatlands Partnership began a major project to address this. The five-year £11 million Heritage Lottery funded 'Flows to the Future' Project delivered a wide range of activities to engage people both locally and remotely, and improved facilities for interpretation and engagement as well as enabling further peatland restoration over a large area.

This 2021 revision provides an update on what has been delivered by the Flows to the Future Project, as well as ongoing efforts to get The Flow Country inscribed as a World Heritage Site. It recognises more recent changes in Government and public sector policy, changes in public attitudes, and how the individual sectors are responding to the Scottish Government's Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis, as well as how they might respond to the green recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Scottish Government has set new ambitious targets to end our contribution to climate change by reducing emissions to net zero by 2045<sup>1</sup> with renewable energy, woodland creation and widespread peatland restoration forming key elements of this Plan. This policy framework presents tremendous opportunities for the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland, and the Action Plan in Part Two identifies a number of priority projects and work areas for the ten-year period to 2030.

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<sup>1</sup> [Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032 - update - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/2018-2032-climate-change-plan/pages/10/)

## 1.2 Why the peatlands?

The peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland are a special place, of national and international importance. Nowhere else in Britain, and possibly the world, is there such an extensive area of this type of peatland (c400,000ha). Together with associated areas of moorland and open water, large areas of the peatlands are protected as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). They are recognised to be of national importance for conservation both as a habitat in their own right and because of the diverse range of rare and unusual breeding birds they support. Approximately 145,000ha are also designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance and part of the Natura 2000 series of sites (Special Areas of Conservation - SAC and Special Protection Areas - SPA).

In addition to the natural heritage designations, parts of the peatlands contain many sites and areas of archaeological and historic significance (Scheduled Monuments), as well as thousands of sites of regional and local significance that are more widely spread across the area.

In recent years the huge importance of the UK's peatlands as a carbon store of national importance has also been recognised, with the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland being a major component of that national resource.

## 1.3 Why a Strategy?

Within the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC/SPA, the Scottish Government is committed to avoiding the deterioration of qualifying habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the disturbance of species. It must also ensure the site's integrity and maintenance in the future. Outside the designated site is a still bigger area of peatland, which is also of importance for nature conservation and to which the Scottish Government has commitments under the Scottish Biodiversity Statement of Intent.

Although this is primarily a strategy to promote the natural heritage interest of the peatlands, there are many ways in which this can go hand in hand with supporting the needs of local communities, the historic environment and the economy. In addition to the socio-economic benefits provided by the peatlands (e.g. carbon store, clean water, spawning habitat, tourist attraction) the Strategy recognises that this is a place where people live and work, and that the support of local communities is key to its survival.

## 1.4 What area does it cover?

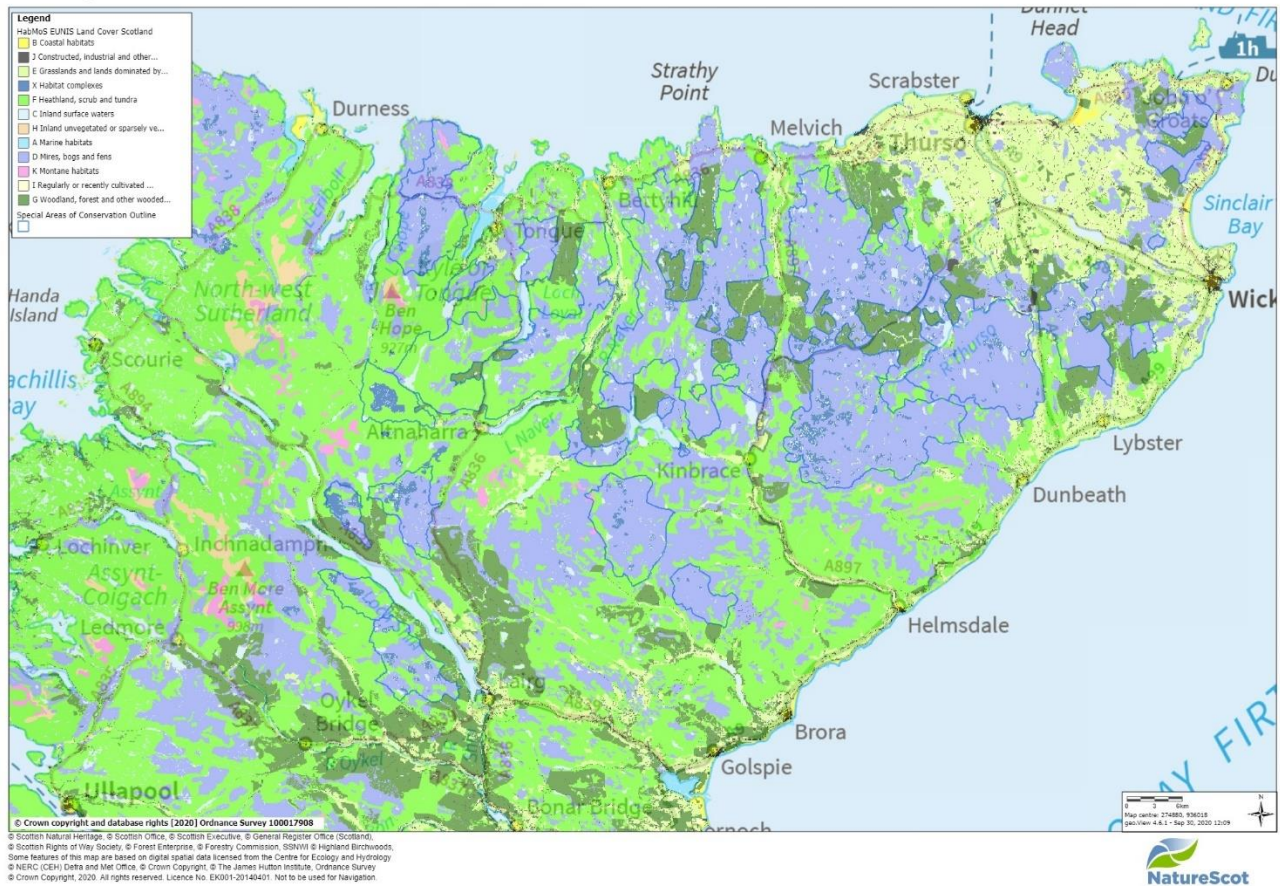
The starting point for this Strategy is all those areas of Caithness and Sutherland with peat soils. Many people are aware of the 'Flow Country', the name now often used for the central part of the counties, but in fact the peatland is much more extensive, stretching from the west coast of Sutherland across to the far east of Caithness.

Much of this peatland supports blanket bog and wet heath vegetation, some of which is designated for its nature conservation interest. Elsewhere agriculture, peat extraction or forestry have significantly altered the character of the peatlands. Within this wide area, the highest priority peatland is that carrying UK and European designations. The map below shows the extent of the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC.

The peatlands cannot be considered in isolation, as they are intimately linked through hydrology, bird and animal movements, and land management (both recently and during the preceding millennia of human occupation) to a much wider area. The Strategy looks at the whole landscape in which the peatlands sit.

The habitat map below shows the extent of bog (purple) and wet & dry heath (bright green) in Caithness and Sutherland. Woodland and forest are coloured dark green, however some of the plantations shown have now been felled for peatland restoration and wind farms.

Habitat Map



## 1.5 Who is it for and what will it be used for?

This Strategy is a shared vision for everyone with a direct interest in the peatlands, for example whether running a croft, managing a sporting estate or working for a public agency with statutory duties. Its uses will include the following:

- As a statement of a shared vision and objectives for the peatlands.
- As an action plan which can be used for promoting and prioritising activities.
- As a reference document for land managers considering future land management options.
- As a source document when policies or plans that affect the area are being prepared.
- As a means of guiding investment in nature, ecosystem services and biodiversity across the area.

## 1.6 How has it been prepared?

The first Strategy was published under the European Union LIFE funded Peatlands Project in 2005, following an extensive development process and public consultation. It was updated but never published in 2015. This second revision includes much of the original text but brings all the information up to date and includes a revised, more targeted action plan.



Since the publication of the original Strategy there have been significant changes in the policy and guidance that influence land use in the peatlands. These have been driven largely by growing concerns in relation to climate change and sustainability, and an increased recognition of the role of both peatlands and forestry as carbon stores. The 2015 revision was prepared in the context in particular of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, with other key developments including the development of Scotland's National Peatland Plan, Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy and National Planning Framework, the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity in 2010 (and the European, UK and Scottish responses to that), and the Community Empowerment and Land Reform (Scotland) Acts.

This 2020 revision provides an update on what has been delivered in the fifteen years since the original Strategy was published and the Peatlands Partnership formed, as well as outlining how recent changes in Government policy and public attitudes might impact on the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland. Priorities for future action are identified, and it is hoped that the action plan in part two will provide a rationale to support future work. The 2020 Scottish Programme for Government makes explicit references to peatland as a major resource for addressing carbon sequestration and halting biodiversity loss, whilst also encouraging and guiding investment in nature to aid the green recovery from COVID-19. This document follows a similar structure to the previous Strategies. It was drafted with input from stakeholders and Partnership members, and the draft Strategy underwent a public consultation in late 2020.

## 1.7 How to find your way around the Strategy

The Strategy starts with a vision, aim and four overarching objectives. Then comes an introduction to why the peatlands are special and to the various accolades they carry. The four objectives are addressed in Chapters 4-7. Each of these chapters begins with the relevant objective and a summary of the key issues, before going into more detail on the issues and summarising progress made to address them in the 15 years since the first Management Strategy was produced. There is inevitably some overlap as some themes, such as economic development and deer management, underlie the whole Strategy.

Part Two contains a progress report and action plan for future work. It is divided into four chapters pertaining to the Strategy's four objectives, and each chapter contains a table summarising progress made in the five years since the 2015 revision, and a second table proposing actions for delivery in the ten years to 2030.

## CHAPTER 2: VISION, AIM & OBJECTIVES

### The vision:

Our vision for the peatlands is one of a revitalised, sustainably managed landscape, with extensive sweeps of hill and bog intersected by fertile straths and forests. These straths and coastal strips support a mosaic of productive crofts and farms, rivers, forestry and native woodland. Above and between the straths lies the open landscape of the world-renowned peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland, which, together with their lochs and lochans, support a spectacular assemblage of birds, plants and other wildlife, including internationally important numbers of raptors, waders and waterfowl. The straths, bogs, hills, lochs, rivers, woodlands and forestry are managed together for the wide range of services they provide and interests they support. Different land management objectives and uses are integrated and support each other, with everything underpinned by a healthy environment, at the centre of which is the great peatland of the north. Everyone who lives, works in or visits the area values the peatlands, which are an exemplar of good management and an inspiration to all.

### Overall aim:

To enhance and promote the special values of the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland, through the promotion of sustainable land management, the encouragement of sustainable community and economic development, and through co-ordinated action.

### Strategy objectives:

**Objective 1: To promote and carry out sustainable land management that maintains and enhances the nationally and internationally important areas of peatland, the associated habitats and species and the wide range of services they provide.**

**Objective 2: To encourage sustainable community and economic investment that is compatible with safeguarding those features that make the peatlands important.**

**Objective 3: To promote greater awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special wildlife, carbon store, landscape, water environment, historical and cultural values of the peatlands.**

**Objective 4: To support and promote the value of the area for best practice management and research and as an exemplar and inspiration for others working on peatland management and restoration, to the benefit of peatlands here and elsewhere.**

## CHAPTER 3: WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THE PEATLANDS?

### 3.1 The habitat

Caithness and Sutherland are home to the largest and most intact area of blanket bog of its type in Europe and possibly the world, with 4% of the world's resource. Blanket bog develops where a cool wet climate allows the growth of vegetation dominated by Sphagnum bog mosses over extensive areas of sloping ground, hollows and flat areas. Where rainfall levels are high it can develop on slopes up to 30°. It typically overlies deep peat and receives all its nutrients through rainfall. In addition to bog mosses, other widespread plants of blanket bogs are heather, cross-leaved heath, deer grass and cotton grass.

For blanket bog to form, water levels need to be near the surface. Where the ground is not so waterlogged, other habitats occur. Wet heath is found on thinner, better drained peat or where management has caused the peat to dry out. This community has many of the same plants as blanket bog, but the bog mosses are less dominant, cotton grass is absent, and heather is more widespread. Dry heath and acid grassland are found on drier ground with mineral soils or occasionally very shallow peat.

The terms peatland and blanket bog may appear to be used interchangeably in this document, but there are some differences between them which can be important. Peatland is a general term for any area with a naturally accumulated peat layer at the surface<sup>2</sup>, regardless of the vegetation or land use. Blanket bog is one type of peatland, where the vegetation is only supplied with water and nutrients from the atmosphere<sup>3</sup>, and the peatland surface largely follows the underlying geology (on a landscape scale). When drained, it will normally still be called blanket bog, although it may no longer be peat forming, or 'active'. Peat formation can only take place where waterlogging slows the decomposition of dead material, which then accumulates as peat. Once the key species (particularly Sphagnum bog mosses) are no longer present or only very rare, such as under closed canopy forestry, it ceases to be blanket bog but remains a peatland. *Note: In other countries, blanket bog exists with natural forest cover.*

To the non-specialist, the diversity of the bogs of Caithness and Sutherland may not be immediately apparent. There is however great variation in form and vegetation, thanks to the differences in climate, geology and underlying landform from west to east and north to south. Water is a critical ingredient of the bogs and a particularly special feature is the patterning of pools often found on level and gently sloping ground. Lochs of all sizes and with a diversity of chemical make-up are abundant throughout the area. The clean waters of the peatlands also feed into many rivers and streams, which sustain internationally important populations of otter, Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel. These watercourses also support important fisheries.

### 3.2 The wildlife

Within any given area of the peatlands, the bogs, lochs and dubh lochans, hummocks, hollows and smaller pools provide niches for a wide range of plants, animals and invertebrates.

The lochs and bog pools are home to a range of insects such as dragonflies and pond skaters which are a common site during the warmer months. Frogs, newts and brown trout can also be found in the lochs and lochans, along with the secretive otter. They are also home to less common species such as the nationally rare water beetle *Oreodytes alpinus*. In spring and early summer, the pools are full of flowering bogbean.

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<sup>2</sup> Joosten & Clarke, 2002 'Wise Use of Mires and Peatlands: Background and Principles including a Framework for Decision Making'

<sup>3</sup> As above

Carnivorous plants such as sundew and butterwort are scattered across the peatlands along with a range of other species such as the important peat-forming Sphagnum mosses, cotton grasses, deer grass, heather and bog asphodel. The rare marsh saxifrage and bog orchid can also be found at a few locations. Red deer and mountain hare can be seen throughout the peatlands and the bogs are home to lizards and adders.

On the steeper and higher ground, the bog habitat grades into wet heath and dry heath. Towards the summits of the higher hills, sub-alpine heath becomes visible, with wind clipped heather and an increase in the cover of species such as trailing azalea and the nationally scarce Arctic bearberry.

The rich insect life in turn helps to support a set of special bird species which particularly like breeding in peatland habitats. The bogs are famous for their striking wading birds, like the golden plover with its plaintive whistling call, and the greenshank with its strident alarm and spectacular song flight. The lochs of the peatlands are home to beautiful red- and black-throated divers, large and primitive fish-eating birds with tremendous powers of pursuit, aggressive territorial battles and eerie calls. Here you will also find ducks like common scoters - despite its name, this is a very rare species, with only a few pairs nesting in Britain and about half of these in the Flow Country.

The wide, open landscape of the peatlands is used by quietly quartering birds of prey and holds very important populations of rare species like hen harriers and short-eared owls. Herds of red deer are one of the greatest spectacles of the peatlands, especially in the autumn rut. This landscape of rivers, streams, pools and lochs also provides a perfect home for otters and water voles.

As is the case with bird populations elsewhere, the bird numbers on the peatlands are not static. Unfortunately, dunlin, golden plover, snipe and curlew are declining in number. Marked differences in population change have occurred for these species between the western and the eastern parts of the peatlands, with most species faring better in the west than the east. This may be due to differential changes in land use and/ or climate change.

Whilst some of the peatland birds spend all of the breeding season on the peatlands, others make use of areas either close by or further afield for feeding. Close by, the enclosed pasture or in-bye ground in some parts of the straths provides important feeding for peatland wading birds, particularly the golden plover and dunlin. On the north coast, the calmer sandy bays provide feeding for red throated divers, and greenshank make use of the bays, rivers and areas of saltmarsh. Once the all-important breeding season is over, many of the birds disperse to other parts of Caithness and Sutherland, the UK or beyond.

### 3.3 The landscape

Aside from its nature conservation interest, the landscape value of the area is much appreciated both nationally and in a Highland context. Much of the landscape of the interior of Sutherland and west Caithness is made up of sweeping moorland, slopes and hills, and flatter areas of peatland. The scale of the landscape is vast in UK terms and much of the area is remote. Although the peatlands have a long history of management, this has been mostly low intensity grazing of livestock and deer stalking, neither of which has left much evidence in the way of built development.

Such 'wild land' is a diminishing resource in Scotland but is very much part of the regional character of Caithness and Sutherland and the national identity of Scotland. It provides opportunities for people to experience solitude and closeness to nature and attracts people to the area.

The straths of Kildonan, Halladale and Naver that cut through to the interior of Sutherland and west Caithness are more populated, often supporting forestry, fragments of native woodland, and farming and crofting activity. By contrast the peatlands in the east of Caithness are surrounded by a more intimate landscape of mixed agriculture and forestry.

### 3.4 The historic environment

Across Caithness and Sutherland there is considerable evidence of prehistoric and historic settlement and farming, dating back at least 6,000 years. There is little evidence of hunter-gatherers using the land during the preceding 3–4 millennia but there is no doubt that they did so. Surviving upstanding elements include prehistoric dwellings and associated field systems, burial monuments, brochs, forts and duns, as well as small medieval/post-medieval tower houses, townships, extensive cultivated areas and shieling grounds. Nationally (and internationally) famous sites include the Camster Cairns, Dun Dornaigil and the Rosal pre-clearance township, as well as the archaeological landscape around Loch of Yarrows.

Increasing community interest in local heritage and the application of conditions linked to planning permissions have resulted in new survey work being undertaken across the region in areas where very little has been done in the past. From basic field survey and recording to 3D LiDAR landscape photography, there is an ever-expanding knowledge of details of the historic environment across Caithness and Sutherland.

Prehistoric and historic sites and areas are concentrated around the burns, rivers and lochs of the peatlands, some at considerable distances from the glens that are still populated today. Evidence of pre-peat-growth land uses and habitations will survive in places below and within the apparently ‘wild land’ of the 20th/21st centuries. The peat has developed due to a mix of natural processes, climate change and human interventions that have taken place since the last glacial ice melt, so it should be no surprise that the historic environment has been subsumed by changing natural habitats.

The peat itself can also hold important information on the past activities of humans and about past environments. Whilst most areas of peat are likely to have formed in response to a wet climate and poor drainage, there is evidence that in some places, peat formation has been influenced by tree removal. Research on the peat deposit suggests however that extensive areas of the Caithness and Sutherland landscape have been treeless for at least the last 4,000 years. Further research is needed on the relative significance of the influence of humans and the changing climate on peat formation and retention.

### 3.5 Water supply and flood management

Much of Caithness and Sutherland’s drinking water comes from upland catchments which are generally peat dominated. Healthy peatlands naturally provide high quality water, but where they have been damaged there are greater levels of dissolved organic carbon (DOC). This increases colour levels and is associated with increases in particulate levels. This can lead to increased water treatment costs associated with water quality standards.

The condition of peatlands also has implications for flood control. Undamaged peatlands store water and help to maintain steady flow rates in rivers which they feed. Where peatlands have been damaged by drainage, run off is quicker, which can cause flooding problems downstream. Restoration reduces this downstream flood risk.

### 3.6 Climate change - the carbon store

With growing concerns regarding climate change, the value of peatland as a massive carbon store (also termed a ‘sink’) is now recognised. Peatlands represent the single most important terrestrial carbon store in the UK. As peat is largely made up of the remains of plants, which are themselves made of carbon, it locks up large stores of carbon for thousands of years. This carbon would otherwise be released to the



atmosphere and contribute to global warming. By contrast forests only store carbon for the lifetime of the trees, although the use of timber products can extend this until they are destroyed or decay. The UK's peatlands provide a store of at least 3,000 million tonnes of carbon, which is ten times that stored by the biomass in the UK's forests<sup>4</sup>,<sup>5</sup>. In its entirety, the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland stores an estimated 407 million tonnes of carbon, representing 25% of all Scotland's peatland carbon store<sup>6</sup>.

Disturbance of the peat surface, for example through drainage, burning or erosion, allows the peat to break down and carbon dioxide, a driver of climate change, is given off to the atmosphere and to watercourses. Restoration of damaged peatland reduces carbon dioxide emissions and enables peat to begin forming again, so that over time the balance will shift to one where more carbon is being laid down than emitted. The time taken for significant emission reductions will vary depending on the scale of damage and the level of restoration undertaken, and could be between a few years and a number of decades<sup>7</sup>.

### 3.7 Social and economic uses

The peatlands support and are shaped by farming and crofting, sporting management, forestry and conservation. They provide renewable power through many large wind farm developments, contributing towards the Government's 'net-zero' greenhouse gas emission targets. On a small scale they also provide local fuel. These activities provide valuable local employment and income. The peatlands also contribute to the local tourism industry, with many visitors coming to enjoy the wildlife, landscape and archaeology. Use of the area for recreation is at a relatively low intensity but is nevertheless significant. The 'wild land' character of peatlands as a whole also contributes to the international image of Scotland, including as part of the brand image for much of Scotland's food and drink.

### 3.8 Research and education

In recent years the peatlands have become a focus for research by universities and institutions from across the UK, complementing and collaborating with research work led out by members of the Partnership themselves (ERI, RSPB, FLS). This reflects the increasing recognition of the importance of the peatlands not only for their biodiversity, but also as a carbon store, and the need to understand more about their sensitivity to changes in land use and climate. It also reflects how the Flow Country holds a strong concentration of experience in peatland restoration and related monitoring, which is increasingly shared on a national and international basis and used to support decisions on national land use policy.

The recent Flows to the Future Project demonstrated the considerable scope to use the peatlands as an outdoor classroom across the curriculum, exploring its many values. Given its national and international significance, there is also considerable justification for the peatlands to be used remotely as a case study by schools and colleges who may never visit. The new Forsinard Field Centre, delivered by Flows to the Future, with classroom, accommodation and a laboratory, allows us to make a step change in our ability to host visiting students of all stages of education from primary to post-graduate.

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<sup>4</sup> Forest Research (2020) Forestry Statistics: 4: Carbon <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/forestry-statistics-2020/4-carbon/>

<sup>5</sup> [IUCN UK Peatlands Committee Briefing paper peatlands and climate change](#)

<sup>6</sup> Chapman S 'Flows to the Future Economic Impact Assessment Report', The James Hutton Institute

<sup>7</sup> Arts', R.R.E., Chapman, S.J., Donnelly, D. and Matthews, R.B. (revised in 2013) 'Potential Abatement from Peatland Restoration' Research Summary for Climatexchange, Scotland's centre of expertise connecting climate change research and policy  
[https://www.climatexchange.org.uk/media/1616/potential\\_abatement\\_from\\_peatland\\_restoration.pdf](https://www.climatexchange.org.uk/media/1616/potential_abatement_from_peatland_restoration.pdf)

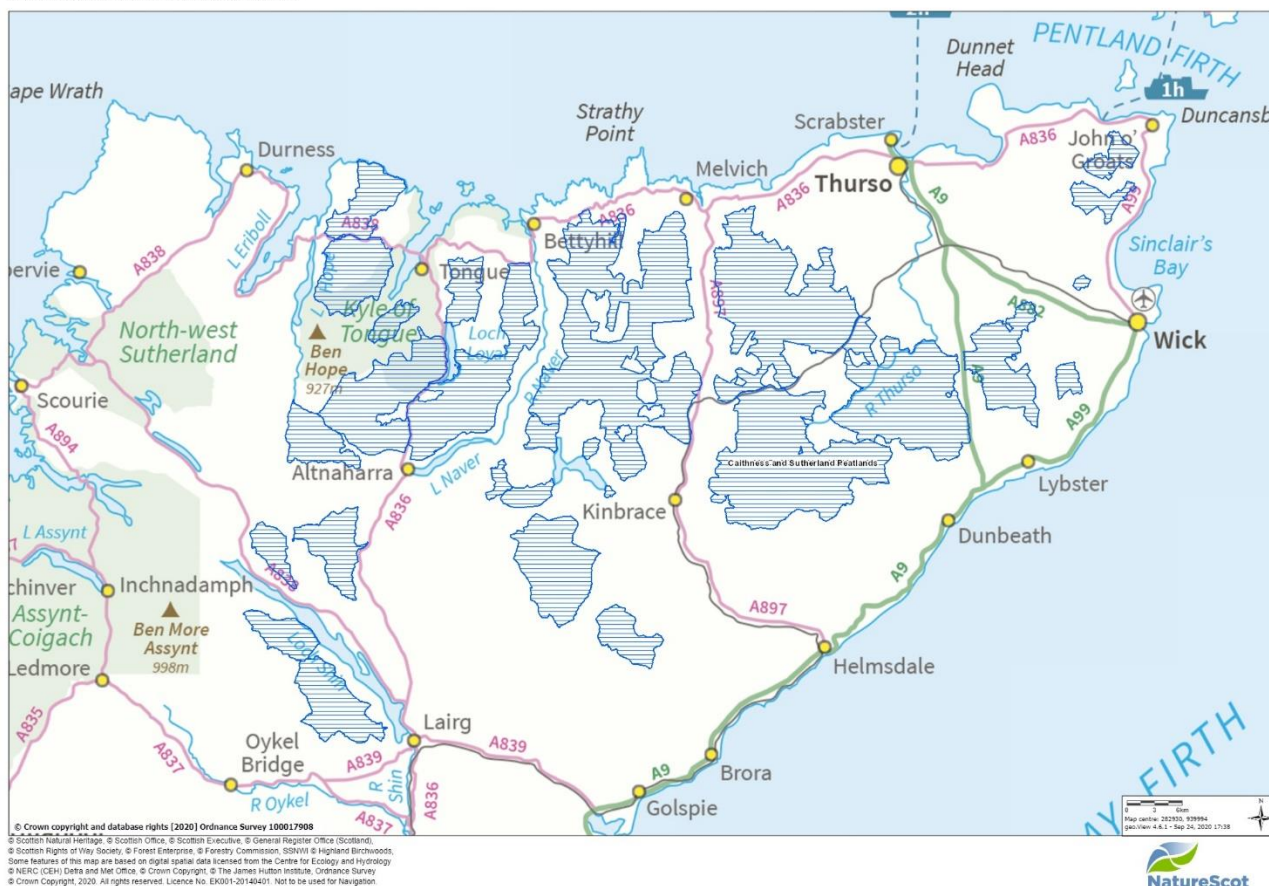
### 3.9 So many titles

In January 1988 the then Secretary of State for Scotland supported the protection of a large area (up to 175,000ha) of the peatlands through a substantial expansion of the SSSI network. During the 1990s, following detailed survey and assessment, almost 150,000 hectares of blanket bog and associated habitats were subsequently designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

In 1999 all or part of 39 peatland SSSI (145,370ha), were classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU's Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), on account of the populations of breeding waders, wildfowl and raptors (see Annex 1). The same area was also designated in the same year as a Wetland of International Importance, a worldwide accolade under the Ramsar Convention.

Active blanket bog is a priority habitat under the EU's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). An area encompassed by, but slightly smaller than the SPA (143,571ha), was designated on 17 March 2005 as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under this Directive (see map below). The SAC qualifies for designation on the basis of various habitats including blanket bog, wet heath, and certain types of lochs, as well as its other populations (see Annex 1 for full list). Conservation objectives for the SAC and SPA are given at Annex 2.

Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC



Outside the area covered by the European designations is a considerable area of undesignated blanket bog, much of which is still of high nature conservation interest. These areas make an important contribution to the UK Government's wider responsibilities under the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Ramsar Convention and Scottish Biodiversity Programme and should be managed sympathetically.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identified a series of habitats and species for which priority action was required, as part of the Government's contribution to the International Convention on Biological Diversity. Those present in and around the peatlands included blanket bog, upland heathland, upland birch

woodland, water vole and common scoter. In Scotland, this is being delivered through the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) prepared for both Caithness and Sutherland in 2003 outlined how the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy would be implemented at a local level. They are overseen and promoted by two local Biodiversity Groups under the auspices of the Highland Environment Forum. More recently, the strategic issues from these plans were drawn together in the Highland Biodiversity Action Plan (currently under review). These non-statutory plans are the local manifestation of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, (see note below).

Several of the rivers in the peatlands are SACs, namely the Rivers Borgie, Naver and Thurso, on account of the populations of freshwater pearl mussels, Atlantic salmon or otters. Although the main focus of this Strategy is the peatlands, there is an intimate link between the management of the peatlands and the health of the rivers.

The Kyle of Tongue is a National Scenic Area (a national landscape designation). A number of other coastal and upland areas with peatland interest have been identified as Special Landscape Areas by The Highland Council. These are areas of regional importance for their scenic quality. Significant parts of the peatlands are included on the map of 'wild land' published by SNH in 2014<sup>8</sup>. Wild land areas are the most extensive areas of high wildness in Scotland. They are identified as nationally important in Scottish Planning Policy but are not a statutory designation.

Within the area there are numerous Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, which are national historic environment designations.

In 1999 the central area of the Caithness and Sutherland peatlands was placed on the UK Government's 'tentative list' of sites for nomination as World Heritage Sites (see chapter 6 below). In July 2020, the Peatlands Partnership received approval from the UK Government to prepare a nomination bid to UNESCO for the inscription of The Flow Country as a World Heritage Site. If it is inscribed by UNESCO, it would be in recognition of the peatlands outstanding natural importance as one of the largest and most intact areas of blanket bog in the world. There are currently only six sites in Scotland with this prestigious title, and of these only one (St Kilda) holds the title in respect of its natural as well as cultural attributes.

#### Note on Scottish Biodiversity, Climate Change and Peatland ACTION

The first Scottish Biodiversity Strategy focused very much on the biodiversity benefits of peatlands, whereas the 2013 supplement, entitled '2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity', looks more at the carbon storage benefits of peatland and reflected a shift towards valuing the wider services provided by habitats and species. More recently, 'Scotland's Biodiversity: A Route Map to 2020 – Third Progress Report 2016-2019'<sup>9</sup> recorded peatland restoration progress across Scotland and stated that Flow Country restoration was on track to establish an international benchmark for good practice.

The State of Nature Scotland 2019<sup>10</sup> report draws on the best available data from over 70 wildlife organisations and Government agencies to present the clearest picture to date of the status of species across Scotland. The report states that the abundance and distribution of Scotland's species have on average declined over recent decades and there has been no let-up in the net loss of nature in Scotland. It cites peatland restoration and coastal resilience projects as excellent examples of working to improve nature and stem climate heating, and identifies the Flows of Caithness and Sutherland as an area where

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/wild-land-2014-maps>

<sup>9</sup> SNH & The Scottish Government (2018) 'Scotland's Biodiversity: A Route Map to 2020 – Third Progress Report 2016-2019' <https://www.nature.scot/biodiversity-route-map-2020-3rd-year-report-2017-2019>

<sup>10</sup> State of Nature Partnership (2019) 'State of Nature Report Scotland 2019' <https://www.nature.scot/state-nature-scotland-report-2019>

major efforts in recent decades have resulted in significant positive progress to reversing historic degradation of peatland habitats.

The Scottish Biodiversity Programme is co-led by Scottish Government and NatureScot. It was created to oversee and coordinate all current and planned activity on biodiversity, to secure a common understanding on priorities and an agreed approach to delivering them. The Programme overview<sup>11</sup> states:

‘The link between biodiversity and climate change is now well established and well understood, both in terms of impact and of joined-up, nature based and nature rich solutions. Scottish Ministers have stated that the challenges facing biodiversity loss are as important as the challenge of combatting climate change. Recent publications such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) “Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystems” (2019), the “Net Zero – The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming report” (2019), and the “State of Nature Scotland report” (2019) clearly identify investment in nature and the restoration of natural resources such as peatlands as a significant contributor to climate change and biodiversity improvements, and to people’s wellbeing. These reports underpin new commitments by SG and have highlighted the need to mainstream biodiversity across SG, public bodies, and our wider society. They have also led to increased collaboration with the climate change portfolio, and increased awareness of the impacts of biodiversity loss among stakeholders, business and the general public.’

The Scottish Government’s Biodiversity Statement of Intent<sup>12</sup>, launched on the 14 December 2020, sets the direction for a new biodiversity strategy which will respond to the increased urgency for action to tackle the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change. The statement confirms continuity, and enhancement where possible, of delivery under the existing biodiversity strategy until it is replaced 12 months after the Conference of Parties (CoP) 15 meeting has agreed the Global Biodiversity Framework.

In February 2020, the Scottish Government announced a substantial multi-annual investment in peatland restoration of more than £250 million over the next ten years<sup>13</sup>. This is in recognition of the fact that restoring peatlands is one of the most effective ways of locking in carbon, offering a clear nature-based solution to the climate crisis. This will be delivered through the Peatland ACTION Project, which has supported over 25,000 hectares of restoration since 2012. The Project is led by NatureScot in partnership with Forestry and Land Scotland and the National Parks, and further guidance on peatland restoration and accessing the fund is available on their website<sup>14</sup>.

The Scottish Government’s ‘Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032, Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero’ (published in December 2020<sup>15</sup>) strengthened its earlier commitment ‘To deliver on the 2032 emissions reduction envelope annual peatland restoration needs to be far higher than the current 20,000 hectare annual target and we will work closely with delivery partners, land owners, managers, farmers and crofters to continue to encourage more restoration of peatland, both traditional bog but also land that offers the highest emission savings per hectare.’ It continues ‘The prioritisation of these “nature-based solutions” and restoration projects will deliver multiple benefits, not only in terms of carbon sequestration, but also enhanced biodiversity, improved air and water quality, and landscapes and ecosystems that are more resilient to climate change.’

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<sup>11</sup> SNH (2020) ‘Scottish Biodiversity Programme - overview’ [https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2020-01/Scottish%20Biodiversity%20Programme%20-%20overview\\_1.pdf](https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2020-01/Scottish%20Biodiversity%20Programme%20-%20overview_1.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [Scottish biodiversity strategy post-2020: statement of intent - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/budget-statement-2020-21/)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/budget-statement-2020-21/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/>

## CHAPTER 4: SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN AND AROUND THE PEATLANDS

This chapter reviews current and historical land management in and around the peatlands, identifies the main impacts on and benefits to the nature conservation interest, and provides an update on progress made since the original Management Strategy was published in 2005.

Key issues and concerns are listed at the start of the chapter, and the priorities for action are suggested at the end. These and other actions are further developed in the Action Plan in Part Two of this document (Table 1.2).

**Objective 1: To promote and carry out sustainable land management that maintains and enhances the nationally and internationally important areas of peatland, the associated habitats and species and the wide range of services they provide.**

### 4.1 Key issues

- The condition of the blanket bog across a small proportion of the SAC remains ‘unfavourable’ for a number of reasons including forestry edge effects, conifer regeneration, drainage, grazing, trampling and wildfire damage. There is insufficient information on the condition of the peatlands out-with designated sites, but there are localised areas of damage.
- In some areas, forests are having a detrimental impact on underlying and adjacent peatland habitats and species, features associated with the historic environment, and on the carbon stored in the peat.
- In some areas, non-native conifers are regenerating onto adjacent areas of open peatland, and this is exacerbated by climate change.
- Funding is available for tree removal and peatland restoration through the Peatland ACTION Fund, but uptake from private estates has been limited.
- There is a lack of resource and willingness to support ongoing management and maintenance of restoration areas in the longer term, such as regeneration control and drain blocking in areas where trees have been removed.
- Native woodlands are scarce and often heavily grazed, although there is funding and assistance available to promote woodland expansion and creation in the right locations in and around the peatlands.
- Agri-environment schemes have been a positive tool but the options for peatland and associated species are limited and for various reasons including uncertainties of future schemes and difficulties in accessing them, uptake in the peatlands has been low.
- In-bye fields in key areas need to be actively managed to be suitable for peatland waders, however there is insufficient information on both the fields and how birds are using them.
- Where land is under the management of common grazings committees, agreement from multiple crofters is needed to make changes, and this can be difficult and time consuming.
- Our collective understanding of the impact of deer on vegetation, habitats and species is incomplete, but such data is very useful to feed into deer management planning decisions.
- Fencing to exclude deer from new forestry planting or agricultural areas may affect grazing and trampling levels of adjacent areas, as well as having deer welfare implications.
- Many historical drains are still active and eroding peatland areas, funding is available through Peatland ACTION to block them but uptake from private estates has been limited.
- Climatic extremes will influence water levels and temperatures in peatland rivers, burns, pools and lochs, which will impact on invertebrates including freshwater pearl mussels and nesting habitat for waders, divers and ducks.



- Future invasion by invasive non-native species such as Canada geese, American mink, pike and minnows could impact on waders, divers and ducks.
- Wildfires can damage sensitive peatland habitats and destroy paleo-environmental and archaeological data, and are an increasing concern as climate change is leading to increased risk of climatic extremes.
- All-terrain vehicles and quad bikes can cause damage to sensitive peatland habitats.
- The restoration of redundant tracks could have habitat benefits, but there is insufficient knowledge on the technical and legal aspects.

## 4.2 The condition of the open peatlands

The condition of the 39 component SSSIs that comprise the Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation (the Natura site) is regularly monitored by NatureScot. The most recent collation of site condition monitoring results (2017) assessed the blanket bog feature of the Natura site as ‘unfavourable – no change’. NatureScot estimates that the majority of the designated areas are in ‘favourable condition’, with the ‘unfavourable’ areas being confined to some 20% of the area of 20% of the component SSSIs. Forest edge effects and the spread of conifer regeneration continue to affect some of these areas, and active hill drains remain widespread. Concentrations of red deer have damaged the vegetation by trampling in some areas, whilst other places have been damaged by large, uncontrolled fires<sup>16</sup>.

All work to improve the condition and functioning of blanket bog habitats will also improve their resilience to climate change and reduce the impacts of extreme events such as flooding and wildfires using nature-based solutions.

Following the designation of the Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands SPA in 1999, monitoring work showed that the populations of a number of the bird species had declined within some of the component SSSIs, and golden plover and black-throated diver had declined across the entire SPA site so that they fell below what is deemed to be ‘favourable’ condition. The 2015 site condition monitoring of dunlin, golden plover and greenshank showed that there were increases in mean density for all three species since 2009, but a decline for golden plover since the mid-1990s. All three species of wader and black-throated divers were considered to have returned to favourable condition in 2015, but forestry plantations are still identified as a negative pressure on golden plover and dunlin (see below).

Research has provided evidence that dunlin and golden plover are likely to have been adversely affected by afforestation, as they avoid breeding in proximity to mature forest edges<sup>17</sup>; furthermore, dunlin declines are more pronounced near forestry<sup>18</sup>. A plausible mechanism for this pattern is the greater activity-abundance of predatory mammals in and around forestry plantations compared to intact bog, which can be reversed in the long term by forest-to-bog restoration<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Source: SNH Site Condition Monitoring

<sup>17</sup> Wilson et al (2014) ‘Modelling edge effects of mature forest plantations on peatland waders informs landscape-scale conservation’, *Journal of Applied Ecology* 2014, 51, 204–213, <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1365-2664.12173>

<sup>18</sup> Hancock et al (2009) ‘Associations between distance to forest and spatial and temporal variation in abundance of key peatland breeding bird species’, *Bird Study*, 56:1, 53–64, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00063650802648176>

<sup>19</sup> Hancock et al (2020) ‘Guild-level responses by mammalian predators to afforestation and subsequent restoration in a formerly treeless peatland landscape’, *Restoration Ecology*, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/rec.13167>

## 4.3 Forests and woodlands in and around the peatlands

Objective 1 cannot be delivered effectively without consideration of the management of forests and woodlands in and around the peatlands. This is in part because this Strategy is seeking to promote management on a landscape scale, and peatlands and woodlands share this same landscape. It is also in part because there is a legacy of large areas of non-native conifers which are having a detrimental impact on underlying peatland and in some cases on adjacent peatland habitats and species. Scottish Government has policies which seek both to restore peatland and to maintain and extend forest and woodland cover across Scotland as a whole. These policies are being applied within the context of this peatland being of national importance.

Many of the conifer forests are now coming to maturity and owners are reviewing management options and beginning felling operations. Some 2 million tonnes of timber are forecast to be produced from the Flow Country over the next 10-15 years. This provides a significant opportunity to increase the local economic and community benefits from forestry and contribute to the green recovery. The public road network is fragile and so haulage is limited to certain agreed routes and tonnage limits. The Highland Timber Transport Group has been working over a number of years to explore options and attract investment in infrastructure to enable these large volumes to reach the market and to minimise impacts on the public road network. Rail haulage has been trialled and is now being looked at again. Felling operations need to be considered and approved by Scottish Forestry. This is usually done through a forest plan which sets out the forest management for the next 20 years. These plans are subject to scoping and consultation, which provide the mechanism to discuss and agree the approach to felling, replanting and peatland restoration.

The location, type and extent of forestry within Caithness and Sutherland is changing to enable restoration of sensitive peatlands. Since 2014, 3,965ha of forest have been removed on public and private land to restore peatlands and address edge effects, with a further 2,300ha approved for clearance over the next ten years. Another significant driver that is reducing forest cover in parts of Caithness and Sutherland is the development of wind farms, which can provide support for woodland removal, peatland restoration and ongoing management over longer timeframes (25-30 years). As per the Scottish Government's woodland removal policy, clearance of forestry will now usually result in a requirement for compensatory planting elsewhere in Highland. Care is needed to ensure that compensatory planting proposals do not threaten existing wildlife and peatland habitats.

The remaining native woodlands in and around the peatlands are scarce and often heavily grazed. Local and national policies seek to expand and improve the condition of native woodlands. Much has been done across Caithness and Sutherland but there is considerable scope to do more along the Straths and around the peatlands.

### The impacts of forests on the peatlands

In the 1970s and 1980s some plantations were established on peatland of similar quality to that subsequently designated as SSSI, leading to a direct loss of blanket bog and associated habitats. Therefore, in some areas, forests are having a detrimental impact on underlying and adjacent peatland habitats and species, and on the carbon stored in the peat. In some places non-native trees are also regenerating from these forests onto adjacent areas of open peatland, which will cause damage. Regeneration occurs across land ownerships and co-ordination is needed to ensure the resulting trees are removed as soon as possible, so that both damage and costs can be minimised.

The effect of forests on neighbouring peatlands has been assessed and the edge effect in the Flow Country set out in a paper in 2014<sup>20</sup>. This showed that some forests were having negative effects on golden plover and dunlin breeding densities, and also on the hydrology of adjacent open blanket bog. When conifer forests are established on peatland, the water level in the peat is lowered through drainage works, water extraction by tree roots and through the interception of rain and snow by growing trees. This causes the peat under and adjacent to the trees to dry out and subside. Research showed a drying effect of first rotation forestry on adjacent blanket bog at a distance of up to 40m, extending up to 100m in subsequent rotations. The effects on golden plover and dunlin are strongest within 800m of the forest edge, with the most sensitive areas being where the habitat is flat and with pool systems. The factors which are causing the avoidance of forest edges by some species are likely to include increased predation (by for example hooded crows and foxes living in the forest), avoidance by birds of tall structures (to allow views of predators), and changes to habitat management (e.g. reduced burning adjacent to forests or increased trampling by deer by forest edges).

Research is also ongoing looking at the balance of losses and gains of stored carbon and the movement (flux) of gases that are significant in climate change (greenhouse gases) both from growing trees on peatland and from restoring previously afforested peatland. Data from a site at Cross Lochs was published in 2015<sup>21</sup>, providing the first peer-reviewed evidence that the unmanaged Forsinard blanket bog is still actively sequestering carbon. Drainage and cultivation of peatland for afforestation result in the loss of soil organic carbon. In drawing up a 'scorecard' of losses and gains, account also has to be taken of the accumulation of carbon in the growing trees, harvesting and the end use of timber.

## Future management of forests in Caithness and Sutherland

In light of the understanding we now have of the significance of the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland both for biodiversity and as a carbon store, there has been a shift away from forestry in the core peatland area. In accordance with the Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy<sup>22</sup>, the focus for productive woodlands in Caithness and Sutherland is now away from the peatlands. There is a presumption against new planting on many peatland soils, particularly where peat depth is greater than 50cm, where there may be net negative environmental impacts of planting in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Planting design should also ensure long-term protection of deep peat areas. The Forests and Peatland Habitats Guidance Note<sup>23</sup> sets out forestry policy and practice in relation to peatland habitats and indicates how Scottish Forestry will evaluate proposals for replanting or expanding woodland or for restoration of peatland habitats from woodland.

Restocking is not appropriate where the forestry is identified as having a significant impact on the Natura site, as described in Scottish Forestry's guidance to forest managers<sup>24</sup>. Restocking is also not required where a site is a priority for peatland restoration or where the future growth is likely to be insufficient to cover greenhouse gas losses from the soil. This is based on research on the balance between carbon emissions and the laying down of carbon by growing trees or by active peat. There may also be cases where the areas identified as suitable for restocking are too small to be viable as a forest and where a return to a more open peatland landscape would be more appropriate.

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<sup>20</sup> Wilson, JD et al (2014) 'Modelling edge effects of mature forest plantations on peatland waders informs landscape-scale conservation' <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2664.12173>

<sup>21</sup> Levy, PE & Grady, A (2015) 'Greenhouse gas balance of a semi-natural peatbog in northern Scotland'. Environmental Research Letters, 10(9), 094019 <http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/511853/1/N511853JA.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> The Highland Council (2018) 'Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy' <https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/891/highland-forest-and-woodland-strategy>

<sup>23</sup> Forestry Commission (2000) 'Forests and Peatland Habitats; Guideline Note' <https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/research/forests-and-peatland-habitats/>

<sup>24</sup> Forestry Commission Scotland (2015) 'Guidance to Forest Managers preparing Forest Plans within the Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands SAC/SPA' <https://forestry.gov.scot/publications/3-guidance-to-forest-managers-preparing-forest-plans-within-the-caithness-and-sutherland-peatlands-sac-spa>

There may be areas of mineral ground or shallow peat where it is appropriate to plant new areas of woodland, particularly where these bring multiple benefits. For example, increasing the amount of riparian woodland in the peatlands would not only achieve biodiversity benefits but also support fisheries interests by reducing water temperatures which would otherwise rise with climate change and reduce suitability of spawning areas.

### Restoration of afforested areas to blanket bog and wet heath habitats

The first phase of restoration work was in the 1990s. Since then, techniques have been refined and developed, and it is now recognised that removing felled trees and leaving as little tree material as possible on site will lead to a speedier recovery. In wetter areas where growth has been poorer and tree size and density is much lower, trees are mulched (shredded) on site. Once trees have been removed or mulched, the main drains need to be blocked to enable the water table to rise again. The time taken for deforested sites to recover to blanket bog or wet heath vegetation will vary greatly depending on site history, conditions and techniques used.

The restoration works carried out under the Flows to the Future Project (2014-2019) removed 837.4ha of non-native trees from deep peat areas and cleared a further 564ha of regenerating non-native conifers. Forestry furrows and drains were blocked in over 1,747ha. In total, the Project carried out surveys, prepared management guidance and submitted funding applications for land managers across almost 75,000ha (19%) of the Flow Country. This work will continue with Scottish Government funding through the Peatland ACTION scheme, which is managed by NatureScot and Forestry & Land Scotland.

SSE Renewables are committed to addressing the issue of inappropriately planted conifers on their sites. To date, 520ha has been felled at their Strathy North wind farm, with a further 141ha to be felled by 2026. Their consent at Strathy South includes a commitment to restore and manage more than 2,500ha of peatland on and off site. The removal of the entire conifer plantation (1,133ha) within the site boundary, will remove indirect impacts of the forestry on the Caithness and Sutherland Peatland SPA/SAC, and allow the restoration of peatland on site.

There is a shortage of contractors with experience of peatland restoration work nationally, but in Caithness & Sutherland the Peatland ACTION Project has been working to bring on board and upskill new contractors with several training events undertaken in recent years, with good uptake. The Project has also been working with Scottish Government to amend the funding model to allow for greater flexibility in terms of the timing of works, which will reduce bottlenecks in contractor capacity and maximise restoration completed on the ground.

Restoration secures the underlying peat and carbon deposit and reduces ongoing losses associated with disturbances. The re-initiation of carbon storage and peat formation are much longer-term processes which rely on the successful re-establishment of peat forming conditions and suitable climate. The reduction in carbon emissions compared with a damaged peatland is a 'gain' (termed 'avoided loss' by the IUCN). The net reduction in carbon emissions varies according to site characteristics and methods used. However, there is now published evidence that forest to bog restoration brings back net carbon sequestration within 16 years when older techniques (felling to waste) are assessed. Novel techniques that involve whole tree harvest and furrow blocking may lead to faster recovery. There are still uncertainties in the actual emissions, and the most up to date inventory is the one provided by Evans et al (2017) 'Implementation of

an emission inventory for UK peatlands<sup>25</sup>. ClimateXChange<sup>26</sup> has issued a policy briefing explaining the climate benefits of forest to bog restoration and the current knowledge gaps<sup>27</sup>, and further research is available, e.g. Hambley et al (2019) 'Net ecosystem exchange from two formerly afforested peatlands undergoing restoration in The Flow Country of northern Scotland'<sup>28</sup>. Recent research from satellite data suggests that in some forest to bog areas, plant productivity returns to near natural levels within five years<sup>29</sup>.

There are some concerns that when peatlands are in the early stages of restoration, they emit more methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas. There is evidence however that these emissions are outweighed by the reductions in carbon dioxide emissions following restoration. No evidence has been found of methane spikes in forest to bog restoration in the Flow Country so far, but further research will continue to develop our understanding of whether any features in near-natural sites (e.g. pools) or whether specific intervention (e.g. drain-blocking) might be associated with methane 'hot spots'. Similarly, given the significance of emissions associated with wildfires, further research should aim to improve our understanding of the conditions under which fire resilience is increased and carbon emissions minimised.

It is recognised that afforestation during the later 20th century caused damage or destruction of archaeological sites and palaeo-environmental data, by the physical processes of building access routes, insertion of drainage and ploughing. It is assumed that in many instances the re-establishment of the peatlands will prove beneficial to any surviving sub-surface deposits within areas affected by land use changes. However, where historic environment features have survived, peatland restoration and management need to be undertaken in an appropriate, integrated way.

Monitoring and evaluation work is being undertaken on all the restoration techniques being used on the RSPB Forsinard Flows Reserve, as well as on Forestry & Land Scotland holdings and wind farm sites.

## 4.4 Agriculture

Away from the more fertile land in the east of Caithness, the majority of the agricultural land in the peatlands is given over to rough grazing, with improved in-bye ground restricted to parts of the coast and the straths. Very little land is now under crops, with sheep dominating and only limited cattle numbers. Crofting tenure predominates in the north and west, coexisting with large sporting estates. Recent years have seen a reduction in the number of active crofters, with a few crofters running a large number of holdings in some areas.

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) underwent a series of reforms and a new CAP was introduced in 2014. The 'Basic Payments' part of this (Pillar 1) was paid on an area basis, with much of the peatlands

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<sup>25</sup> Evans et al (2017) 'Implementation of an emission inventory for UK peatlands'. Report to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. [https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat07/1904111135\\_UK\\_peatland\\_GHG\\_emissions.pdf](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat07/1904111135_UK_peatland_GHG_emissions.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> ClimateXChange is Scotland's Centre of Expertise on Climate Change, providing independent advice, research and analysis to support the Scottish Government as it develops and implements policies on adapting to the changing climate and the transition to a low carbon society

<sup>27</sup> Hermans et al (2017) 'Climate benefits of forest-to-bog restoration on deep peat – policy briefing' <https://www.climateexchange.org.uk/media/3654/climate-benefits-of-forest-to-bog-restoration-on-deep-peat.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Hambley et al (2019) 'Net ecosystem exchange from two formerly afforested peatlands undergoing restoration in The Flow Country of northern Scotland' [in special issue: The Flow Country peatlands of Scotland] *Mires and Peat*, 23, 05. 14, pp <http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/522756/>

<sup>29</sup> Lees et al (2019) 'A model of gross primary productivity based on satellite data suggests formerly afforested peatlands undergoing restoration regain full photosynthesis capacity after five to ten years'. [https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301479719303421?casa\\_token=j\\_pw8SUJiv8AAAAA:7ENXOpCw\\_uXN9ZhrbysAtwR\\_BQbxVxfvCsCE1tiautflA7dbC\\_kxGN\\_Px8nXiTk3xAddG7Eak](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301479719303421?casa_token=j_pw8SUJiv8AAAAA:7ENXOpCw_uXN9ZhrbysAtwR_BQbxVxfvCsCE1tiautflA7dbC_kxGN_Px8nXiTk3xAddG7Eak)



within Caithness and Sutherland falling within 'Payment Region 3' which tended to be the poorest land with the lowest stocking densities. For farm businesses dependent on this type of land, the new CAP introduced a voluntary sheep support scheme which aimed to stop the decline in sheep numbers in these areas. There were concerns that the new support scheme would encourage an increase in sheep numbers, which had been declining across the area since the shift from a headage to an area-based payment in 2005. This has not happened, but things may change now that we left the European Union.

Rural development (Pillar 2 of the CAP) was delivered through the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). The main priorities were enhancing the rural economy, supporting agricultural and forestry businesses, protecting and improving the natural environment, addressing the impact of climate change and supporting rural communities. Within SRDP, funding is available through the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) for land management practices which protect and enhance natural heritage, improve water quality, manage flood risk and mitigate and adapt to climate change. This includes options for the peatlands and uplands, and is delivered jointly by the Rural Payments & Inspections Division (RPID) of Scottish Government and NatureScot.

A future round of AECS is anticipated in 2021 covering the period 2021-2024, although this will be similar to the last scheme and there will be no new options. There may be scope to introduce new options to benefit peatland species in any new scheme post 2024<sup>30</sup>.

### Management of neighbouring farm and croft land

In-bye ground (defined as part of the farm or croft bounded by a fence, dyke or hedge which is used for arable or grassland production and not hill or rough grazings<sup>31</sup>) can play an important role in supporting many of the birds that live on the peatlands. Species making use of farmland close to the peatlands include dunlin, golden plover, snipe, curlew, hen harrier, short-eared owl, merlin, greylag goose and lapwing. Active management is needed to ensure the conditions are right to provide plenty of food and, for some species, nesting sites. Some fields are known to be particularly important for golden plover and dunlin, with birds travelling considerable distances over seemingly similar fields to reach favoured fields to feed, although knowledge of the reasons for this is incomplete.

No formal assessment has been made of the extent or condition of in-bye grassland, but much is known not to be grazed or actively managed in recent years. Current stocking levels, policies, support schemes and management have led to a situation where in-bye is often in poor condition for biodiversity in general, and for peatland birds in particular. In-bye needs to be actively managed to maximise the biodiversity benefits, with for example control of rushes, soil aeration and suitable grazing densities. Although there are no specific prescriptions under AECS for golden plover and dunlin, there are management options for other waders and support for rush control, creating wet areas and small arable areas, and for cattle grazing.

The 'wader grazed grassland' option has been popular, but this is targeted at the grasslands most suitable for breeding farmland waders, so some areas of peatland in-bye were excluded, and it didn't really benefit golden plover or dunlin. 'Small scale rush management' and 'creation of wader scrapes' have also had reasonable uptake. Rush control will have improved some fields for golden plover and dunlin, but again this is aimed at breeding waders. As mentioned above, any new AECS scheme which is in place from 2021 to 2024 will not have new options, however there may be scope to introduce new options for golden plover and dunlin into a future scheme post 2024, and the Flow Country Partnership could make a case for this.

Plantlife Scotland have a new AECS agreement for their reserve at Munsary in Caithness, and are continuing to graze the in-bye fields with cattle to improve the habitat for golden plover and dunlin as well as farmland

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<sup>30</sup> James Plowman, NatureScot, pers. comm.

<sup>31</sup> Scottish Government (2011) 'Definitions of Land Types' in Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 <https://www.gov.scot/policies/agriculture-payments/scottish-rural-development-programme-srdp/>

waders and to improve species diversity. RSPB are currently undertaking further work to improve the in-bye fields at Forsinain Farm for waders. The Caithness Wetland and Wildlife Initiative<sup>32</sup>, a partnership between RSPB, Scotland's Rural College and the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, and supported by the National Farmers Union Scotland, was launched in 2013 to promote positive management for waders across the County. The Working For Waders<sup>33</sup> Project started in 2017 to tackle the decline of wading birds across Scotland, and is supported by a wide range of charities, organisations and individuals, from farmers and conservationists to gamekeepers and birdwatchers.

Discussions are ongoing as to the best areas to plant trees on farm and croft land, to create much needed native woodland without damaging important wader sites.

Much of the hill or rough grazings croft land on the margins of the peatlands is managed by common grazings committees. Agreement from multiple crofters is needed to make changes; this can be difficult and time-consuming.

## 4.5 Deer and game management

Much of the open ground in the peatlands is managed for sport, with a significant proportion being in the ownership of a small number of large estates. Deer management is undertaken by individual landowners, coordinated by the Deer Management Groups (DMGs). There was a rise in deer numbers from the 1960s to the 1980s. Then, the traditional deer range was reduced with the widespread afforestation of the 1970s and 1980s, which affected deer densities and movements. Some estates have made significant efforts to reduce deer numbers, but densities remain high over much of the area.

Over the last ten years there has been much closer working between land managers, public bodies and conservation organisations at a national level to promote and deliver sustainable deer management for a range of benefits including healthy ecosystems. This was expressed as a vision, with priorities for future work, in the 2014 policy document 'Scotland's Wild Deer, a National Approach including 2015-2020 priorities'<sup>34</sup>. There have also been changes to deer legislation giving stronger regulatory powers to NatureScot, a new code of practice and a new series of best practice guidance notes.

The Code of Practice on Deer Management<sup>35</sup> came into effect in 2012 as a result of changes in deer legislation included within the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011<sup>36</sup>. This puts responsibilities on all land managers to manage deer responsibly and to produce Deer Management Plans.

The Northern Deer Management Group (NDMG) contains the largest part of the Flow Country, covering some 150,000 hectares in five sub-groups which reflect the main deer movements. There are also DMGs in North West and East Sutherland, and all three groups manage their deer in accordance with agreed Deer Management Plans. Concerns include changing numbers and distributions of deer within the area as a whole, in particular falling numbers of stags coupled with increasing numbers of hinds, and the associated habitat impacts and potential conflict with other land uses (e.g. conservation, grouse) that this may bring. Changes in forest management including felling for commercial or peatland restoration reasons have

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/projects/caithness-wetlands-and-waders-initiative/#:~:text=and%20waders%20initiative-,Caithness%20wetlands%20and%20waders%20initiative,and%20the%20great%20yellow%20bumblebee.>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.workingforwaders.com/>

<sup>34</sup> Scottish Government (2014) 'Scotland's Wild Deer: a national approach including 2015-2020 priorities' <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-wild-deer-national-approach-2015-2020-priorities>

<sup>35</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (2011) 'Code of Practice on Deer Management' <https://www.nature.scot/code-practice-deer-management>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/6/contents>

impacted on the resources available to deer, as have the development of a number of extensive windfarms within the NDMG area.

The Deer Management Group is a forum for Government agencies, conservation organisations and land managers to discuss and address issues such as overgrazing and trampling, supported by habitat condition monitoring and information on deer numbers collected by NatureScot and individual estates at a sub-group level. It is also a means of members collectively addressing concerns such as a shortage of mature stags across the area. In addition, there is now a recognition that DMGs need to engage wider community interests in their work<sup>37</sup> and deliver public benefits such as contributing to non-protected countryside being in good condition. This wider engagement is particularly important here in the peatlands, due not only to their national and international importance, but also to the ongoing efforts to promote wider awareness and understanding of the land and its management, and to encourage more visitors. Closer links between land managers and the surrounding communities would deliver benefits for the area.

Erection of fences without reference to deer movements is a cumulative issue in the area in relation to smaller scale woodland planting. Such planting also tends to be on better ground, which is therefore removing good feeding areas (see also deer issues under forestry section above).

Parts of the drier moorland in the east of the peatlands are managed for grouse, although this is restricted in extent and in recent years, hampered by reductions in grouse numbers. This may be due to a range of factors including changes in land use, burning practice and gamekeeper activity, poor weather in some years, heather beetle attacks, and the presence of a significant tick problem in some areas.

There is no evidence from the limited study to date that ticks have a significant effect on other moorland birds, although they frequently carry obvious tick loadings. There have been various studies on ticks and peatland restoration in recent years. Felling conifer forest to restore peatlands could produce a dramatic decline in tick abundance, with implications for disease risk<sup>38</sup>.

Many land managers are concerned about loss of heather cover across the area, as heather provides feeding for both deer and grouse. The causes of this are not known but contributory factors can be high grazing and trampling levels by deer and sheep, and poor burning practice. Attacks of heather beetle are also a significant factor. Management guidance to reduce the risk of heather beetle attack is to carry out muirburn in accordance with the Muirburn Code. Well-managed heather is not as badly affected by heather beetle and young heather is likely to recover more rapidly from an attack. However, studies undertaken by The Heather Trust found no evidence that either burning or cutting of the heather is necessary to re-establish heather after a beetle attack, and that care should be taken to avoid further damage by trampling or overgrazing as the heather plants are often weakened<sup>39</sup>.

## 4.6 Management issues

### Grazing and trampling

Due to slow vegetation growth and poor nutritional quality, blanket bogs can only support low densities of grazing animals. Sheep and/or red deer graze most of the designated peatlands, with the impacts of the two being difficult to distinguish. Sheep numbers have reduced over the past 15 years due to economics, an

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<sup>37</sup> [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_RuralAffairsClimateChangeandEnvironmentCommittee/GeneralDocuments/2014.03.05\\_-\\_Ministers\\_response\\_on\\_Deer\\_Management.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_RuralAffairsClimateChangeandEnvironmentCommittee/GeneralDocuments/2014.03.05_-_Ministers_response_on_Deer_Management.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Gilbert, Lucy (2013) 'Can restoration of afforested peatland regulate pests and disease?' Journal of Applied Ecology, <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1365-2664.12141>

<sup>39</sup> The Heather Trust (2019) 'Heather Beetle' guidance note, [https://01a393a3-c4d4-4ca5-885d-c2330c108548.filesusr.com/ugd/fdc287\\_a3a63069ec3546c89c964cb431459413.pdf](https://01a393a3-c4d4-4ca5-885d-c2330c108548.filesusr.com/ugd/fdc287_a3a63069ec3546c89c964cb431459413.pdf)

ageing population and the switch from headage to area agricultural support payments following reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy that came into force in 2005. Stocking levels are now lower on open ground and active shepherding much reduced, with stock tending to be kept on better in-bye ground.

Cattle grazing takes place on a few areas at the peatland margins. Limited summer cattle grazing can be beneficial on certain areas as they graze less selectively than sheep, creating a more diverse vegetation structure which in turn can benefit moorland birds and other wildlife. However, cattle grazing has to be carefully managed as it can lead to excess trampling and the erosion of the fragile peat soils.

Deer have moved into the vacuum left by sheep on open ground and the increased availability of feeding has led to higher deer productivity. In places deer grazing and trampling is now damaging the biodiversity of the peatlands and deer numbers need to be controlled. Damage can be a particular issue where forest fences restrict and channel deer movements, causing localised tracking and erosion along fence lines. Less frequently, there are places with undergrazing. It is not known whether deer grazing levels on the peatlands are being affected by the rise in both red and roe deer populations in forests where fences have not been maintained or where sport is the main management objective.

Trampling can have a more significant impact than grazing, particularly in the wetter 'flows', as grazing is only attractive in these areas for a short period during the early winter and spring. Trampling can kill off bog mosses and other plants leaving bare peat, and can be exacerbated by fencing, which can channel deer through narrow areas. Where pools and wetter areas lie adjacent to fences, trampling damage can be more extensive. Overgrazing and excessive trampling can both lead to erosion, with the slow growth of vegetation and cool wet climate slowing or preventing vegetation recovery.

Deer numbers are counted regularly across the peatlands. There is however a recognition that there are challenges with obtaining accurate count data. There is now more emphasis on looking at trends rather than absolute numbers and monitoring the impacts of deer and other grazing animals on habitats. Best practice guidance has been developed by NatureScot to enable deer managers to carry out Habitat Impact Assessments using a standardised monitoring methodology<sup>40</sup>.

Over the last few years, NatureScot, Deer Management Groups and the Flows to the Future Project have carried out joint working and training to support more use of Habitat Impact Assessments, but further work is needed to encourage greater uptake both on designated and non-designated peatlands. Training helps to develop a common understanding of the impacts of management on vegetation, what constitutes good vegetation condition, and how this can be achieved to support all interests. The results of monitoring then need to be translated where appropriate into changes in management, and this is starting to be implemented on some peatland sites e.g. Ben Griams<sup>41</sup>.

## Drains

Through the 1950s and 1960s, financial incentives were provided for the draining of agricultural land, as part of a post-war policy to promote food production. In reality these drains did little to improve agricultural output in most areas of the peatlands, and they are now often detrimental to the nature conservation interest and to water quality and quantity. Drains affect over half of the SAC, with 22% of the area seriously affected.

Typically, the water table is lowered for a distance of up to four metres either side of a drain, with other less obvious effects potentially extending further. Gradual slumping of the peat occurs towards the drain and in older drains deep lateral cracking and collapse are observable. The drier conditions allow better

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk/impacts/principles/>

<sup>41</sup> Claire Foot-Turner, RSPB, pers com

heather growth and halt peat formation. This drying out may also reduce the number of invertebrates, which will have a knock-on effect on birds.

Where drains have been dug on the most gentle of gradients and where maintenance has not taken place, infilling is gradually taking place. By contrast, on steeper slopes, the impact of the drains has increased over time as scouring by rock and debris from further up the hill has increased the size and erosive power of the drains. The silt carried into streams and rivers by these drains may have negative effects on game fisheries and on drinking water supplies. Periods of high rainfall exaggerate the problems of erosion and lead to high flows in adjacent watercourses. In recent years there has been an increasing tendency towards flash floods in rivers locally.

Drain blocking is beneficial to fisheries interests, as it helps to moderate river flows and reduce silt inputs. It also leads to improvements in water quality that will help the drinking water treatment process, if the activities are within a drinking water catchment. This brings the benefits of compliance with Drinking Water Standards, customer satisfaction, reduced energy and chemical use, deferred capital expenditure, increased life of water treatment works and reduced costs to customers.

The first phase of restoration work was in the 1990s with funding from the EU Life Programme. This early work focused on the RSPB Reserve at Forsinard and the Plantlife Reserve at Munsary. Over the last 25 years, RSPB has blocked drains across 4,800ha of their Reserve, which totals 21,000ha in size. There is a further 2,800ha of damaged land left to restore across the Reserve.

In 2012 the Scottish Government established the Peatland ACTION Project, which supports practical peatland restoration works such as blocking drains to increase water levels and revegetating peat hags to stabilise bare eroding peat. The Fund is managed by NatureScot and Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS). Since 2014 FLS has restored 3,052ha of open habitat in Caithness & Sutherland. In addition to the work carried out on RSPB and FLS land, the Peatland ACTION Project has supported 2,714ha of restoration work on private land, with a further 420ha project currently underway in the Flow Country. In addition, the Scottish Government Agri-Environment Climate Scheme committed £501,000 towards drain blocking in the peatlands of Caithness & Sutherland between 2017 and 2020.

In recent years there has been a growing awareness of the implications of drains on peatland for climate change. As noted above the lowered water levels can mean that peat ceases to form, so that carbon is no longer locked up. At the same time, the erosion of the peat following drainage can lead to the release of carbon, either in the form of Dissolved Organic Carbon (DOC) within water leaving the peat or through oxidation into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. Drain blocking can reverse this, eventually leading to carbon storage once successfully revegetated.

In recognition of this, in February 2020 the Scottish Government announced a further investment of more than £250 million towards peatland restoration across Scotland over the next ten years. This will be delivered through the Peatland ACTION Project.

## Muirburn

Muirburn is a traditional land management practice, carried out to promote new vegetation growth and so increase the amount of feeding available for stock, deer or grouse. It is regulated by legislation and guided by a code of practice known as 'The Muirburn Code'<sup>42</sup> (amended by the Moorland Forum in 2017 and supported by supplementary information<sup>43</sup>). It aims to ensure that when muirburn is carried out, it is in the right place, avoids damage to sensitive habitats and ecosystem services, and doesn't lead to wildfire.

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<sup>42</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) 'The Muirburn Code: Management of Moorland by Burning and Cutting' <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-11/Guidance%20-%20Management%20of%20Moorland%20-%20Muirburn%20Code.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <http://muirburncode.org.uk/supplementary-information/>



Muirburn on most areas of blanket bog is contrary to The Muirburn Code, and the focus of activity should be on the drier heather areas. Extensive less well controlled burns sometimes encroach on areas of blanket bog, particularly when fires are set in drier or windier conditions using limited manpower. Such damage has occurred in recent years within the Natura site and the Muirburn Code needs to be followed to ensure that no further damage occurs. On SSSIs muirburn practice is subject to consultation. Muirburn can also impact on water quality in some circumstances.

In many areas muirburn is carried out more sporadically than in the past, as numbers of people with available time and knowledge have fallen. This can mean that when burning does take place, there is a higher chance of fires spreading quickly over large areas that have accumulated tall leggy heather and purple moor grass litter. The presence of dry dead heather damaged by heather beetle can also add to the risk of fire spreading.

Some habitats are extremely sensitive to burning, and many of the rare and sensitive plants and animals found in peatlands cannot survive fires. Although the vegetation of an area burnt in the past may superficially appear unchanged, regular or severe burning reduces plant and animal diversity, damaging soils and removing some sensitive peat forming species. Erosion can also result from severe burns, and once established on these sensitive peat soils it can be very difficult or impossible to reverse.

## Wildfires

Wildfires have become an increasing concern across rural Scotland in recent years. The months between June and August in 2018 saw four times the number of wildfires recorded in the same period in 2017, and that was an increase on the year before<sup>44</sup>. Wildfires can be caused deliberately by wilful fire raising or through carelessness via sparks from unmanaged garden fires, residual heat from unextinguished bonfires, casually discarded litter including glass bottles and cigarette butts, or by inappropriate or badly managed muirburning. They are particularly concerning on peatland because the fires can exist in the peat long after they are thought to have been extinguished.

Wildfires can cause significant damage to biodiversity and agricultural, forestry, recreational and sporting interests; and can threaten infrastructure, property, and life. They release carbon dioxide, damage the capacity of peatlands to sequester carbon, and smoke affects human health. Wildfires place significant operational burdens and costs on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and other public services, and under expected climate change scenarios wildfire incidence and severity are predicted to increase.

Earth Observation techniques are now being applied by the Environmental Research Institute (ERI), NatureScot and others to assess the fires that have taken place. In 2019, a case study was undertaken on West Halladale in the Flow Country, which had experienced a large wildfire earlier that year (5,614ha)<sup>45</sup>. It affected bog and heath habitats, including bog that was undergoing peatland restoration. The study found that wetter, intact bogs were less affected and should recover sooner than drained or otherwise damaged bog, and concluded that not only will peatland restoration efforts lock up more carbon, they will also help limit the amount of carbon released during wildfire events. ERI is currently leading a further research project on this theme to inform policy and management practices, entitled 'How does land management influence Fire RESilience and carbon fate in BLANKET bogs? (Fire Blanket)'<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> BBC News (2019) 'Wildfire numbers in Scotland quadruple in a year' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-48798789>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=91001a1e278d4c41a7b28886e8530f25>

<sup>46</sup> <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=NE%2FT006528%2F1#/tabOverview>

The Scottish Wildfire Forum<sup>47</sup> aims to raise awareness of the work being undertaken across Scotland in relation to minimising the impact of wildfire and is working with SFRS to develop training for land managers in wildfire response. The SFRS has a Community Asset Register on its website<sup>48</sup>, where people can register equipment and skilled practitioners who could help with a wildfire. The creation of local fire partnerships and plans could also help SFRS and individual estates access additional equipment and personnel to jointly tackle wildfires on the peatlands.

## Vehicle use

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and quad bikes are now seen as essential tools for both sporting and agricultural work, and their use is continuing to increase. The cumulative effects of the last fifty years of use are however now evident in some places. When used in softer and wetter areas of peatland they can cause significant damage to the fragile plant communities, with recovery either being very slow or erosion taking place.

It is possible that more constructed tracks will be proposed to upgrade informal ATV routes and fishing access tracks in future. Whilst constructed tracks can limit the incremental spread of damage, they have their own effects on the vegetation and on water movement. In terms of vehicle technology, ATVs with front wheel steering are likely to cause less damage than those that rely on skid steering.

## Peat cutting

No commercial peat cutting takes place within the Natura site, and elsewhere in the peatlands there is just one site where there is limited ongoing extraction. Domestic peat cutting still takes place but is much less widespread than it used to be. Where it still occurs, it has become increasingly mechanised. On designated peatland it is subject to discussion under SSSI procedures.

## 4.7 Management for nature conservation

Until the 1980s the national and international importance of the peatlands was not widely recognised. Since then there has been a growth in the management of land specifically for nature conservation.

Between 1992 and 2007, SNH ran the Peatland Management Scheme (PMS), which had a dedicated advisory officer and offered management agreements to land managers taking on appropriate peatland management prescriptions. The advisory post and PMS ceased in 2007 with the advent of the Scotland Rural Development Scheme (SRDP), which also enabled payments for peatland management (and other agri-environment measures) within SSSI. Around 65% of the SAC was covered by PMS agreements, but not all of these transferred to an agreement under the SRDP. This may have been due to the complexity and cost of the SRDP application process compared with the PMS.

The RSPB has become very active in the area since the mid-1990s and is now a major landowner/manager (21,027ha, including all or part of 11 peatland SSIs). It is also a significant employer, with six full-time staff equivalents (FTE) involved directly in the peatlands.

Since 1994 two tranches of funding from the EU LIFE Programme, and then funding from other sources, have enabled firstly experimentation and then larger scale peatland management and restoration work. This was largely on RSPB and Forestry and Land Scotland ground, but also to a more limited extent on the Munsary Plantlife Reserve and on private estates in more recent years with support from the Flows to the Future Project and Peatland ACTION Fund. Work includes large scale drain blocking within the European

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.scottishwildfireforum.co.uk/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/community-asset-register.aspx>

designated peatland and targeted tree removal and peatland restoration on adjacent areas, with a view to protecting the Natura site features. Further information on peatland restoration is given in Chapter 4.2 Restoration of afforested areas to blanket bog and wet heath habitats.

The 2014 to 2019 Flows to the Future Project drew down £11.3 million of funding for peatland restoration and awareness raising. Between 2014 and 2019, RSPB employed a further 4.7 FTE posts in the peatlands as part of the project. Over £4.2 million was spent using local contractors and the permanent legacy of the project currently supports spend to the equivalent of 4.2 FTEs in Caithness and Sutherland.

## 4.8 Water catchment and fisheries management

One of the main drivers for sustainable water management in the UK is the EU Water Framework Directive<sup>49</sup> (implemented in Scotland by the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003<sup>50</sup>). This sought to ensure that the quality of water bodies does not deteriorate and that all water bodies achieve at least 'good' ecological status by 2015. In order to do this, new regulatory and monitoring systems were brought in.

The peatlands cover a major land area, and their management influences the water quality in burns, rivers and lochs both within the peatlands and over much larger areas. Consideration therefore needs to be given to drinking water catchments in assessing any potential land use change. In the peatlands, there are very limited areas with water quality issues at present.

There is also an intimate link between management of the peatlands and fisheries. Fish spawning areas and juvenile habitats are often found in the peatlands, miles from any main river or burn, and care needs to be taken to ensure their protection.

Atlantic salmon, sea trout and brown trout fisheries make an important contribution to the economy of the area. Atlantic salmon and sea trout populations have declined markedly through most of their ranges over recent decades, due to a combination of factors including higher mortality at sea and changes in land and river management. Populations have however remained healthy over much of north and east Caithness and Sutherland. This is perhaps in part due to the naturally high productivity of the rivers, resulting from the underlying geology. In contrast, populations have declined on the west coast where natural productivity levels of the shorter river systems are lower and marine mortality higher.

The Rivers Borgie, Naver and Thurso have their origins in the peatlands and are all SACs for nature conservation interests that include Atlantic salmon. The Borgie and the Naver also have freshwater pearl mussel populations and were part of the LIFE + project Pearls in Peril (2012-2017), which aimed to save and restore populations at 21 key Natura 2000 sites in Scotland, England and Wales.

Brown trout are found in lochs and rivers across the area and include the unique Ice Age relict Crocach trout in lochs above Loch Hope. Brown trout populations are generally good and reflect the productivity of the waters - high in those areas with limestone featuring in the geology, and low where peat predominates in dubh lochans. Angling pressure remains light to moderate for the most part. RSPB have amended their fishery management at Forsinard to benefit common scoter.

## 4.9 Implications of climate change

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<sup>49</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index\\_en.html](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html)

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/3/contents>

Climate change may result in less suitable climatic conditions for bog growth. Both increased rainfall and increased temperature are predicted for Scotland, with most of the additional rainfall anticipated as coming over the winter. These changes are likely to result in bogs drying out over the summer months as a result of the higher temperatures and resultant higher evapo-transpiration rates.

If conditions do become sub-optimal for bog growth (in particular *Sphagnum* mosses) then increasing levels of erosion through oxidation, physical removal of particulate peat and increased release of heavy metals, organic compounds and nutrients into watercourses can be expected. The release of huge quantities of carbon stored in the peat along with other greenhouse gas emissions would further accelerate climatic warming. 20% of Scotland's carbon emissions currently come from peatlands, predominantly damaged ones<sup>51, 52</sup>.

Ensuring peatland is in good condition reduces the dangers of erosion and carbon loss from the system. A particular priority is to reduce any artificial drainage to help mitigate the predicted increase in summer drying and to reduce winter run-off. It will also be important to reduce areas of bare peat so as to reduce the likelihood of erosion.

Climate change is also likely to affect plants and animals living in the peatlands. Most of the characteristic bird species for example are normally northerly breeders near or at the southern edge of their range. They would therefore be expected to be particularly vulnerable to any changes in the climate. Changes to marine and coastal habitats as a result of climate change may also affect peatland species that use these areas for feeding.

## 4.10 Next steps

Part Two of this draft Management Strategy contains an update on progress made since 2015 and an Action Plan for the ten-year period to 2030. Potential projects and actions have been suggested and for each, a lead partner and timescale are identified in addition to potential outputs and targets.

The table of actions in Part Two are not ranked and follow the same structure used in the preceding chapter, however six priority issues and suggested actions to deliver Objective 1 are listed below. These proposals reflect recent and ongoing shifts in policies and support mechanisms for peatland restoration and land management. Please refer to Table 1.2 in Part Two for further details on these priorities in addition to the full table of proposed actions.

- **Blanket bog condition:**  
**Issue:** The condition of the blanket bog across a small proportion of the SAC remains 'unfavourable' for a number of reasons including forestry edge effects, conifer regeneration, drainage, trampling and wildfire damage. There is insufficient information on the condition of the peatlands out-with designated sites, but there are localised areas of damage.  
**Suggested action:** Promote and provide mechanisms and incentives that support sustainable grazing and peatland restoration, and address forest edge effects. Work with forest owners to support removal of the edges of conifer forests which are having the highest impacts on peatland biodiversity.

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<sup>51</sup> Evans et al (2017) 'Implementation of an emission inventory for UK peatlands'. Report to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. [https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat07/1904111135\\_UK\\_peatland\\_GHG\\_emissions.pdf](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat07/1904111135_UK_peatland_GHG_emissions.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Salisbury et al (2015) 'Greenhouse Gas Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: 1990-2013' [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/455529/DA\\_GHGI\\_1990-2013\\_Report\\_v1.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/455529/DA_GHGI_1990-2013_Report_v1.pdf)

- Peatland restoration:**  
**Issue:** Funding is available for tree removal and peatland restoration through the Peatland ACTION Fund, but uptake from private estates has been limited.  
**Suggested actions:** Employ dedicated Peatland Advisory Staff to provide advice and training on the sustainable management of peatland habitats, restoration of damaged bog, removal of non-native tree regeneration, monitoring, funding etc. Provide training to land managers and agents to promote uptake of the Peatland ACTION Fund and other opportunities for enhanced peatland management through e.g. the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS).
- Conifer regeneration:**  
**Issue:** In some areas, non-native conifers are regenerating onto adjacent areas of open peatland, and this is exacerbated by climate change.  
**Suggested action:** Conduct a review of conifer regeneration on peatland to identify priorities and potential solutions, develop a costed action plan to secure agreement on the scale of the issue, and engage with owners to implement a programme for removal of non-native regeneration from priority areas.
- Woodland expansion:**  
**Issues:** Native woodlands are scarce and often heavily grazed, although there is funding and assistance available to promote woodland expansion and creation in the right locations in and around the peatlands.  
**Suggested action:** Secure additional funding and employ a Flow Country Woodland Adviser to provide advice on the sustainable management and regeneration of existing native woodlands, and the planting of new native and non-native woodlands on appropriate non-peatland habitats (such as croft and farm woodlands) in and around the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland.
- In-bye management:**  
**Issue:** In-bye fields in key areas need to be actively managed to be suitable for peatland waders, however there is insufficient information on both the fields and how birds are using them.  
**Suggested action:** Collate habitat and species information on in-bye grassland, identify and ground-truth priority areas, and advise land managers on appropriate management for peatland waders. Employ a Flow Country Grassland Officer to provide advice on the sustainable management of existing grasslands utilised by wading birds in and around the Flow Country, identify and help restore 'abandoned' or rank grasslands of wildlife importance, and assist land managers to apply for funding through schemes like AECS.
- Wildfire mitigation:**  
**Issue:** Wildfires can damage sensitive peatland habitats and destroy paleo-environmental and archaeological data, and are an increasing concern as climate change is leading to increased risk of climatic extremes.  
**Suggested action:** Establish a Flow Country Wildfire Group to minimise the risk and impact of fires, ensure fire plans are in place, share experience of best practice of wildfire prevention and management, and facilitate joint responses to incidents including the provision of personnel and equipment.



## CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The future long-term health of the peatlands depends very much on decisions that are made regarding community and economic development in the area. Some aspects of development are dealt with in other parts of the Strategy, particularly woodlands (chapter 4), and tourism and interpretation (chapter 6).

The following chapter looks at development issues that already impact on the peatlands or that may do so in the future. It identifies key issues that need to be addressed to deliver Objective 2 and suggests some priority actions. These and other actions are further developed in the Action Plan in Part Two of this document (Table 2.2).

**Objective 2: To encourage sustainable community and economic investment that is compatible with safeguarding those features that make the peatlands important.**

### 5.1 Key issues

- There is a lack of direct community and business involvement in the management of the peatlands.
- There are opportunities to create skilled and long-term local employment through peatland-based development and the upscaling of habitat restoration activities.
- The strong policy drive towards development of further renewable energy sites to help meet CO<sub>2</sub> emission targets will increase development pressures, despite concerns on the scale and cumulative impacts of wind farms across the area.
- There are further long-term restoration opportunities that could be delivered through habitat management plans associated with peatland developments.
- There is insufficient information on the community and economic benefits of the peatlands, including future opportunities that may arise from the potential World Heritage Site inscription.
- Peatland communities and business sectors experience difficulties in accessing markets for various reasons including remoteness and scale of operations.
- The North Coast 500 driving route brings both opportunities and challenges for local communities and the peatland environment.

### 5.2 Community management and engagement

Over recent years there has been an increasing interest in community involvement in land management and ownership, spurred on by the provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003<sup>53</sup> and Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015<sup>54</sup>. This legislation aims to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.

The only peatland within the Natura site in community ownership at present is on the Melness Crofters Estate, although the Assynt Crofters Trust, Assynt Foundation, Kylesku Crofters Trust and Culag Community Woodland Trust also own areas of peatland. In addition, the North Sutherland Community Forest Trust (NSCFT) owns several large sheds at Forsinain which are used for wood processing, with some of the wood coming from peatland restoration areas.

The various crofting grazing committees are a mechanism for local collective management of peatland, although the number of active committees is in decline. A number of grazing committees have taken advantage of changes in legislation and have carried out woodland regeneration or planting schemes.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2/contents>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted>

Whilst local employment in forestry will not return to the heights of 1980s, other sectors are coming in to play creating skilled and long-term local employment. Examples include renewable energy and the likely significant upscaling of habitat restoration for carbon and wildlife. There is also increased recognition of the important role the peatland landscape has played in the recent increase in tourism related employment.

Community engagement in the peatlands has the potential to ensure that local priorities are addressed, that more economic benefits are retained locally, and that a sense of ownership is maintained or developed. Forestry & Land Scotland and RSPB Scotland both seek community involvement in the management planning for their holdings in the area, and there is also wide consultation on both public and private forestry proposals.

The Peatlands Partnership was formed in 2006 and changed its name to the Flow Country Partnership in 2021. It comprises a range of bodies and groups involved in the management of the peatlands who wanted to work together to implement the first edition of this Strategy, some of whom represent community-based interests. There is scope to broaden the membership of the Partnership and involve more communities and key individuals in the management of the area.

## 5.3 Local Planning and Community Planning

The Government is currently preparing its fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) which will guide spatial development, set out national policies, designate national developments and reflect regional spatial priorities. The recently published NPF4 Position Statement<sup>55</sup> sets out current thinking on the issues that will need to be addressed and opportunities taken to help stimulate the green economy and combat climate change. When it is adopted by Scottish Ministers, the new Framework will incorporate Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and take on an enhanced status as part of the statutory Development Plan.

In 2020, The Highland Council approved an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy for Highland<sup>56</sup> as part of its submission to the Scottish Government's engagement on the emerging National Planning Framework 4. Renewable energy and action on carbon emissions is central to the long-term vision, which states: 'by 2050, Highland will be an exemplar carbon action region by optimising its unique, rich and diverse assets to lead national emissions reduction targets', and 'This will maintain and enhance Highland's role as a global centre of excellence for renewable energy innovation and generation'.

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012)<sup>57</sup> (HwLDP) is the land use plan which the Council uses to guide development and investment across The Highland Council area. Together with supplementary guidance covering specific issues and more detailed Area Local Development Plans, it aims to create sustainable communities and balance population growth, economic development and the safeguarding of the environment. The planned review of the HwLDP started in 2016 but was postponed until the implications of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019<sup>58</sup> and NPF4 are more clearly understood.

The Caithness and the Sutherland Community Partnerships<sup>59</sup> are the organisations responsible for promoting and leading community planning activity in their respective counties. They bring together representation from business interests, communities, local government and other government bodies to improve the way public services are delivered by involving the communities who use the services in the decision-making processes.

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<sup>55</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-fourth-national-planning-framework-position-statement/>

<sup>56</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4304/economy\\_and\\_infrastructure\\_committee](https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4304/economy_and_infrastructure_committee)

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/199/highland-wide\\_local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan)

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/contents/enacted>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.highlandcpp.org.uk/>

## 5.4 Renewable energy developments

A major economic shift affecting the peatlands in recent years has been the growth in renewable energy developments, with most interest to date being in relation to wind farms. The wind regimes of Caithness and Sutherland combined with low population densities, proximity to electricity grid and availability of grid capacity make the area particularly attractive to developers, and a significant number of wind farms have been developed or consented within and adjacent to the peatlands.

The recently published update to the 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan (CCP) entitled 'Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero' (Dec 2020)<sup>60</sup> sets out the Government's pathway to its new and ambitious targets set by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act (2019)<sup>61</sup>. The Government has committed to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030 (compared with 1990) and to net zero by 2045. The Government's Energy Strategy Update, to be published in 2021, will set out the role that onshore wind will have in the wider energy system, but the Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2017)<sup>62</sup> stated that 'Scotland will continue to need more onshore wind development and capacity, in locations across our landscapes where it can be accommodated.' In terms of this Management Strategy, these documents reflect the strong national policy drive towards further development of renewable energy, including onshore wind farms, as well as the restoration of degraded peatland areas.

In 2019, The Highland Council declared a climate and ecological emergency, and agreed to meet net zero emissions by 2025. The Council's Climate Change Panel aspires to reposition Highland as a low CO<sub>2</sub> region, and is developing a framework around this vision.

Caithness and Sutherland are already contributing towards these targets. In terms of onshore wind energy, as of January 2020 the two counties together host around 380 turbines constructed over about 100 sites varying from single small/micro turbines to windfarms comprising numerous large turbines and having a combined installed capacity of around 620 megawatts (MW). In addition, 16 turbines were under construction across 2 sites, with an installed capacity of around 34 MW. About a further 165 turbines were approved (but not yet under construction) across approximately 35 sites, with an installed capacity of around 440 MW<sup>63</sup>. The Highland Council has produced interactive maps of wind turbines and hydro schemes across Highland, which are available on its website<sup>64</sup>.

There are environmental concerns about renewable developments in or close to the peatlands, particularly those situated on deep peat. Scottish Planning Policy recognises the importance of peatland and deep peat as a nationally important habitat and its role in carbon storage. Policy 55 of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan gives a presumption against unacceptable peat disturbance and states that development proposals should demonstrate how they have avoided unnecessary disturbance, degradation or erosion of peat and soils. However, it is acknowledged that impacts can be avoided or reduced through siting and design being informed by relevant surveys, and in some areas, development could result in peatland restoration as a component of a wind energy scheme.

### Key natural heritage considerations

The following list identifies a number of potential impacts of renewable energy developments in the peatlands from a natural heritage perspective:

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/15/enacted>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-9781788515283/>

<sup>63</sup> David Cowie, Highland Council, pers comm

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning - long term and area policies/152/renewable energy>

- Habitat loss, damage or fragmentation and impacts on species either through land take (e.g. for turbines, tracks, grid connections and other infrastructure), hydrological disruption, during construction or decommissioning, through peat slides (triggered by the construction and/or operation of a wind farm), or when infrastructure is renewed in the future.
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from peat disturbance both during and after construction.
- Displacement of birds if they avoid wind farms due to turbine operation / visitor disturbance or are deterred from using their normal routes to feeding and roosting grounds, which can have implications for their energy consumption.
- Collision risk with turbines for some species of birds.
- Impacts on deer welfare, habitats (including potential for grazing and trampling damage elsewhere if deer are displaced), and other interests (e.g. impact of displaced deer on any nearby access and recreation areas).
- Risk of concentrations of suspended solids or contaminants entering watercourses during construction, during operation or as a result of a peat slide.
- Risk of monitoring and management not being maintained on restored peatland areas agreed as mitigation for development impacts.
- Potential impacts on landscape, archaeological and historic sites and areas, and on access and recreation.

The level of impact depends on the location, design and management of the wind farm. However, the cumulative impact of wind farms on landscapes, habitats and species is now a significant consideration in Caithness and Sutherland. Research is ongoing concerning potential impacts and is more advanced for some issues than others. NatureScot and others have also developed a range of guidance for onshore wind energy developments<sup>65</sup> including spatial guidance, research, and guidance on assessing the potential impacts on the natural heritage, good practice during construction, restoration and decommissioning.

The siting and design of wind farms has to be cognisant of peatland resources, which vary in quality. However, successful co-existence can bring about not only renewable energy generation benefits, but also specific peatland restoration opportunities, which taken together are aimed at combating the global Climate Emergency. Appropriately sited wind farm development provides an opportunity to implement habitat management and peatland restoration, and wind farms can provide a source of finance to support the restoration of degraded habitats. Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitat Management Plans and Construction Environmental Management Plans are all tools that can substantially reduce impacts.

Scottish Renewables (2020) 'Wind Power and Peatland: Enhancing Unique Habitats'<sup>66</sup> sets out a number of case studies, providing examples of positive management and sensitive approaches to developing peatland sites. These include RWE's Habitat Management Plan at Bad a Cheo near Mybster in Caithness which is seeking to restore areas of peat bog, modified and degraded by years of peat cutting and commercial forestry, to a more functional blanket bog state over the life of the wind farm. Almost 10 miles of drains were blocked across 39 hectares of peatland, at a cost of around £30,000. The publication also highlights SSE Renewables' plans for extensive peatland restoration and management associated with their Strathly South wind farm, should a variation to its planning permission be consented. On site, SSE Renewables would remove 1,133ha of commercial forest to allow the restoration of peatland habitats. Further peatland restoration and management across 1,535ha of the adjacent Caithness and Sutherland Peatland Special Areas of Conservation is also proposed. Similar peat restoration programmes are being undertaken elsewhere in Caithness & Sutherland by these and other wind farm companies, with advice from SEPA and NatureScot.

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-advice/renewable-energy/onshore-wind-energy/advice-wind-farm-development>

<sup>66</sup> [Wind Power and Peatland: Enhancing Unique Habitats \(scottishrenewables.com\)](https://www.scottishrenewables.com/wind-power-and-peatland-enhancing-unique-habitats)

There is also a growing interest in hydro-electric power schemes on rivers, with several schemes having consent in the west of Sutherland<sup>67</sup>. As well as potential water quality issues, there may be impacts from access tracks and from pipe installation. With small schemes this impact can be disproportionate to the renewable energy generation benefit. NatureScot, SEPA and others have produced guidance on the potential impacts of hydro schemes on the natural heritage<sup>68</sup>.

## Planning and policy requirements

Scottish Planning Policy (2014)<sup>69</sup> (SPP) gives guidance on considerations for all types of renewable energy and other development and a specific framework for identifying where wind farm developments are likely to be appropriate. In relation to the peatlands, it identifies the following areas of significant protection where 'further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation':

- World Heritage Sites;
- Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- National Nature Reserves;
- National Scenic Areas;
- areas of wild land as shown on the 2014 SNH map of wild land areas;
- carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat; and
- an area not exceeding 2km around cities, towns and villages.

SPP also states in relation to all types of development that 'Where peat and other carbon rich soils are present, applicants should assess the likely effects of development on carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. Where peatland is drained or otherwise disturbed, there is liable to be a release of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere. Developments should aim to minimise this release.'

There are extensive areas within the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland which have a number of the attributes highlighted within the SPP guidance. The outstanding intrinsic value of the peatlands is not just in the value of the individual areas, but in the collective value of such an extent of deep peat and such an extensive landscape dominated by peatland. This is reflected in its inclusion on the list for nomination as a World Heritage Site. It is also reflected in the vision of this Strategy to not only maintain the peatlands but also to restore those areas of peatland which are not currently being managed to promote biodiversity and the wide range of services provided by the peatlands.

The SPP Spatial Framework applies to developments above the thresholds defined by the Council (single turbines 50m or more to blade tip, or more than one turbine 30m or more to blade tip). All onshore wind energy developments, irrespective of their size, are assessed against the other parts of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance and the HwLDP policies.

The Highland Council has robust planning policies set out in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012) and further elaborated in the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2016 and 2017)<sup>70</sup>. There is a presumption against the disturbance, degradation or erosion of peat, and construction environmental management and other natural environment factors are addressed. The Council's development management process plays a vital role in balancing the achievement of renewable energy targets with environmental, economic and other objectives.

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<sup>67</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning\\_-\\_long\\_term\\_and\\_area\\_policies/152/renewable\\_energy/5](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning_-_long_term_and_area_policies/152/renewable_energy/5)

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-advice/renewable-energy/hydroelectric-power>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/>

<sup>70</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory\\_record/712079/onshore\\_wind\\_energy](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712079/onshore_wind_energy)



It is increasingly recognised that while wind farms may be successfully accommodated within some peatland areas where they avoid deep peat and sensitive habitats and maximise restoration opportunities, damage to peatland as a result of wind farm development can significantly undermine the climate benefits of renewable energy.

Applicants of wind energy developments are strongly encouraged to calculate carbon impacts using the Scottish Government's carbon calculator<sup>71</sup>. This is a tool developed for use in the consideration of wind farm developments over 50 MW on peatlands which require consent under Section 36 of The Electricity (Scotland) Act 1989<sup>72</sup>. It is also beneficial for assessing smaller developments likely to affect the peatlands. In the case of the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland there are wider considerations beyond these site-by-site calculations, reflecting the impact of any individual development on the area as a whole. These should include potential impacts on future restoration opportunities.

### Marine renewable energy schemes

There has been an increased interest in marine renewables in recent years, with two large offshore wind farms under construction in the Moray Firth. These may affect breeding and overwintering divers and scoters from the peatlands that use this area for feeding. Tidal energy proposals are also being considered between Orkney and the mainland. Marine proposals and any land based associated infrastructure may have implications for those peatland birds that breed on the peatlands but also feed in marine and coastal areas such as divers, greenshank and common scoter. Potential issues include disturbance during construction, collision and avoidance issues.

## 5.5 Other developments

Any peatland development has the potential to cause damage through habitat loss or fragmentation, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through peat disturbance, suspended solids or contaminants entering watercourses, wildlife disturbance and displacement, or impacts on landscape and other peatland attributes. As above, the level of impact depends on the location, scale, design and management of the development. Again, large developments will be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, and Habitat Management Plans and Construction Environmental Management Plans are tools that can substantially reduce impacts and identify opportunities for improvements including peatland restoration.

### Space Hub Sutherland

There is a proposal to erect a satellite launch station on the Melness Crofters Estate at A'Mhoine, North Sutherland<sup>73</sup>. Launch related infrastructure will include a control centre, 2.5 km of road and a launch pad, occupying a total of just over 4 hectares of a 300ha peatland site. This project is being led by Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Orbex and has received planning approval from The Highland Council. The proposal is supported by local people and the Environmental Impact Assessment includes a restoration plan that will see all of the peat that is dug out during construction retained on site and used to repair areas that were degraded by past digging.

The impacts on the surrounding habitats and wildlife are as yet unknown, and there may be opportunities to offset the operation of the site by identifying additional restoration proposals nearby.

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<sup>71</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/carbon-calculator-for-wind-farms-on-scottish-peatlands-factsheet/>

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/contents>

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.hie.co.uk/our-region/regional-projects/space-hub-sutherland/>

The proposal will progress towards assessment of impacts at operation licence regulation stage under the UK Space Industry Act (2018)<sup>74</sup>.

### Infrastructure developments

Other developments which may occur in the area include road and track repair or creation, water supply provision and house building. New planning controls were introduced in 2014 by the Scottish Government so that prior notification and approval is needed for hill tracks being constructed for agricultural or forestry purposes<sup>75</sup>. Community and economic benefits of any new developments will need to be assessed against potential environmental impacts. NatureScot has also produced guidance on hill track construction and management which may be relevant.<sup>76</sup>

### Marketing and branding

There may be scope in the future to develop the economic benefits arising from the peatlands through additional marketing or branding of products from the area, particularly if it is designated as a World Heritage Site. This could have the dual benefits of bringing additional income and raising the profile of the area. It will be important to identify and promote these economic and social benefits to local people, to help engender a sense of pride in the Flows.

### Tourism

The influx of visitors to the North Highlands through very successful marketing campaigns such as the North Coast 500 and following the 2020 COVID-19 travel restrictions has brought income to the area; but is not without its challenges to local services and fragile ecosystems such as the peatlands. It is important to encourage the right visitor who appreciates and looks after our countryside. Teaching establishments and accommodation providers need to promote the Flows and nurture a pride in the area, continuing the good work already started by the Peatlands Partnership in the Flows to the Future Project.

## 5.6 Next steps

Part Two of this Management Strategy contains an update on progress made since 2015 and an Action Plan for the ten-year period to 2030. Potential projects and actions have been suggested and for each, a lead partner and timescale are identified in addition to prospective outputs and targets.

The table of actions in Part Two are not ranked and follow the same structure used in the preceding chapter, however three priority issues and suggested actions to deliver Objective 2 are summarised below. These proposals reflect recent and ongoing shifts in policies and support mechanisms for biodiversity and climate change. Please refer to Table 2.2 in Part Two for further details on these priorities in addition to the full table of proposed actions.

- **Community engagement:**

**Issue:** There is a lack of direct community and business involvement in the management of the peatlands.

**Suggested actions:**

- Broaden the membership of the Flow Country Partnership to include further community and land management interests.

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/5/contents/enacted>

<sup>75</sup> [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/300/pdfs/ssipn\\_20140300\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/300/pdfs/ssipn_20140300_en.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/constructed-tracks-scottish-uplands>

- Investigate community benefit funding from e.g. renewable developments or carbon credit finance as a possible source of longer-term support to develop a stronger sense of ownership and community engagement in the peatlands, promoting sustainable communities including outreach work and economic investment linked to the area's international importance and potential WHS inscription.

- **Renewable energy developments:**

**Issue:** The strong policy drive towards development of further renewable energy sites to help meet CO<sub>2</sub> emission targets will increase development pressures, despite concerns on the scale and cumulative impacts of wind farms across the area.

**Suggested actions:**

- Undertake landscape and ecological sensitivity appraisals and spatial planning to identify strategic capacity for future onshore wind energy developments, with particular focus on cumulative impacts.
- Work with developers of wind farms and other peatland projects to prevent or minimise negative impacts and contribute to biodiversity gain across the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland.

## CHAPTER 6: SPREADING THE MESSAGE ABOUT THE PEATLANDS

Six years ago, despite the acknowledged importance of the peatlands, opportunities to find out about them were limited, as were places where you could access and enjoy them. The Flows to the Future Project (2014-2017) went some way to addressing these issues and has left a great legacy in terms of interpretation, visitor facilities and online resources. However, in view of the international importance of the peatlands, there is still work to do to capitalise on the outcomes of this Project and embed a greater sense of local pride and ownership amongst the communities of Caithness and Sutherland.

This chapter looks at issues surrounding the promotion of better engagement and enjoyment of the peatlands as well as the nomination of the area as a World Heritage Site. It identifies key issues that need to be addressed to deliver Objective 3 and suggests some priority actions. These and other actions are further developed in the Action Plan in Part Two of this document (Table 3.2).

**Objective 3: To promote greater awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special wildlife, carbon store, landscape, water environment, historical and cultural values of the peatlands.**

### 6.1 Key issues

- The Flows to the Future Project resulted in significant awareness raising and community engagement outputs, however there is a lack of longer-term funding for community outreach work, visitor facilities and infrastructure to enhance local pride and sense of ownership in the peatlands.
- The Flow Country Partnership has received approval from the UK Government to prepare a World Heritage Site nomination bid to UNESCO. The boundary and management plan are yet to be agreed, and there is work to do to engage local support and secure local benefits that may arise from the inscription.
- The increase in visitors in recent years has benefited the local economy but has also resulted in a rise in antisocial behaviour, littering and damage to the environment.

### 6.2 Awareness raising

#### Tourism, recreation, awareness and interpretation

Levels of awareness of the value of the peatlands amongst local people have grown considerably in local years, but still remain variable. Local support for and pride in the peatlands is key to ensuring the objectives of this Strategy are met. This is likely to come not only from increased awareness, but also from demonstrable economic benefit. Tourism is the most likely source for this, but in itself is more likely to be successful where there is a pride in the local area.

There are quite a few community heritage groups working in the peatlands including Discover Assynt's Historic Assynt Projects in Sutherland, the Castletown Heritage Society (which is very active across North Caithness), and the Caithness Archaeological Trust. These groups are led by local people and undertaking work that involves other residents, visitors and tourists coming to the area or extending their stays to participate in heritage projects.

Six years ago, the infrastructure of interpretation facilities for locals and visitors was limited, with the notable exception of facilities on the RSPB Forsinard Flows Reserve. A review of possible interpretation activities was undertaken as part of the development of the Flows to the Future Project, and a number of these have been implemented, listed below.

A key priority for the Project was to increase the number of places where people can easily access and learn about the peatlands, whilst recognising the fragile nature of the habitat and landscape sensitivities:

- Improved parking, interpretation and seating was installed at four roadside sites: Cnoc Craggie, Moine House (which also has an all-abilities walk), Crask and Loch Rangag.
- A review of the existing peatland paths was undertaken, and the Project has way-marked and promoted five walking routes.
- A viewing tower with all-abilities boardwalk was constructed on the existing Dubh Lochan Trail at Forsinard Flows RSPB Reserve. This enables people to walk through and have an elevated view of a bog pool system. The tower also acts to encourage more people to visit Forsinard and the peatlands as a whole.
- An information point was installed at Forsinain.
- Three new museum and visitor centre displays were created at Caithness Horizons, Strathnaver Museum and the RSPB Forsinard Flows Visitor Centre. An information booklet was produced and is available at hotels, tourist attractions and elsewhere across the area.

The peatlands are a long way from where most people live. They are however a resource of national and international importance, and greater understanding and support from this wider audience is needed if they are to be protected. This was also addressed through Flows to the Future:

- A touring exhibition travelled to 13 UK venues and was seen by 150,000 people.
- 27 events were held out with the peatlands including in London, Edinburgh and Orkney.
- A website [www.theflowcountry.org.uk](http://www.theflowcountry.org.uk) was produced and contains resources that were designed specifically for the Project including a carbon capture game, digital model and peatland film.
- The Project worked with a number of visiting art students and two artists residencies, and an interactive installation with arthouse Cryptic: Below the Blanket was established in the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh.
- The Project stimulated a lot of press coverage in local and national newspapers, radio and TV.

### Learning and volunteering opportunities

Successive peatland projects have delivered programmes of school and community activities over the past 25 years, supported by staff and volunteers from RSPB Scotland and the Highland Council Rangers (now employed by High Life Highland). The RSPB also offers volunteering opportunities on its reserve at Forsinard Flows, where people can be directly involved in practical management activities.

The Flows to the Future Project worked with schools and communities throughout Caithness and Sutherland to deliver a wide range of community engagement activities and volunteering opportunities:

- 151 events were held locally including walks, talks and workshops, with over 4,000 attendees.
- Forsinard Flows RSPB Reserve welcomed 61 school visits, and a further 151 outreach visits were undertaken with 35 schools. In all, 4,246 interactions with school children took place across Caithness and Sutherland, learning about 'The wonders of the Flow Country' covering different topics linked to many parts of the curriculum.
- 270 volunteers were trained and carried out conservation, engagement and office work, contributing over 5,500 days.

The Flows to the Future Project worked with a range of partners including archaeology, astronomy and the North Rail Line. It will be important for any future peatland projects to continue this wider engagement.

Clearly, a lot has been achieved by the Flows to the Future Project in its five years duration. However, like preceding projects, the activities are time limited. A longer-term commitment to raising awareness and securing engagement from local people would help foster a better sense of ownership and more enduring



local pride in the peatlands, which will be a key part of the World Heritage Site application. It would be sensible to deliver this important ongoing work through existing networks such as the High Life Highland Ranger Service and RSPB's volunteering programme, if sufficient longer-term funding can be secured from external sources. Community benefit funding from renewables developments is one possible source of longer-term funding for community outreach work such as this.

## 6.3 World Heritage Site nomination

In 1999 The Flow Country was added to the 'Tentative List' held by the UK government of sites that might be put forward for nomination as World Heritage Sites (WHS). Its position on the list was reassessed and confirmed in 2011. UNESCO bestows this international accolade on either natural or cultural properties of outstanding universal value. The Flow Country will be submitted in the natural heritage category. Nominations are made through the Scottish Government and then through the UK government.

The first stage of the process is to undertake a Technical Evaluation to determine whether a site has a strong case for claiming Outstanding Universal Value and whether it would have adequate protection, management and resourcing. An initial Technical Evaluation was submitted to the UK government in 2013. The Assessment Panel recommended further work be undertaken including a comparative study of peatlands across the world, to support the premise that the area is of outstanding universal value. A second Technical Evaluation was submitted in 2015 which required some further enhancements. In December 2019, the Partnership's World Heritage Site Working Group submitted a third Technical Evaluation of The Flow Country proposed WHS to the UK Government's Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and in July 2020, the Government invited the Peatlands Partnership to make a full Nomination to UNESCO<sup>77</sup>.

The partners aim to submit the Nomination documentation in early 2023, and the submission will need to be accompanied by a draft management plan for the area. The proposed boundary for The Flow Country World Heritage Site has still to be determined but the core area of the Site is likely to comprise all or most of the Caithness and Sutherland peatlands Natura site. It is likely that some of the surrounding area would be included either within the core site, or in places as a buffer zone. As an accolade this international designation would make a significant contribution to raising the profile of the peatlands and the area more generally, both nationally and internationally.

## 6.4 Next steps

Part Two of this Management Strategy contains an update on progress made since 2015 and an Action Plan for the ten-year period to 2030. Potential projects and actions have been suggested and for each, a lead partner and timescale are identified in addition to prospective outputs and targets.

The table of actions in Part Two are not ranked and follow the same structure used in the preceding chapter, however two priority issues and suggested actions to deliver Objective 3 are summarised below. These proposals reflect lessons learned from previous projects and opportunities which may be provided in recognition of the importance of the peatlands. Please refer to Table 3.2 in Part Two for further details on these priorities in addition to the full table of proposed actions.

- **Long-term funding:**

**Issue:** There is a lack of longer-term funding for community outreach work, visitor facilities and infrastructure to enhance local pride and sense of ownership in the peatlands.

**Suggested action:**

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<sup>77</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/green-light-peatlands-partnership-apply-unesco-world-heritage-site-status>

- Facilitate learning and engagement to enhance local pride and sense of ownership in the peatlands through inspiring and enthusing all generations about the globally important nature and landscapes in the Flow Country and its fundamental role in climate change mitigation.
- Help communities and businesses to access additional resources to support community outreach work, visitor facilities and infrastructure to help manage increased visitor activity.

- **WHS benefits:**

**Issue:** The Flow Country Partnership has received approval from the UK Government to prepare a World Heritage Site bid to UNESCO. The boundary and management plan are yet to be agreed, and there is work to do to engage local support and secure local benefits that may arise from the inscription.

**Suggested action:** Prepare a World Heritage Site submission to UNESCO including nomination documentation, management plan (including visitor and tourism management planning, restoration opportunities, climate change implications & opportunities, opportunities to be gained from WHS status e.g. socio-economic, environmental educational) and agreed boundary.

## CHAPTER 7: UNDERSTANDING THE PEATLANDS

Our understanding of the peatlands has grown tremendously over the 16 years since this Strategy was first published with improved funding, networking and co-ordinated research and monitoring on subjects such as climate change, carbon dynamics, biodiversity, water regulation, peatland restoration and land management. However, our collective knowledge is still far from complete.

This chapter focuses on research and monitoring of the peatlands. It identifies key issues that need to be addressed to deliver Objective 4 and suggests some priority actions. These and other actions are further developed in the Action Plan in Part Two of this document (Table 4.2).

**Objective 4: To support and promote the value of the area for best practice management and research and as an exemplar and inspiration for others working on peatland management and restoration, to the benefit of peatlands here and elsewhere.**

### 7.1 Key issues

- There is scope to develop the links between land managers and the research community through joint research and monitoring projects and workshops, as well as further engaging with communities of interest through 'citizen science' type projects.
- Peatland restoration practitioners, researchers and policy makers need to align their strategies and work together to ensure that restoration and monitoring is evidence-based and underpinned by science.
- Around the UK, the metrics required to adequately monitor peatland restoration are still largely under development with no standardised approach, spatial scale or timescale to assess the cost-effectiveness of the wide range of methods deployed over large areas.
- Further work is needed to quantify the social and economic benefits of peatland restoration in cost-benefit terms.
- Understanding the past development of the peat is crucial if we are really to understand what will happen during and after peatland restoration work. Better integration of the findings from palaeoecological and archaeological studies with studies into contemporary responses of peatlands to similar changes will help improve forecasting models.
- Our collective understanding on the impact of deer on vegetation, habitats and species is incomplete, but such data is very useful to feed into deer management planning decisions.
- There is insufficient information on the importance of in-bye fields to peatland waders.
- Our understanding of the erosion of upland peat areas is incomplete.
- Common scoter ecology, including how they move in and out of the Flows during migration & commuting during breeding season and links to loch & peatland management, is not well understood. Further research using innovative technologies would help us improve management for this important species.
- There has been insufficient independent assessment on the cumulative impacts of wind farms on peatland landscapes and ecosystems, and on knowledge gaps such as the impacts on birds flying at night.

### 7.2 Research and monitoring

RSPB, Plantlife and Forest Research (Forestry Commission) have been engaged in research and monitoring linked to their own landholdings for many years. However, despite the international importance of the peatlands, research efforts by universities, colleges and research institutions were initially sporadic, hampered by a lack of funding and the remoteness of the area. This has changed dramatically in recent years.

It is now recognised that the Flow Country is a vital area in developing our understanding of a wide range of peatland issues, from the ecology of individual species and changes in their populations over time to greenhouse gas fluxes and the role of peatland habitats in climate change mitigation and adaptation. This is because the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland encompass a range of states from near-pristine to highly degraded, include several large-scale restoration sites, and span a climatic gradient with rainfall as high as 4,400mm per year to the west and as low as 500mm per year to the east. They profile an ideal setting to understand the influences of land use and climate change on carbon dynamics, biodiversity, water regulation both in peatlands and connected landscapes, but also to improve our capacity to predict the consequences of a changing climate upon those ecological functions.

### 7.3 Flow Country Research Hub

In 2012, a network of researchers and stakeholders involved or interested in the scientific research taking place in the peatlands of the Flow Country was launched, known as the ‘Flow Country Research Hub’<sup>78</sup>. The Hub seeks to establish the Flow Country as a UK and, increasingly, international focal point of peatland science addressing contemporary environmental and societal issues such as climate change, biodiversity, resource management and sustainability. The Hub is coordinated by the Environmental Research Institute<sup>79</sup> in Thurso. Communication between the different groups involved in Flow Country research is promoted via twitter, a quarterly newsletter circulated to over 100 people, and a regular (every 18 months) Flow Country conference where researchers, students and practitioners gather to share the latest findings and visit field restoration sites.

There are a wide range of peatland research projects taking place in the Flow Country, most of which are collaborative in nature. This is in line with the long-term aspirations of the network, which are to:

- Provide and maintain infrastructures which promote international collaborations, student placements and visiting researchers, and which enable sustainable, world-class research to take place in the Flow Country.
- Improve the integration between scientists, landowners, practitioners, governance bodies and policy makers to help deliver restoration objectives in Scotland.
- Develop a better platform for the provision of outreach and knowledge exchange activities making research accessible.

In 2019, a special issue of the scientific journal ‘Mires and Peat’ was dedicated to recent advances in research in the Flow Country and featured 9 research articles with authorships from 25 different institutions, all of which are open access<sup>80</sup>. The Flow Country Research Hub was also shortlisted for a ‘Nature of Scotland’ Award in 2019 in the category ‘Conservation Science’, demonstrating that the coordinated approach is starting to bear fruits.

### 7.4 Peatland restoration research and monitoring

Restoration of peatlands is one of the most significant landscape-scale changes currently taking place in the UK and aims to deliver multiple benefits in terms of enhanced biodiversity, water supply and flood management, and natural carbon capture/long-term storage. Understanding how peatland degradation and restoration impact the delivery of all these ecosystem services is essential to improve management strategies. The long-term decadal and multi-decadal monitoring and research programmes that are needed

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<sup>78</sup> <https://www.theflowcountry.org.uk/learning-and-teaching/research/research-hub/>

<sup>79</sup> For more information see <https://eri.ac.uk/>

<sup>80</sup> <http://mires-and-peat.net/pages/volumes/map23/map2303.php>

to address these objectives have underpinned some key research outputs (e.g. on long-term restoration outcomes) from the Flow Country research community, although they do not fit with traditional research funding that typically support projects for 2 or 3 years.

However, this funding landscape may be changing; long-term commitments from Scottish Government towards peatland restoration, including monitoring, have been welcome by the research community. A new, large research programme based in the Flow Country funded by the Leverhulme Trust (£1M, ERI-UHI led, 2020-2025) will bring new opportunities to develop the research strands that tie in with this Strategy<sup>81</sup>. Other large initiatives under development also include the Flow Country as a key site and with the development of the National Peatland Research and Monitoring Group, which underpins the delivery of the National Peatland Plan<sup>82</sup>, there is now a much more direct link between research and policy.

The renewables energy sector is providing long-term funding to support peatland restoration and associated monitoring programmes, and there is scope for further collaborative working both in terms of research programmes and in the sharing of lessons learned across all sectors. The support and co-operation of landowners in the Flow Country, including non-governmental organisations, governmental and private landowners, is key to the continuity of long-term studies of peatland restoration.

### Monitoring blanket bog restoration: need for reference systems, proxies and metrics

In order to assess the success of blanket bog restoration, adequate monitoring needs to be undertaken to compare the pre- and post-restoration status and set them in context using a reference system. This means understanding the current status of both degraded (e.g. drained, afforested) and less impacted blanket bogs in Caithness and Sutherland in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, carbon storage, biodiversity, water quality etc. We also need to gain a better understanding of how those functions vary with time and location, both in disturbed and more natural systems, in order to be able to attribute changes in a restored site to restoration rather than to e.g. inter-annual variability.

Evaluating peatland restoration is challenging due to the large areas and timescales involved. This can be addressed by well-designed ground-based monitoring, particularly replicated trials with controls and both before and after data. These schemes can then be used to ground-truth newer remote sensing techniques, which - if they can be validated properly against ground data - might then allow a degree of inference for broad outcomes over much larger areas and time periods.

In the last five years, the application of remote sensing technology to monitor vegetation changes and eco-hydrological behaviours in peatland has been developed in the Flow Country<sup>83, 84</sup> and current projects are looking at developing tools for the monitoring of peatland restoration based on these novel approaches. A key challenge going forward is to relate meaningfully some of these proxies to greenhouse gas emissions using a combination of measures like vegetation type, ground surface motion, temperature, moisture and light. In order to do this, researchers will need to combine remote sensing with quality ground measurements - something which they already have a good track record of doing in various Flow Country studies. This can be built on to further develop remote sensing tools.

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<sup>81</sup> <https://eri.ac.uk/research/major-projects/developing-a-new-understanding-of-blanket-bog-resilience-from-molecules-to-landscapes/>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-national-peatland-plan-working-our-future>

<sup>83</sup> Alshammari, L., Boyd, D.S., Sowter, A., Marshall, C., Andersen, R., Gilbert, P., Marsh, S. and Large, D.J., 2020. Use of Surface Motion Characteristics Determined by InSAR to Assess Peatland Condition. *Journal of Geophysical Research: Biogeosciences*, 125(1), p.e2018JG004953.

<https://pure.uhi.ac.uk/en/publications/use-of-surface-motion-characteristics-determined-by-insar-to-as>

<sup>84</sup> Lees, K.J., Artz, R.R., Khomik, M., Clark, J.M., Ritson, J., Hancock, M.H., Cowie, N.R. and Quaife, T., 2020. Using Spectral Indices to Estimate Water Content and GPP in Sphagnum Moss and Other Peatland Vegetation. *IEEE Transactions on Geoscience and Remote Sensing*.  
<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/8970455>



## Developing restoration techniques in response to different disturbances and objectives

Different restoration approaches will be required for drained, drained and afforested, and eroded peatlands, and for each approach, different levels of intervention (e.g. number of dams, material used to construct the dam, tree harvest or mulching etc.) are available. Understanding which peatland management and restoration methods are optimal for biodiversity conservation, for carbon storage or for other ecosystem functions is necessary for decision making, especially where trade-offs may be required. Determining priority areas for restoration and optimal and cost-effective restoration approaches is essential both for the ongoing management of afforested peatland areas, and to inform government support schemes which may finance bog restoration. To achieve this, the practitioners, researchers and policy makers need to align their strategies and work together to ensure that restoration and monitoring on the ground is underpinned by science and is evidence-based.

Illustrating the strong practitioner-researcher partnerships in the area, the Flow Country includes a number of long-running monitoring schemes with data on hydrology, vegetation, birds, and carbon dynamics. The area also hosts a number of major designed & replicated management trials of different restoration approaches. These elements provide excellent opportunities to build on, in order to understand how restoration should best be carried out and where the highest priority areas are for restoration management.

## Cost-benefit of restoration in economic terms

Restoration of peatlands often requires a large up-front capital investment that is expected to translate into wider benefits (e.g. reduction in carbon emissions). Quantifying these benefits in economic terms has the potential to influence future policies and also investment in peatland restoration. There is an increasing recognition of the need to take integrated landscape approaches and in the Flow Country. This means including riparian (native) woodland planting alongside peatland restoration schemes. It also means starting to document the potential impact of peatland restoration and management on the surrounding rivers and lochs. There is likely to be a significant positive response in terms of water quality, flood control and the overall health of the aquatic ecosystem. Given that many peatland rivers and streams are prime salmon habitat, understanding the downstream impacts of restoration has a particularly high socio-economic relevance in Caithness and Sutherland. As well as these aspects, values that are less easily expressed in monetary terms, such as cultural or biodiversity values, need to also remain central to our management of the Flow Country.

## Future forecasting: linking past-present-future condition

Understanding the past development of the peat is crucial if we are really to understand what will happen during and after peat restoration work. Features associated with the historic environment should be taken into account as we develop restoration techniques. With changes in management regimes and climate, it is difficult to predict how peatland systems, degraded or not, will respond in the future. Given that restoration aims to recover peatlands in a climate now that is different than when they started to form in the early-mid Holocene, what outcome is it reasonable to expect? Using palaeoecological techniques (for example plant macrofossil analysis, carbon dating, pollen analysis) we can understand how peatland plant species and carbon accumulation have changed in the past in relation to climatic shifts, or changes in land use. Better integration of knowledge and techniques from such studies with studies looking at the contemporary responses of peatlands to similar changes will help us to improve our forecasting models.

In the past few years, the UK has experienced a range of extreme weather events, and these are predicted to become more frequent with climate change in the future. In the Flow Country, these included cold snap and heavy precipitation in winter (the 2017 'beast from the east', and in February 2020), a prolonged summer drought (2018) and the largest wildfire in the UK (2019, 5,600ha). Understanding how

peatlands in different condition respond to these events is essential to improve the reliability of land surface models, and will be a key component of the ERI-UHI's and the Flow Country Research Hub's strategic priorities in the next 5 years. Ultimately this knowledge will help us identify management practices, for example, around deer management, that can help keep the peatlands in good condition so that it is resilient in the face of future climate change and extreme events.

### Linking research and the community

It is proving hugely beneficial for land managers to work directly with the research community and there is scope for this to develop further in the future, for example through further joint research and monitoring projects and workshops. There is also a great opportunity to use the research and monitoring as a way of engaging with the local community, for example thorough 'citizen science' and other community activities, apprenticeships and summer schools. The Flow Country is already an exemplar of joint working between land managers and researchers, and we can further build on this foundation, to strengthen both the evidence base for land management and policy choices, and deep scientific understanding of how peatlands respond to differing interventions, which in turn helps to reveal key mechanisms and pathways.

## 7.5 Potential research areas to develop further

In addition to core areas around peatland restoration, biodiversity and climate, it is important to continue research and monitoring in other areas such as land management and renewable energy developments, see list below. New windfarm developments are subject to robust Environmental Impact Assessment which includes assessment of cumulative impacts in relation to the proposed development, and NatureScot provides information on the siting of new onshore windfarm developments. However, there are concerns surrounding the cumulative impacts of wind farms on peatland landscapes and ecosystems, and further independent studies would be welcome.

## 7.6 Next steps

Part Two of this draft Management Strategy contains an update on progress made since 2015 and an Action Plan for the ten-year period to 2030. Potential projects and actions have been suggested and for each, a lead partner and timescale are identified in addition to potential outputs and targets.

The table of actions in Part Two are not ranked and follow the same structure used in the preceding chapter, however the priority issues and suggested actions to deliver Objective 4 are summarised below. These proposals were chosen to address the key issues identified above and reflect the importance of basing good environmental management on sound scientific knowledge. Please refer to Table 4.2 in Part Two for further details on these priorities in addition to the full table of proposed actions.

- **Joint working:**

- Issues:

- There is scope to further develop the links between land managers and the research community through joint research and monitoring projects and workshops, as well as further engaging with communities of interest through 'citizen science' type projects.
    - Peatland restoration practitioners, researchers and policy makers need to align their strategies and work together to ensure that restoration and monitoring is evidence-based and underpinned by science.

- Suggested actions:

- Continue to support the extensive research collaboration working through the Flow Country Research Hub to understand climate and biodiversity effects of management decisions in the Flow Country, and the implications of upland land use policy more widely.

- Develop science with research collaborators to better understand areas such as i) spontaneous recovery of high-altitude eroded areas, ii) deer impacts on condition and climate resilience, iii) management routes to supporting resilience to drought and wildfire.
- **Peatland restoration:**  
**Issue:** Around the UK, the metrics required to adequately monitor peatland restoration are still largely under development with no standardised approach, spatial scale or timescale to assess the cost-effectiveness of the wide range of methods deployed over large areas.  
**Suggested action:** Combine long-term monitoring data and novel remote-sensing approaches to improve understanding of the effectiveness of different restoration techniques.
- **Potential research areas to develop further:**  
In addition to core areas around peatland restoration, biodiversity and climate, the Action Plan identifies a number of topics as potential research areas to develop further.

# PART TWO: ACTION PLAN

## Introduction

The most significant development since the first edition of this Strategy has been the recognition not only of the imperative to act to slow climate change, but also that the peatlands have a significant part to play in that. There therefore needs to be a step change in the speed of delivering the actions within this Strategy. The Flow Country Partnership has a key role to play here, but it also needs engagement from land managers, other organisations and communities. Reviewing this Strategy has demonstrated just how quickly policy changes. Peatlands are currently high on the agenda at a UK and Scotland level, and advantage should be taken of this window of opportunity.

Part Two of this Management Strategy focuses on action and is divided into four chapters, each reflecting one of the Strategy's four objectives. The chapters begin by restating the objectives and issues. An update on the actions identified in the 2015 Strategy is given, and the second table contains an Action Plan proposing priority actions, projects and work streams for the ten-year period to 2030. The proposed actions reflect recent and ongoing shifts in policies and support mechanisms for agriculture, forestry, sporting management, the natural heritage, carbon capture and rural development which seek a greater synergy between the environment and our activities. Although they are listed in four separate tables relating to the Strategy's objectives, the actions are grouped under common headings labelled A-N for ease of reference.

Chapter 1: Sustainable land management	A: The condition of open peatlands B: Forests and woodlands C: Agriculture D: Grazing management E: Wildfire F: Nature conservation
Chapter 2: Community & economic development	G: Community engagement & representation H: Sustainable community facilitation I: Renewable energy developments
Chapter 3: Spreading the message	J: Awareness raising & engagement K: World Heritage Site nomination
Chapter 4: Understanding the peatlands	L: Joint working M: Restoration research & monitoring N: Potential research areas to develop further

Several of these actions are dependent on securing additional funding to support the employment of a number of new staff to promote peatland restoration and management, appropriate rural development and community engagement. The five-year Flows to the Future Project was a tremendous success and demonstrated the benefits of working together to achieve a common goal. A major challenge for the Flow Country Partnership will be to put together a strong case for a future project or projects which build on the achievements made to date and enables local communities and land managers across the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland to make the most of the opportunities that are currently available through the World Heritage Site application and the Peatland ACTION programme.

Securing external funding from grant applications and developer contributions is one way of financing joint projects such as this. The Flow Country Partnership is also looking at novel approaches such as connecting with green financiers and identifying pathways for increasing investment in sustainable nature-based solutions to achieve the vision.

**The vision:** Our vision for the peatlands is one of a revitalised, sustainably managed landscape, with extensive sweeps of hill and bog intersected by fertile straths and forests. These straths and coastal strips support a mosaic of productive crofts and farms, rivers, forestry and native woodland. Above and between the straths lies the open landscape of the world-renowned peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland, which, together with their lochs and lochans, support a spectacular assemblage of birds, plants and other wildlife, including internationally important numbers of raptors, waders and waterfowl. The straths, bogs, hills, lochs, rivers, woodlands and forestry are managed together for the wide range of services they provide and interests they support. Different land management objectives and uses are integrated and support each other, with everything underpinned by a healthy environment, at the centre of which is the great peatland of the north. Everyone who lives, works in or visits the area values the peatlands, which are an exemplar of good management and an inspiration to all.



## CHAPTER 1: SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN AND AROUND THE PEATLANDS

**Objective 1: To promote and carry out sustainable land management that maintains and enhances the nationally and internationally important areas of peatland, the associated habitats and species and the wide range of services they provide.**

### Key Issues

- The condition of the blanket bog across a small proportion of the SAC remains ‘unfavourable’ for a number of reasons including forestry edge effects, conifer regeneration, drainage, grazing, trampling and wildfire damage. There is insufficient information on the condition of the peatlands out-with designated sites, but there are localised areas of damage.
- In some areas, forests are having a detrimental impact on underlying and adjacent peatland habitats and species, features associated with the historic environment, and on the carbon stored in the peat.
- In some areas, non-native conifers are regenerating onto adjacent areas of open peatland, and this is exacerbated by climate change.
- Funding is available for tree removal and peatland restoration through the Peatland ACTION Fund, but uptake from private estates has been limited.
- There is a lack of resource and willingness to support ongoing management and maintenance of restoration areas in the longer term, such as regeneration control and drain blocking in areas where trees have been removed.
- Native woodlands are scarce and often heavily grazed, although there is funding and assistance available to promote woodland expansion and creation in the right locations in and around the peatlands.
- Agri-environment schemes have been a positive tool but the options for peatland and associated species are limited and for various reasons including uncertainties of future schemes and difficulties in accessing them, uptake in the peatlands has been low.
- In-bye fields in key areas need to be actively managed to be suitable for peatland waders, however there is insufficient information on both the fields and how birds are using them.
- Where land is under the management of common grazings committees, agreement from multiple crofters is needed to make changes, and this can be difficult and time consuming.
- Our collective understanding of the impact of deer on vegetation, habitats and species is incomplete, but such data is very useful to feed into deer management planning decisions.
- Fencing to exclude deer from new forestry planting or agricultural areas may affect grazing and trampling levels of adjacent areas, as well as having deer welfare implications.
- Many historical drains are still active and eroding peatland areas, funding is available through Peatland ACTION to block them but uptake from private estates has been limited.
- Climatic extremes will influence water levels and temperatures in peatland rivers, burns, pools and lochs, which will impact on invertebrates including freshwater pearl mussels and nesting habitat for waders, divers and ducks.
- Future invasion by invasive non-native species such as Canada geese, American mink, pike and minnows could impact on waders, divers and ducks.
- Wildfires can damage sensitive peatland habitats and destroy paleo-environmental and archaeological data and are an increasing concern as climate change is leading to increased risk of climatic extremes.
- All-terrain vehicles and quad bikes can cause damage to sensitive peatland habitats.
- The restoration of redundant tracks could have habitat benefits, but there is insufficient knowledge on the technical and legal aspects.

## 1.1 Progress update

The numbered actions in the following table were taken from the 2015 revised Management Strategy. The table summarises progress that has been made and where appropriate, suggests future works which have been incorporated into the Action Plan for 2021-2030 (Table 1.2).

**Table 1.1 Progress update on the actions identified in 2015 to deliver Objective 1**

<b>Action 1.1</b>	Ensure land management support schemes include options that maximise the opportunities for the sustainable management of the peatlands & associated habitats.
Progress Update	AECS has peatland options. Scottish Government has allocated £250M to peatland restoration over next 10 years.
Future Action	Identify restoration priorities, help land managers access Peatland ACTION fund and ensure C&S peatlands benefit from this funding. (Actions A1 & A2 below)
<b>Action 1.2</b>	Promote uptake of SRDP options (or other funding schemes) which support appropriate management and restoration of open peatland and associated habitats including in-bye, through promotion, demonstration sites and training.
Progress Update	Work undertaken by NatureScot, Peatland ACTION, RSPB & Caithness Wetlands and Waders Initiative
Future Action	Employ dedicated C&S Peatland Advisory Staff to promote existing initiatives and help target funding to priority areas. (Action A2 below)
<b>Action 1.3</b>	Raise awareness of the EIA (Agriculture) (Scotland) Regulations to ensure proposals for improvement of rough grazings are appropriately assessed and that inappropriate improvements do not take place.
Progress Update	Limited progress, greater land manager awareness of EIA regulations.
Future Action	Identify & protect important in-bye grasslands (Actions C2 & C3 below)
<b>Action 1.4</b>	Assess the extent of in-bye ground, its significance for peatland waders and any trends in management.
Progress Update	No progress
Future Action	Collate habitat & species information, identify/ground-truth areas. (Action C2 below)
<b>Action 1.5</b>	Identify ways of monitoring the overall condition of the peatlands across their range.
Progress Update	Satellite work undertaken
Future Action	Ongoing, habitat impact assessment work (Action D1 below)
<b>Action 1.6</b>	Seek to reduce and reverse trends of loss of heather from areas of heath and bog.
Progress Update	Studies into heather beetle by The Heather Trust
Future Action	Forms part of sustainable management promoted by Actions A1 & D1 below
<b>Action 1.7</b>	Manage deer and stock numbers at levels that sustain the natural heritage interest of the peatlands, and are compatible with other land uses.
Progress Update	NatureScot promoting use of Habitat Impact Assessment and the development of DMG Management Plans.
Future Action	Promote use of habitat impact assessment & use findings to influence land management. (Action D1 below). Promote the continued development and implementation of effective management plans.
<b>Action 1.8</b>	Promote and support regular assessment of deer and sheep numbers and habitat impact assessments.
Progress Update	Promoted through DMG work and through AECS contracts. Sheep stock numbers submitted to SGRPID annually.
Future Action	Promote use of habitat impact assessment & use findings to influence land management. (Action D1 below)
<b>Action 1.9</b>	Support initiatives that increase the value of venison
Progress Update	No progress

Future Action	Support local community branding initiatives. (Included in Action H2 below)
<b>Action 1.10</b>	Encourage co-operation between deer and forestry managers to address forest deer issues that affect peatlands.
Progress Update	DMGs and Deer Management Plans address this issue.
Future Action	Ongoing – driven by national legislation and policy
<b>Action 1.11</b>	Ensure forest and woodland planning and design take account of deer management and where appropriate, include compensatory culls.
Progress Update	Scottish Forestry addresses this through Forest Plans.
Future Action	Ongoing – again driven by national strategy.
<b>Action 1.12</b>	Take opportunities to create links between land managers and local communities e.g. through wider engagement in Deer Management Groups, as a means of increasing wider awareness and understanding.
Progress Update	Flows to the Future engaged a significant number of local community members.
Future Action	Continue the engagement work started in the FttF Project by supporting existing services (e.g. HLH Rangers) and relevant community initiatives. (Actions J1 & J2 below)
<b>Action 1.13</b>	Facilitate implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans for Caithness and Sutherland and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.
Progress Update	Many projects undertaken by both Caithness and Sutherland LBAP groups.
Future Action	LBAP funding no longer available, support relevant biodiversity projects undertaken by local voluntary groups. (Actions J1 & J2 below)
<b>Action 2.1</b>	Promote and provide mechanisms and incentives that support peatland restoration and address forest edge effects on peatlands.
Progress Update	FttF and Peatland ACTION funding have facilitated restoration.
Future Action	Continue to identify priorities for restoration and help land managers access funding. (Actions A1 & A2 below)
<b>Action 2.2</b>	Provide clear guidance on the location and type of woodland that might be appropriate in and around the peatlands.
Progress Update	THC Forest & Woodland Strategy updated in 2018, FCS/UHI PhD undertaken (2016-2020), BTO wader hotspot mapping project.
Future Action	Continue to promote relevant guidance on appropriate woodland location and type e.g. Scottish Forestry Edge Effect guidance and other SF guidance, THC Forest & Woodland Strategy & BTO wader hotspot mapping with early consultation with RSPB/NatureScot and survey work on prospective sites. (Action B1 below)
<b>Action 2.3</b>	Provide criteria and guidance on where restoration is a priority for peatlands.
Progress Update	Scottish Forestry uses edge effect sensitivity maps & provides guidance to managers when forest plan or felling permission applications are submitted.
Future Action	Continue to identify priorities for restoration and help land managers access funding. (Action A1 below)
<b>Action 2.4</b>	Monitor the impact of removing forests on peatland habitats and species, and if required adjust guidance.
Progress Update	Baseline implemented by Forest Research & NatureScot
Future Action	Continue to research edge effects and forest to bog restoration, ensure results are written up & used to guide future work. (Actions L1 & M1 below)
<b>Action 2.5</b>	Put in place a programme to tackle regeneration on open peatlands.
Progress Update	Some surveys undertaken & regeneration controlled through FttF & Peatland ACTION
Future Action	Conduct a review of regeneration of conifers on peatland and develop an action plan to tackle this issue. (Actions B2 below)
<b>Action 2.6</b>	Maximise the local economic and community benefits from any forest restructuring or clearing work.
Progress Update	CONFOR study, 3 priorities identified, NSCFT are clearing part of Dyke forest for use in local community sawmill
Future Action	Make projections of future work more available and maximise the local economic and community benefits from any forest restructuring or clearance work. (Action B5 below)

<b>Action 2.7</b>	Support the development and delivery of a timber transport strategy by the Highland Timber Transport Group.
<b>Progress Update</b>	Work recently reinvigorated, rail extraction trials restarted in 2020
<b>Future Action</b>	Secure additional funding for solutions including enhanced rail infrastructure and a cross flows haul route. (Action B6 below)

## 1.2 Action plan

The table below is a list of priority actions for the 2021 Strategy. It is based on discussions with key partners, feedback on the delivery on actions from the 2015 Strategy, and responses from the consultation on the draft Strategy (Nov-Dec 2020). The actions are not listed in order of priority, rather the table is structured to reflect the layout of the Management Strategy above (Part One). Several of the actions are dependent on securing additional funding to support the employment of new posts to promote peatland restoration and improve habitat management.

**Table 1.2 Proposed actions to deliver Objective 1 (2021-2030)**

Proposed Action	Output, Timescale & Lead Partners	Outcome & Target
<b>A. The condition of open peatlands</b>		
A1. Promote and provide mechanisms and incentives that support sustainable grazing and peatland restoration, and address forest edge effects. Work with forest owners to support removal of the edges of conifer forests which are having the biggest impacts on peatland biodiversity.	Staff time 2021-2030 NatureScot, Scottish Forestry, Forestry & Land Scotland & RSPB	Outcome: Improved management of blanket bog & associated habitats, increased resilience against climate change, reduced carbon emissions. Targets: Contact owners of forests without approved plans which address impacts on peatlands by 2021, ensure SRDP and Peatland ACTION funding is available, and owners are supported in accessing it.
A2. Provide advice and training on the sustainable management of peatland habitats, restoration of damaged bog, removal of non-native tree regeneration, monitoring, funding etc. Provide training to land managers and agents to promote uptake of the IUCN Peatland Code, the Peatland ACTION Fund and other incentives & opportunities for enhanced peatland management through e.g. AECS.	Dedicated Peatland Advisory Staff (1-2 FTE posts) 2023-2028 led by NatureScot & RSPB	Outcome: As above Targets: Agreement on post remits, employment route, funding sources & area/engagement targets by 2021, Advisory Staff appointed by 2023.
A3. Promote Forsinard Flows, Forestry & Land Scotland sites and relevant sites on SSE and private land as innovation hubs and demonstration sites in relation to peatland restoration.	Staff time 2021-2030 led by RSPB, Forestry & Land Scotland, SSE Renewables & NatureScot, supported by ERI through Flow Country Research Hub	Outcome: Enhanced knowledge and awareness of best practice peatland restoration, funding opportunities and sources of assistance. Target: 20 land managers & policy makers influenced p/a by discussing restoration on sites.
<b>B. Forests &amp; woodlands</b>		

B1. Develop a strategic plan for forestry associated with the peatlands of Caithness & Sutherland. Engage forest owners, communities and stakeholders in developing this plan which will provide a strategic framework for the future of productive woodlands whilst addressing timber transport, peatland restoration and edge effects.	Adviser & staff time 2021-2030 led by The Highland Council & Scottish Forestry	Outcome: Strategic plan to provide greater detail to The Highland Council Forest & Woodland Strategy and help provide direction for the long-term woodland cover in and around the peatlands. Target: Strategic plan for forestry associated with the C&S peatlands led by the Woodland Adviser (Action B3 below), 2023 start, plan to be agreed by stakeholders by 2025.
B2. a) Conduct a review of conifer regeneration on peatland to identify priorities and potential solutions, develop an action plan to secure agreement on the scale of the issue and how to tackle it. b) Engage with owners to implement a programme for removal of non-native regeneration from priority areas.	a) Review & action plan: £20,000 contract 2021-2022 b) Removal programme: Peatland Advisory Staff time 2023-2030 led by NatureScot, Scottish Forestry & RSPB	Outcome: Improved management of blanket bog habitat adjacent to conifer plantations and reduced forest edge effects. Targets: a) Review & costed action plan identifying the scale of the issue and how to address it by 2022. b) Removal programme to start in 2023, area targets to come from a).
B3. Provide advice on the sustainable management and regeneration of existing native woodlands, and the planting of new native and non-native woodlands on appropriate non-peatland habitats (such as croft and farm woodlands) in and around the peatlands of C&S.	Flow Country Woodland Adviser (1 FTE post) 2023-2028 led by NatureScot & Scottish Forestry (with external funding)	Outcome: Enhanced knowledge of best practice in relation to native woodland in a peatland environment, native and non-native woodland established in appropriate locations in & adjacent to the peatlands. Targets: Agreement on post remit, employment route, funding sources & area/engagement targets by 2021, Adviser appointed by 2023.
B4. Conduct a review of appropriate ground for native woodland establishment on Forsinard Reserve, and plant / regenerate new native woodland in appropriate locations.	Staff time 2022-2030 RSPB	Outcome: Areas of new native woodland of biodiversity value e.g. on steeper ground or riverine corridors. Target: Area target to be agreed following completion of review.
B5. Contribute to the green recovery by maximising the local economic and community benefits from any forest restructuring, management or clearing work.	Staff time 2021-2030 led by CONFOR, NatureScot	Outcome: Improved community income & benefits from forest restructuring, management & clearing work, training & employment opportunities for local peatland restoration contractors.
B6. Develop sustainable timber transport solutions to maximise local economic benefits and ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. Secure additional funding for solutions including enhanced rail infrastructure and a cross flows haul route.	Staff time 2020-2030 led by CONFOR, Highland Timber Transport Group & Scottish Forestry (additional funding requirements)	Outcome: Improved infrastructure to aid timber extraction from the peatlands.
<b>C. Agriculture</b>		



C1. Advocate to Scottish Government for improvements to agri-environment funding, e.g. additional AECS option to improve habitat for peatland waders.	Staff time 2020-2030 led by NatureScot & RSPB with input from Scottish Land & Estates, crofting & farming interests	Outcome: Funding available for land management projects which meet the needs of the peatlands of C&S. Target: Submission to the 2024 SRDP revision.
C2. a) Collate habitat & species information on in-bye grassland, and b) identify & ground-truth priority areas.	a) one-year Project Officer, 2023, and b) one-year Scientist contract to analyse, ground truth and prioritise areas, 2024 led by RSPB	Outcome: Improved understanding of the location & importance of grasslands for peatland waders. Targets: a) Information collated by 2023, b) surveys undertaken & areas prioritised by 2024. Results to feed into Action C3.
C3. Provide advice on the sustainable management of existing grasslands utilised by wading birds in & around the Flow Country, identify & help restore 'abandoned' or rank grasslands of wildlife importance, and assist land managers to apply for funding through schemes like AECS.	Flow Country Grassland Officer 0.5 FTE post 2025-2030 led by NatureScot & RSPB	Outcome: Improved management of in-bye grasslands for wading birds, secured funding for improved management in & adjacent to the Flow Country. Targets to be agreed once areas prioritised (see C2).
<b>D. Grazing management</b>		
D1. Undertake training in habitat impact assessment, analyse patterns in deer/sheep and vegetation to better understand how they affect vegetation and numbers of key species such as waders, use findings to influence management via e.g. deer management plans, common grazings.	Staff time 2021-2025 NatureScot, RSPB, Deer Management Groups, Environmental Research Institute	Outcome: Improved understanding of the impact of large herbivores on biodiversity, management decisions informed, resulting in improved grazing management benefiting habitats and key species. Follow-up research on habitat responses. Targets: 20 land managers trained, input to 5 management plans/groups, Publication or report on impacts and recommendations.
<b>E. Wildfire</b>		
E1. Establish a Flow Country Wildfire Group to minimise the risk & impact of fires, ensure fire plans are in place, share experience of best practice of wildfire prevention and management and facilitate joint responses to incidents including provision of personnel & equipment.	Staff time 2021-2030 led by Scottish Land & Estates with support from the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	Outcome: Incidents of wildfire are dealt with collectively and damage is minimised. Targets: 1 meeting p/a, list of contacts, personnel & equipment (held by area, updated annually), joint responses to incidents.
E2. Disseminate results of the FireBlanket Project & make policy and management recommendations to support improved practices such as rewetting and brash management over drained areas and areas undergoing forestry removal.	Research Project 2019-2021 Led by ERI (NERC funded project)	Outcome: Improved peatland management practices that reduce fire risk and maximise soil C resilience to future climate extremes, contribution to emissions and climate mitigation target. Targets: 1 workshop report on "Building fire resilience in the Flow Country Peatland", input to Peatland ACTION and the UK Peatland Code.

F Nature conservation		
F1. Develop partnership working to support & implement a work plan for common scoters including survey & monitoring, research, conservation actions and stakeholder engagement.	Staff time 2021-2030 RSPB	Outcome: Increased understanding of scoter numbers & ecology, management undertaken, increased awareness & support from stakeholders. Targets: Scoter targets set & met/surpassed.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Objective 2: To encourage sustainable community and economic investment that is compatible with safeguarding those features that make the peatlands important.**

### Key Issues

- There is a lack of direct community and business involvement in the management of the peatlands.
- There are opportunities to create skilled and long-term local employment through new peatland-based developments and the upscaling of habitat restoration activities.
- The strong policy drive towards development of further renewable energy sites to help meet CO<sub>2</sub> emission targets will increase development pressures, despite concerns on the scale and cumulative impacts of onshore wind farms across the area.
- There are further long-term restoration opportunities that could be delivered through habitat management plans associated with peatland developments.
- There is insufficient information on the community and economic benefits of the peatlands, including future opportunities that may arise from the potential World Heritage Site inscription.
- Peatland communities and business sectors experience difficulties in accessing markets for various reasons including remoteness and scale of operations.
- The North Coast 500 driving route brings both opportunities and challenges for local communities and the peatland environment.

### 2.1 Progress update

The numbered actions in the following table were taken from the 2015 revised Management Strategy. The table summarises progress that has been made and where appropriate, suggests future works which have been incorporated into the Action Plan for 2021-2030 (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.1 Progress update on the actions identified in 2015 to deliver Objective 2**

<b>Action 3.1</b>	Support community engagement in planning and management of the peatlands area.
Progress Update	Several voluntary trusts in many of the areas funded by the Climate Challenge Fund are working to maximise sustainable development opportunities.
Future Action	Broaden the membership of the FCP to include community and land management interests, work up proposals to facilitate community engagement. (Actions G1 and H1-2 below)
<b>Action 3.2</b>	Engage individuals and communities in the work of the Peatlands Partnership.
Progress Update	Flows to the Future Project held 151 local events with over 4,000 attendees.
Future Action	As above
<b>Action 3.3</b>	Undertake spatial planning to identify capacity for future renewable energy developments.
Progress Update	THC has mapped existing sites, NatureScot & others have developed spatial guidance
Future Action	Identify strategic capacity for future onshore wind energy developments. (Actions I1 & I2 below)
<b>Action 3.4</b>	Support habitat and species research and monitoring work that may inform future development planning.
Progress Update	SSE funded research, undertaken by RSPB into the effects of windfarms on golden plover, published in 2016 <sup>85</sup>
Future Action	Work with developers of wind farms and other peatland projects. (Action I2 below)

<sup>85</sup> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ibi.12364>

<b>Action 3.5</b>	Support renewable energy developments where these are compatible with the natural heritage.
<b>Progress Update</b>	Numerous examples of positive management and sensitive approaches to onshore wind developments on peatland sites (see Scottish Renewables (2020) 'Wind Power and Peatland: Enhancing Unique Habitats').
<b>Future Action</b>	Identify strategic capacity for future onshore wind energy developments & work collaboratively to minimise negative impacts and contribute to biodiversity gain. (Actions I1-2 below)
<b>Action 3.6</b>	Promote branding of products related to the natural heritage of the peatlands.
<b>Progress Update</b>	No progress
<b>Future Action</b>	There are branding opportunities through e.g. the WHS inscription bid and the circular economy work undertaken by the Flow Country Partnership (included in Action H2 below).
<b>Action 3.7</b>	Identify and monitor the community and economic benefits arising from the peatlands.
<b>Progress Update</b>	Voluntary groups and the NHS promote health and wellbeing through nature.
<b>Future Action</b>	Develop a plan and help communities and businesses to maximise the local benefits from the Flow Country. (Action H2 below)

## 2.2 Action plan

The table below is a list of priority actions for the 2021 Strategy. It is based on discussions with key partners, feedback on the delivery on actions from the 2015 Strategy, and responses from the consultation on the draft Strategy (Nov-Dec 2020). The actions are not listed in order of priority, rather the table is structured to reflect the layout of the Management Strategy above (Part One). Several of the actions are dependent on securing additional funding to support the employment of new posts to facilitate sustainable communities and green finance investment into the peatlands, linked to the area's international importance and potential World Heritage Site inscription.

**Table 2.2 Proposed actions to deliver Objective 2 (2021-2030)**

Action	Output, Timescale & Partners	Outcome & Target
<b>G. Community engagement &amp; representation</b>		
G1. Broaden the membership of the Flow Country Partnership to include further community and land management interests.	Staff time 2021-2030 led by NatureScot & Environmental Research Institute	Outcome: Broader Partnership with representation from community and land management interests. Target: Membership to be expanded & first full meeting held by end 2021.
<b>H. Sustainable communities</b>		
H1. a) Investigate community benefit funding from e.g. renewable developments or carbon credit finance as a possible source of longer-term support to develop a stronger sense of ownership and community engagement in the peatlands. b) Use longer term funding to promote sustainable communities, including outreach work and economic investment linked to the area's international importance and potential WHS inscription.	a) Staff time Long-term funding secured by 2024 b) Officer time 2024 onwards led by The Highland Council & Highlands & Islands Enterprise	Outcome: Longer-term funding available to promote sustainable communities. Target: Funding secured by 2024, Sustainable Communities project to start with appointment of officer in 2024 (see H2b below).

(actions H2, H3, H4, J1, J2 below).		
<p>H2. a) Develop a plan and process to assist businesses, communities and individuals to think creatively about new sustainable development opportunities, encourage the development of innovative and novel products, and facilitate joint initiatives such as branding (e.g. Flow Country venison), to help build an economic case and infrastructure for a World Heritage Site.</p> <p>b) Manage and oversee development projects on behalf of communities and third sector groups to help businesses, communities and individuals to maximise the local benefits from the increasingly known global status of the Flow Country.</p>	<p>a) Staff time/contract Plan completed by 2022-2023 Led by Highlands &amp; Islands Enterprise</p> <p>b) Flow Country Sustainable Communities Officer 1 FTE post 2024-2030 led by HIE (with external funding)</p>	<p>Outcome: Businesses and communities are better able to realise economic and social benefits associated with the Flow Country and its designations, attract inward investment and increase employment opportunities, skills and wellbeing.</p> <p>Targets: a) Plan completed by 2023 (part of WHS preparatory works) b) Project specification to be worked up, targets agreed &amp; funding secured by 2023, with Officer appointed in 2024.</p>
<p>H3. Provide advice to businesses, communities and individuals within the Flow Country area to help them transition to a net-zero economic model. Consider including carbon trading and other natural capital financing opportunities, building on the outcomes of the Highland Adapt Project.</p>	<p>Flow Country Climate Adaption Officer 0.5 FTE post 2025-2030 led by The Highland Council (with external funding)</p>	<p>Outcome: Home and SME energy advice provided to improve efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and help tackle climate change and fuel poverty.</p> <p>Targets: Project specification to be worked up, targets agreed &amp; funding secured by 2024, with Officer appointed in 2025.</p>
<p>H4. Raise awareness of health &amp; wellbeing issues and how nature and the environment can help to address them, deliver outdoor activities in and around the Flow Country, co-ordinate delivery of social prescribing services and advocate the vital ecosystem services provided by the Flow Country.</p>	<p>Flow Country Health and Wellbeing Officer 0.5 FTE post 2025-2030 led by High Life Highland (with external funding)</p>	<p>Outcome: Health and wellbeing through nature best practice disseminated across relevant networks.</p> <p>Targets: Project specification to be worked up, targets agreed &amp; funding secured by 2024, with Officer appointed in 2025.</p>
<b>I. Renewable energy developments</b>		
<p>I1. Undertake landscape and ecological sensitivity appraisals and spatial planning to identify strategic capacity for future onshore wind energy developments, with particular focus on cumulative impacts.</p>	<p>Staff time 2021-2030 led by The Highland Council &amp; NatureScot with independent ecological advice</p>	<p>Outcome: Improved guidance to developers and planners.</p> <p>Target: guidance agreed and disseminated by 2023.</p>
<p>I2. Work with developers of wind farms and other peatland projects to prevent or minimise negative impacts and contribute to biodiversity gain across the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland.</p>	<p>Staff time 2021-2030 led by The Highland Council &amp; NatureScot with independent ecological advice</p>	<p>Outcome: Peatland habitats and species protected and enhanced.</p> <p>Target: Independent ecological input to all new Peatland Habitat Management Plans by 2025.</p>



## CHAPTER 3: SPREADING THE MESSAGE ABOUT THE PEATLANDS

**Objective 3: To promote greater awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special wildlife, carbon store, landscape, water environment, historical and cultural values of the peatlands.**

### Key Issues

- The Flows to the Future Project resulted in significant awareness raising and community engagement outputs, however there is a lack of longer-term funding for community outreach work, visitor facilities and infrastructure to enhance local pride and sense of ownership in the peatlands.
- The Flow Country Partnership has received approval from the UK Government to prepare a World Heritage Site bid to UNESCO. The boundary and management plan are yet to be agreed, and there is work to do to engage local support and secure local benefits that may arise from the designation.
- The increase in visitors in recent years has benefited the local economy but has also resulted in a rise in anti-social behaviour, littering and damage to the environment.

### 3.1 Progress update

The numbered actions in the following table were taken from the 2015 revised Management Strategy. The table summarises progress that has been made and where appropriate, suggests future works which have been incorporated into the Action Plan for 2021-2030 (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.1 Progress update on the actions identified in 2015 to deliver Objective 3**

<b>Action 4.1</b>	Continue to support the Peatlands Partnership to co-ordinate the implementation and monitoring of this Strategy.
Progress Update	The PP continued throughout this period and sub-groups took forward the Flows to the Future Project and World Heritage Site nomination bid.
Future Action	FttF Project now closed, WHS Group to prepare application to UNESCO (Action K1 below).
<b>Action 4.2</b>	Support individual and community engagement in the work of the Peatlands Partnership.
Progress Update	Flows to the Future Project held 151 local events with over 4,000 attendees.
Future Action	Broaden the FCP membership (Action G1 above) and support community engagement and outreach work (Actions J1-2 below).
<b>Action 4.3</b>	Facilitate and undertake activities to increase awareness, understanding and engagement with the peatlands, both locally and remotely.
Progress Update	As above, FttF also delivered 27 events further afield, 3 displays in museums etc & a new website with film, digital model & carbon capture game.
Future Action	Continue to maintain the website & displays, employ further longer-term posts to facilitate learning, engagement and community outreach work (Actions J1-2 below).
<b>Action 4.4</b>	Undertake and support projects that encourage community engagement in the peatlands and that bring community benefit.
Progress Update	As above, £4.3 million was spent with local businesses following FttF.
Future Action	Undertake further community engagement and outreach work (Actions J1-2 below)
<b>Action 4.5</b>	Provide training to increase the understanding and awareness of the peatlands for those who work with visitors and interest groups.
Progress Update	270 volunteers were trained and contributed over 5,550 days via the FttF project.
Future Action	Employ a Learning & Engagement Officer (Action J1 below).
<b>Action 4.6</b>	Facilitate and provide appropriate recreation and access facilities.
Progress Update	FttF installed 1 lookout tower & all-abilities boardwalk, 4 viewpoints, 1 info point & 5 signposted walking routes.

Future Action	Ongoing maintenance associated with FttF facilities, viewpoints & routes. Investigate scope for further facilities. (Action J2 below)
<b>Action 4.7</b>	Develop and market the peatlands as a green tourism destination and support appropriate ventures that bring local benefit.
Progress Update	FttF produced a new information booklet for tourist outlets across the area.
Future Action	Undertake a Sustainable Communities Project to provide advice on branding and sustainable development opportunities. (Action H2 above)
<b>Action 4.8</b>	Support the nomination of an area of the peatlands as a World Heritage Site.
Progress Update	In 2020 the UK Government invited the PP to make a full submission to UNESCO.
Future Action	Prepare WHS submission. (Action K1 below)

## 3.2 Action plan

The table below is a list of priority actions for the 2021 Strategy. It is based on discussions with key partners, feedback on delivery of the 2015 Strategy, and responses from the consultation on the draft Strategy (Nov-Dec 2020). The actions are not listed in order of priority, rather the table is structured to reflect the layout of the Management Strategy above (Part One). Several of the actions are dependent on securing additional funding to support the employment of new posts to facilitate learning and engagement associated with the important role the peatlands play in biodiversity and climate change mitigation, as well as helping communities to benefit from the increasing recognition of the importance of the Flow Country and the World Heritage Site submission.

**Table 3.2 Proposed actions to deliver Objective 3 (2021-2030)**

Action	Output, Timescale & Partners	Outcome & Target
<b>J. Awareness raising &amp; engagement</b>		
J1. Facilitate learning and engagement to enhance local pride and sense of ownership in the peatlands through inspiring and enthusing all generations about the globally important nature and landscapes in the Flow Country and its fundamental role in climate change mitigation.	a) Representation of the Flow Country at COP26, 2021 Environmental Research Institute b) Flow Country Learning & Engagement Officer (1 FTE post) 2023-2028 led by High Life Highland (with external funding)	Outcome: Environmental education and awareness raising activities will be delivered to all ages and abilities in and around the Flow Country. Targets: a) Representation of the Flow Country at COP26 (2021). b) Learning & Engagement Project specification to be worked up, targets agreed & funding secured by 2022, with Officer appointed in 2023.
J2. Help communities and businesses to access additional resources to support community outreach work, visitor facilities and infrastructure to help manage increased visitor activity. Promote responsible access, educate visitors so that they understand and respect the Outdoor Access Code and ensure irresponsible activity is curtailed.	Flow Country Outreach Officer (1 FTE post) 2023-2028 led by High Life Highland (with external funding)	Outcome: Communities will be more resilient and better able to manage challenges and benefits presented by increased numbers of visitors. Target: Project specification to be worked up, targets agreed & funding secured by 2022, with Officer appointed in 2023.
J3. Maintain and promote the Flows Field Centre as a hub for both local and residential volunteering, including new opportunities	Staff time 2021-2030	Outcome: Increased understanding of the importance of peatlands.

such as social prescribing and for visiting researchers, students and artists.	RSPB, Environmental Research Institute through the Flow Country Research Hub	Targets: 15% increase in volunteer numbers and use of facilities by 2025.
<b>K. World Heritage Site nomination</b>		
K1. Prepare a World Heritage Site submission to UNESCO including nomination documentation, management plan (including visitor and tourism management planning, restoration opportunities, climate change implications & opportunities, opportunities to be gained from WHS status e.g. socio-economic, environmental, educational) and agreed boundary.	Staff time 2021-2023 led by NatureScot, The Highland Council & Environmental Research Institute	Outcome: Peatlands profile raised nationally and internationally. Target: Submission of nomination bid in 2023

## CHAPTER 4: UNDERSTANDING THE PEATLANDS

**Objective 4: To support and promote the value of the area for best practice management and research and as an exemplar and inspiration for others working on peatland management and restoration, to the benefit of peatlands here and elsewhere.**

### Key Issues

- There is scope to develop the links between land managers and the research community through joint research and monitoring projects and workshops, as well as further engaging with communities of interest through 'citizen science' type projects.
- Peatland restoration practitioners, researchers and policy makers need to align their strategies and work together to ensure that restoration and monitoring is evidence-based and underpinned by science.
- Around the UK, the metrics required to adequately monitor peatland restoration are still largely under development with no standardised approach, spatial scale or timescale to assess the cost-effectiveness of the wide range of methods deployed over large areas.
- Further work is needed to quantify the social and economic benefits of peatland restoration in cost-benefit terms.
- Understanding the past development of the peat is crucial if we are really to understand what will happen during and after peatland restoration work. Better integration of the findings from palaeoecological and archaeological studies with studies into contemporary responses of peatlands to similar changes will help improve forecasting models.
- Our collective understanding on the impact of deer on vegetation, habitats and species is incomplete, but such data is very useful to feed into deer management planning decisions.
- There is insufficient information on the importance of in-bye fields to peatland waders.
- Our understanding of the erosion of upland peat areas is incomplete.
- Common scoter ecology, including how they move in and out of the Flows during migration & commuting during breeding season and links to loch & peatland management, is not well understood. Further research using innovative technologies would help us improve management for this important species.
- There has been insufficient independent assessment on the cumulative impacts of wind farms on peatland landscapes and ecosystems, and on knowledge gaps such as the impacts on birds flying at night.

### 4.1 Progress update

The numbered actions in the following table were taken from the 2015 revised Management Strategy. The table summarises progress that has been made and where appropriate, suggests future works which have been incorporated into the Action Plan for 2021-2030 (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.1 Progress update on the actions identified in 2015 to deliver Objective 4**

<b>Action 4.9</b>	Support and undertake research and monitoring that enhances understanding of, and supports the maintenance and enhancement of, the condition of the peatlands.
<b>Progress Update</b>	Several large collaborative projects recently started funded by NERC & the Leverhulme Trust, several large proposals under development with all the partners.
<b>Future Action</b>	Continue to support the delivery of research and monitoring that enhances understanding of and supports the maintenance and improvement of the condition of the peatlands (Actions below).

<b>Action 4.10</b>	Establish long term monitoring of peatland restoration on areas cleared of forest including those to reduce edge effects.
<b>Progress Update</b>	Ongoing long-term monitoring programme (RSPB, FLS) and collaborative funded project (ERI-NatureScot-RSPB).
<b>Future Action</b>	Combine monitoring data and novel remote-sensing approaches to improve understanding of effectiveness of restoration techniques (Action M1 below).
<b>Action 4.11</b>	Support and promote activities that encourage community engagement in research and monitoring.
<b>Progress Update</b>	Several activities through the Flows to the Future Project, dedicated research conferences in 2016 and 2018.
<b>Future Action</b>	Continue to support and promote activities that encourage community engagement in research and monitoring (Action L3 below).

## 4.2 Action plan

The table below is a list of priority actions for the 2021 Strategy. It is based on discussions with key partners, feedback on delivery of the 2015 Strategy, and responses from the consultation on the draft Strategy (Nov-Dec 2020). The actions are not listed in order of priority, rather the table is structured to reflect the layout of the Management Strategy above (Part One).

**Table 4.2 Proposed actions to deliver Objective 4 (2021-2030)**

Action	Output, Timescale & Partners	Outcome & Target
<b>L. Joint working</b>		
L1. Continue to support the extensive research collaboration working through the Flow Country Research Hub to understand the climate and biodiversity effects of management decisions in the Flow Country, and the implications of upland land use policy more widely. Encourage practitioners, researchers and policy makers to align their strategies and work together to ensure that restoration and other peatland management is evidence based.	Staff time 2021-2030 Flow Country Partnership members led by the Environmental Research Institute (Flow Country Research Hub host)	Outcome: Land management decisions and advocacy work are based on strong science.
L2. Develop science with research collaborators to better understand areas such as: i) spontaneous recovery of high-altitude eroded areas, ii) deer impacts on condition and climate resilience, iii) management routes to supporting resilience to drought and wildfire.	Staff time 2021-2030 Led by ERI, with collaboration from RSPB, NatureScot & others in developing funding bids	Outcome: Priority areas are identified and progressed e.g. through PhD projects linked to part of wider work on peatland resilience. Targets: Projects worked up and underway to address each of the three areas by 2023.
L3. Support and promote activities that encourage community engagement in research and monitoring.	Staff time 2021-2030 led by ERI & NatureScot	Outcome: Local community awareness and engagement is raised, sense of ownership & pride in the peatlands is strengthened, and research



		projects benefit from local knowledge and assistance. Targets: WHS monitoring plan includes citizen science, projects to start in 2024.
<b>M. Restoration research and monitoring</b>		
M1. Combine long-term monitoring data and novel remote-sensing approaches to improve understanding of the effectiveness of different restoration techniques.	Ongoing long-term monitoring programme (RSPB, FLS) and collaborative funded project (NERC & Leverhulme grants to ERI-UHI, NatureScot, FLS, RSPB, RESAS programme from the James Hutton Institute)	Outcome: Results and recommendations to be fed back to partners to guide future restoration works. Targets: By 2022, InSAR-based methods are developed and validated for the Flow Country condition assessment and restoration monitoring. By 2025, a 'tool-kit' of remote sensing technologies is available for practitioners.
M2. Repeat the FttF economic study to quantify the social and economic benefits of peatland management and restoration in cost-benefit terms taking into account the outcomes of upcoming green finance solutions.	Independent contract 2024 Led by HIE with input from Peatland Partnership partners	Outcome: Results are disseminated and widely understood by local communities and businesses. Target: secure funding and repeat study in 2024 (FttF study undertaken in 2019).
M3. Integrate the findings from palaeoecological and archaeological studies with studies into contemporary responses of peatlands to similar changes to help improve forecasting models.	Led by ERI (Flow Country Research Hub host) with input from RSPB and NatureScot	Outcome: Research findings on past development of peat are widely shared and used to inform management decisions. Targets: PhD projects on long-term development of Flow Country landscape underway by 2021; publications of recent work on native woodland, peatland development and long-term effects of forestry by 2023.
M4. Carry out second phase of edge effect research work, to understand responses of waders to forestry removal to date. (A repeat of the 2003-2005 wader edge effects study to measure rate and scale of any wader response to forest to bog restoration in the intervening period).	Staff time 2022-2024 led by NatureScot, findings disseminated via the Flow Country Partnership	Updated understanding and evidence around waders' responses to forestry removal. Target: Study to be repeated in 2022-2024
M5. Complete first phase of research on forest to bog restoration methods by writing up early trials and completing the setting up of later phases, ensure relevant research findings are used to inform future restoration projects.	Staff time, 2020-2025, RSPB supported by ERI, findings disseminated via the Flow Country Partnership and Flow Country Research Hub	Collective understanding on land-use change & management is evidence-based. Target: Research completed; findings disseminated & incorporated into future management.
M6. Review experience of forest track removal elsewhere as precursor to trials of track removal and restoration.	Staff time start by 2022	Outcome: Proposals prepared include review of experience

	led by RSPB with input from ERI, results disseminated via the Flow Country Partnership	from elsewhere, trials undertaken at Forsinard. Targets: Completed evidence review, feasibility study and trial restoration of a short spur track end section.
<b>N. Potential research areas to develop further</b>		
N1. Investigate the role of non-carbon elements of climate interactions (e.g. albedo, volatile organics, cloud formation) in understanding full climate implications of management and policy decisions (e.g. around forestry) in the peatlands.	Research project 2030 Lead partner: Flow Country Research Hub	Outcome: Results to inform policy decisions and peatland management. Targets: Research project worked up & underway by 2030.
N2. Develop research to understand the composition of mammalian predator community of forest plantations, and their use of linear features.	Staff time 2022-2024 led by RSPB, results disseminated via the Flow Country Partnership & Flow Country Research Hub	Outcome: Improved understanding of forestry effects on predators & the role of linear features. Target: Camera trapping study of linear feature use by mammals in forestry, restoration and open peatland habitats in Forsinard Reserve area.
N3. Analyse patterns in duck productivity over time (scoters, wigeon, other ducks) and in relation to forest proximity, using long-running Forsinard scoter survey dataset.	Staff time 2020-2023 led by RSPB, results disseminated via the Flow Country Partnership & Flow Country Research Hub	Outcome: Updated understanding & evidence around wildfowl responses to forestry removal. Target: Temporal patterns in duck productivity, informing forestry policy and management decisions.
N4. Study the origins and connectivity of brown trout populations in the Flow Country to distinguish native populations from those influenced or established by past stocking from outside the area.	Staff time 2024-2025 led by RSPB, results disseminated via the Flow Country Partnership & Flow Country Research Hub	Outcome: Increased understanding of brown trout populations, improved habitat management for common scoters & other peatland species. Target: research undertaken, and management recommendations developed by 2025.

## List of Acronyms used in the Action Plan

AECS	Agri-Environment Climate Scheme
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
C&S	Caithness & Sutherland
CONFOR	Confederation of Forest Industries
COP26	Conference of Parties – UN Climate Change Conference, Glasgow 2021
DMG	Deer Management Group
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ERI	Environmental Research Institute
FCP	Flow Country Partnership
FCS	Forestry Commission Scotland
FLS	Forestry & Land Scotland (formerly Forest Enterprise / Forestry Commission)
FTE	Full-time equivalent
FttF	Flows to the Future
HIE	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
HLH	High Life Highland
HTTG	Highland Timber Transport Group
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JHI	James Hutton Institute
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NHS	National Health Service
NS	NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage)
NSCFT	North Sutherland Community Forest Trust
PP	Peatlands Partnership
RESAS	Scottish Government Rural & Environment Science & Analytical Services
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SF	Scottish Forestry (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland)
SFRS	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
SGRPID	Scottish Government Rural Payments & Inspections Directorate
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SRDP	Scottish Rural Development Programme
SSE	Scottish & Southern Energy
THC	The Highland Council
UHI	University of the Highlands & Islands
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHS	World Heritage Site

## Annex 1: SAC & SPA qualifying habitats & species

## Annex 2: SAC & SPA conservation objectives



## Annex 3: Glossary

Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS)	Promotes land management practices which protect and enhance Scotland's natural heritage, improve water quality, manage flood risk and mitigate and adapt to climate change.
Biodiversity	Term used to describe the enormous variety of life on Earth, it can be used more specifically to refer to all of the species in one region or ecosystem.
Biodiversity Crisis	Refers to the rapid loss of species and the rapid degradation of ecosystems - 1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, the current global response is insufficient, and transformative changes are needed to restore and protect nature (IPBES, 2019).
blanket bog	A type of peatland where the vegetation is only supplied with water and nutrients from the atmosphere.
carbon sequestration	The process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide.
carbon store / sink	A reservoir that retains carbon and keeps it from entering Earth's atmosphere, e.g. forests, peatlands.
citizen science	The collection and analysis of data relating to the natural world by members of the general public, typically as part of a collaborative project with professional scientists.
Climate Change Plan	Scotland's 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan, updated in 2020, sets out the Scottish Government's pathway to its ambitious targets set by the Climate Change Act 2019.
Climate Emergency	A situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it. Many governments and organisations have declared a Climate Emergency.
Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)	Deals with environmental impacts during construction, sets out how developers will mitigate or compensate for the impacts, complimentary to Habitat Management Plans.
emission targets	Greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets set by governments to tackle climate change, measured against 1990 levels.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A means of drawing together, in a systematic way, an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects arising from a proposed development.
Flow Country	Area of deep peat, dotted with bog pools, that forms the heart of the Caithness and Sutherland peatlands.
Flow Country Partnership	Expanded group of organisations & representatives renamed from the Peatlands Partnership in 2021 to deliver this Peatland Management Strategy.
Flow Country Research Hub	A network of researchers and stakeholders involved or interested in the scientific research taking place in the peatlands of the Flow Country, established in 2012.
Flows to the Future	Peatland project which ran from 2014-2019 delivering local and remote engagement activities, improving interpretation & engagement facilities and enabling peatland restoration over a large area.
green recovery	Widely adopted name for a proposed package of environmental, regulatory and fiscal reforms to recover prosperity after the COVID-19

	pandemic; term also used in relation to climate change and reducing carbon emissions.
greenhouse gas	Any gas that has the property of absorbing infrared radiation (net heat energy) emitted from Earth's surface and reradiating it back to Earth's surface, thus contributing to the greenhouse effect. Carbon dioxide, methane, and water vapour are the most important greenhouse gases.
Habitat Management Plan (HMP)	Sets out how developers will mitigate or compensate for the impacts caused by the development, or enhance the natural heritage interest of the area. Where a HMP proposes land management within or potentially affecting a Natura site, consideration of the requirements of the Habitats Regulations will also be required.
Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)	Highland Council's vision for the area, sets out how land can be used by developers over 20 years, to be read alongside Area Local Development Plans & reviewed following publication of NPF4.
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)	An independent intergovernmental body established by States to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	The global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.
National Planning Framework (NPF)	Long-term plan for Scotland that sets out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth. The current framework (NPF3) was published in 2014 and the Scottish Government has now begun a process of review and preparation of a new framework, NPF4.
Natura site	Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands SPA/SAC: part of a network of sites selected to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.
nature based solutions	Refers to the use of nature and natural environments to help tackle socio-environmental challenges, providing benefits to people and nature. In particular, these solutions can help us mitigate and adapt to climate change.
net zero	Refers to achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. The net-zero target recognises that emissions need to be fully offset, predominantly through natural carbon sinks such as oceans, forests and peatlands.
North Coast 500 (NC500)	Coastal touring route of just over 500 miles around the northern Highlands.
paleoecology	The study of interactions between organisms and/or interactions between organisms and their environments across geologic timescales.
peat slide	Naturally occurring landslides which occur on the blanket bogs, large amounts of peat soil move downslope and into water courses. Some peat slides are associated with human use of peatlands, where drainage or construction has modified the hydrology or loaded the slopes, leading to failure.
peatland	A general term for any area with a naturally accumulated peat layer at the surface, regardless of the vegetation or land use.

Peatland ACTION	Scotland-wide peatland restoration project set up in 2012, led by NatureScot in partnership with Forestry and Land Scotland and the National Parks.
peatland restoration	Term used to describe management measures that aim to restore the original form and function of peatland habitats to favourable conservation status.
Peatlands Partnership	Group of organisations & representatives formed in 2006 to oversee delivery of the Peatlands of Caithness & Sutherland Management Strategy, now called the Flow Country Partnership.
Ramsar site	Wetland of International Importance designated under the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental environmental treaty established by UNESCO which came into force in 1975.
Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)	Part of the Common Agricultural Policy, funds economic, environmental and social measures for the benefit of rural Scotland.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Protects one or more special habitats and/or species – terrestrial or marine, listed in the EU Habitats Directive.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Selected to protect one or more rare, threatened or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, or certain regularly occurring migratory species.
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)	Specialised agency of the United Nations aimed at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture.
Water Framework Directive	European environmental legislation which aims to improve and protect the water environment on a catchment scale.
WHS Tentative list	Inventory of properties which a State party considers to be cultural and/or natural heritage of outstanding universal value, and therefore suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List.
wild land	Term used to describe areas of Scotland, chiefly in the north and west, with largely semi-natural landscapes that show minimal signs of human influence - these may be mountains and moorland, undeveloped coastline or peat bog.
World Heritage Site (WHS)	Cultural and/or natural site of outstanding universal value which is important across countries and generations, nominated by individual governments & inscribed by UNESCO.



# THE FLOW COUNTRY

DÙTHAICH NAM BOGLAICHEAN

Start your explorations online at  
[www.theflowcountry.org.uk](http://www.theflowcountry.org.uk)



#TheFlowCountry

## Discover The Flow Country



A vast expanse of blanket bog, sheltered straths, moorland and mountain covers much of Caithness and Sutherland. Known as The Flow Country, or the Flows, it is one of Scotland's most important natural resources.

Blanket bog is a rare type of peatland which forms only in cool places with plenty of rain and covers the landscape like a blanket. Due to the cool, wet and acidic conditions, the plants which grow here, especially the *Sphagnum* bog mosses, don't fully rot away when they die. Instead they build up deep layers of peat. The Flow Country's bogs have been growing for more than 10,000 years and in some areas the peat is up to 10 metres deep.

On a global scale, this land of hidden riches is rare. Scotland holds about 15% of the world's blanket bog, and a large part of this is in the Flow Country.

**Flow fact**  
There are more solids in milk than undisturbed peat.

THE MORE YOU LOOK THE MORE YOU SEE

# Discover The Flow Country

## Key sites

- 1 Caithness Horizons
- 2 Strathnaver Museum
- 3 Cnoc Craggie
- 4 Moine House
- 5 Crask
- 6 Forsinard National Nature Reserve
- 7 Loch Rangag

## Routes and walks

- A836: Lairg to Tongue to Moine
- A897: Helmsdale to Forsinard
- A9 Helmsdale to Thurso
- 1 Forsinain Trail
- 2 Loch a'Mhuilinn Walk
- 3 Strathy Pools Walk
- 4 Munsary Reserve
- 5 Flows of Leanas



The surface of a blanket bog might look uniform, but it's actually a rich wildlife habitat. The hummocks and dips in the mossy surface create micro-habitats where different plants can grow.

Bogs are home to many species of insects and spiders, as well as amphibians, reptiles and small mammals like shrews. Birds that depend on this wild, unspoilt environment include red-throated and black-throated divers, golden plover and greenshank. Birds of prey like merlin, short-eared owls and golden eagles hunt over the moss and pools.

It's not always easy to see some of the rare animal species because the peatlands they live in are so vast. Being so remote and undisturbed is what makes the Flows an ideal place for many nesting birds.

The Flow Country is on the UK's tentative list for World Heritage Site status and it is considered to be the best peatland habitat of its type anywhere in the world. It is the quality and extent of the blanket bog that makes the site so important and justifies its position as a potential World Heritage Site.



## How peat helps the climate

All green plants absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which is released when they die and rot away. In healthy peat bogs, however, moss and other plants don't fully decay when they die. Instead they compress down to form a layer of peat that stores the carbon.

Peat acts as a carbon store or 'sink', which is why peat bogs are so important as a defence against climate change. The Flow Country's peat bogs store about 400 million tonnes of carbon, which is more than three times the amount in all of Britain's woodlands.

Landscape at Crask, with  
views of Ben More Assynt  
*Image: James Carter*



### Flow fact

It's been estimated that the carbon store in Scotland's peatlands represent 100 years worth of the country's emissions from burning fossil fuels: it would be disastrous if this were to be released.



**Sphagnum moss**  
*Image: Lorne Gill, SNH*

Healthy peatlands depend on a wet climate and a layer of peat-forming plants, particularly *Sphagnum* mosses. When bogs are damaged, for example through drainage or too much grazing and trampling, carbon is released through oxidation or erosion. It is important to ensure that the undisturbed bogs of the Flow Country remain in good condition and to restore any damaged bogs.

As peatlands get all their water from rain, they are greatly influenced by rainfall patterns and air temperature. They have the potential to be damaged by climate change, but research indicates that, if healthy, peatlands can be quite resilient to climatic changes.

## Restoring the Flows

For thousands of years, human activity left the peat bogs of the Flow Country largely untouched. During the twentieth century, improvements in technology meant that land previously seen as barren and useless could be drained for agriculture and forestry. Government funding after both the First and Second World Wars funded hill drainage across large areas of peatland. Then, in the 1970s and 80s, tax incentives led to an increase in forest planting. Large areas of the bog that had been treeless for thousands of years were drained, furrowed and planted with non-native conifers.

### Flow fact

The Flow Country takes its name from old Norse **Floi** meaning wet or marshy and was historically pronounced to rhyme with cow.

Restoration at Dyke, building dams helps raise the water table and re-establish pools  
*Image: Paul Turner, RSPB*

A flux tower, which monitors gas exchange  
*Image: Andy Hay, RSPB*



The Flow Country became notorious as a battleground between investors and conservationists, who were concerned at the destruction of such a rare, undisturbed habitat. In the end, the tax incentives were stopped, and it's now become clear that forests planted on deep peat will never produce a valuable crop of timber.

The Peatlands Partnership was formed in 2006 and has a new approach to managing the Flows. Its vision is for a landscape underpinned by a healthy environment, at the heart of which is the great expanse of wild peatland habitat. Forestry and agriculture are part of a mosaic of productive land use in the straths (the fertile valleys in between the hill and bog) and along the coast.



## Repairing the damage

Since the 1990s, scientists and conservationists have been researching techniques that can restore drained and damaged bogs in the Flow Country. RSPB Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry and Land Scotland, Plantlife Scotland and private land owners have been working together to apply those techniques to large areas.

Restoring a bog from a forestry plantation takes a lot of work. It begins with felling the trees. Drains and furrows are blocked to restore the water table to its original level and as much woody material as possible is removed. For many years, trees may grow from seeds left in the soil or from nearby plantations and these have to be removed.

Creating dams, to restore the water table  
Image: Paul Turner, RSPB



It does not take long for signs of a healthy bog to appear, once the trees have been felled and the ground is waterlogged again. *Sphagnum* mosses and other peatland plants begin to grow back, and insects and birds that depend on the wet peatland return. Repairing damaged sections needs careful research, hard work and patience. The Flows have developed over thousands of years, and it may be decades before the damage is fully repaired, if ever.



### Flow fact

Water is a big part of the Flow Country landscape, and if the bogs are in good condition, the water in the rivers and lochs is of very high quality.

Volunteers on a winter work party at Forsinard  
Image: Lorne Gill, SNH



Volunteers remove regenerating trees  
Image: Paul Turner, RSPB

## What you can see in the Flow Country



In the Spring and Summer, birds come from all over the UK and beyond, to breed in the wild Flow Country.

**Golden plover** (*Pluvialis apricaria*) arrive between March and July and remain until the autumn. If you walk the Forsinain Trail you may see them in the fields close to the farm — listen out for their plaintive ‘peep’.



You should be able to hear their song alongside that of the **skylark** (*Alauda arvensis*) — another summer visitor. Whilst widespread here, their numbers are in decline.

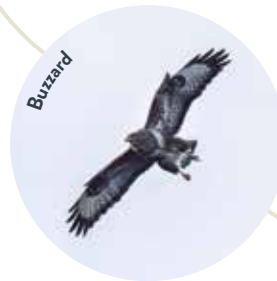


The **meadow pipit** (*Anthus pratensis*) is the most common songbird in upland areas. Its numbers are in decline, but, alongside the **wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), it is a regular sight in the roadside fields throughout the Flow Country.

Another species in decline, **curlew** (*Numenius arquata*) are the largest wading bird in Europe and are easily identified by its long, downcurved bill. The Flow Country is an important breeding area for these graceful birds.



Harder to spot are **greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*) and **dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*). Both visit in the summer to breed, and can be seen close to the pools and rivers of the Flow Country.



The most common bird of prey in the UK, **buzzards** (*Buteo buteo*) are regularly spotted throughout the year along the roads through the Flow Country. A less common resident bird of prey you might see is the **hen harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*). During the spring time, you may be lucky enough to see the male hen harrier’s dramatic mating ritual — the sky dance.



**Red-throated diver** (*Gavia stellata*) and **black-throated diver** (*Gavia arctica*) enjoy the peace of the lochs of the farthest reaches of the Flow Country during the breeding season.

The **short-eared owl** (*Asio flammeus*) is one of the few resident birds here that is easier to spot in the winter.



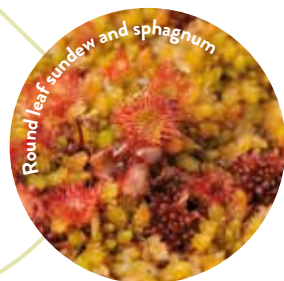
Images: Andy Hay, Chris Gomersall, Tom Marshall ([rsfb-images.com](http://rsfb-images.com)) & Sam Udale-Smith



## What you can see in the Flow Country

If insects and peatland plants are your thing then between June and August is the best time to visit.

One of the most widespread plants in the Flow Country are the *Sphagnum* bog mosses. Easy-to-spot species here include **feathery bog moss** (*Sphagnum cuspidatum*) and **red bog moss** (*Sphagnum capillifolium*).



Moss and lichen grow well here due to the acidic nature of the soil and the lack of nutrients. Carnivorous plants survive by trapping and eating insects. Named for their sticky insect-trapping 'dew', sundews are in abundance



in the Flow Country. Two species you can easily find are the **round-leaved sundew** (*Drosera rotuniflora*) and **oblong sundew** (*Drosera intermedia*)

Another carnivorous plant on the bog is **butterwort** (*Pinguicula vulgaris*) which has striking purple flowers between May and July.

The fluffy white flower heads of the **common cottongrass** (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and **hares-tail cottongrass** (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) are widely seen across the bog in spring and summer. Misleadingly named, cottongrass is a sedge not a grass.

The yellow flowers of **bog asphodel** (*Narthecium ossifragum*) seen between July and August add a splash of colour to the bog.



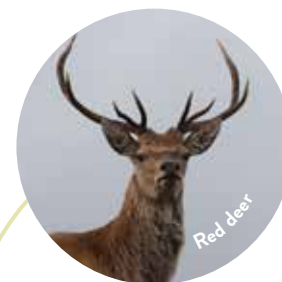
**Bog myrtle** (*Myrica gale*), a small shrub, has leaves which give off a distinctive aroma when rubbed. It can be used as a natural midge repellent and has been used in brewing, as a replacement for hops. The plants emerge in May and the leaves turn yellow in October before being shed during the winter.

**Bogbean** (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) is the plant you can see growing out of the water in the pools themselves. The intricate white and pink stars of the flowers are best seen between May and July.



Seen flitting over the bog pools in the summer,

**four-spotted chaser dragonfly** (*Libellula quadrimaculata*) and **large red damselfly** (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*) are common sights on the walk to the Flows Lookout or on the Forsinain Trail.



**Red deer** (*Cervus elaphus*) can be seen all year round across The Flow Country. Listen out for the roaring of the males during the rutting (mating) season in the Autumn. Dainty **roe deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*) are less common, and distinguishable from red deer by their whiter rump and smaller tail.

Images: Lorne Gill, Laurie Campbell SNH, Andy Hay (rspsb-images.com), John Wright & Sam Udale-Smith



A landscape photograph of a snow-covered mountain trail. The trail is a wide, light-colored path that curves through the snow, with a series of footprints visible. To the left of the trail is a small, dark, rectangular structure, likely a tower. The background shows snow-covered mountains under a blue sky with some clouds. The overall scene is a winter landscape in a mountainous region.

Discover the Flow Country

# Heading North

Travel guide and walks  
in the Flow Country

Dudh-lochain Trail and  
the Flows Lookout tower  
*Image: Sam Udale-Smith*

## Travelling through the Flow Country by road

### White-tailed eagle

Image: Sam Udale-Smith



### A836: Lairg to Tongue to Moine

To visit the Flow Country from Lairg, head north on the single track A836. Heading away from Loch Shin the landscape to the east is dominated by Dalchork Forest, although large areas of the forest have been restored to peatland in recent years. Just south of the Crask Inn is a view point with information and seating. This is a great place to catch a glimpse of golden or white-tailed eagles or to listen out for greenshank and golden plover as they sing over the peatlands of Cnoc an Alaskie.

At the Crask Inn, the trees disappear to reveal distant views of Ben More Assynt (998m) and Ben Hee (873m) to the west and Ben Klibreck (931m) to the east. In the early morning in spring, it is also sometimes possible to see black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) displaying here.



### Crask viewpoint

Image: John Wright

Continuing northwards the road follows the River Vagastie before entering Altnaharra. The road climbs gently to reveal Ben Loyal (764m) to the north and Ben Hope (927m) to the north-west. All around the peatland is broken up by rocky outcrops. At Loch Staing the road passes between two lochs, and then drops down and along the shore of Loch Loyal. The Cnoc Craggie viewpoint, at the top of Loch Loyal, offers a stunning Flow Country panorama!

### Cnoc Craggie viewpoint

At the old quarry at Cnoc Craggie you will find a viewpoint that looks over open peatland towards Borgie Forest. Planted on peatland in the 1920s, this was one of the first forests in Scotland planted by the Forestry Commission. The straight lines in the peatland in the foreground are an indicator of past peat cutting for fuel.

### Cnoc Craggie viewpoint

Image: Iain Sarjeant



Travel north from Cnoc Craggie to reach Tongue. From Tongue, you can travel west, across the stunning Kyle Of Tongue, to reach Moine House.

### Moine House

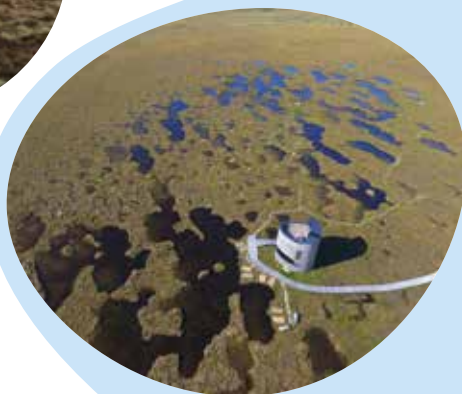
The long stretch of bog between the Kyle of Tongue to the east and Loch Hope to the west is called 'A' Mhòine' - meaning 'moss' or 'peat' in Gaelic. It was a difficult and dangerous place for travellers to cross until the Duke of Sutherland had a road built across it in 1830.

At the ruin of Moine House you will find viewpoints with information, and two short walks suitable for a wide range of abilities, including wheelchairs.

On a clear day, this is one of the most dramatic locations in the Flow Country. Even when the mountains are hidden in cloud, this is an ideal place to understand why this habitat is called blanket bog. The huge stretch of wet, mossy ground in front of you looks very much like a thick covering draped over the land.



**View from Moine House**  
*Image: John Wright*



## Travelling through the Flow Country by road

### A897: Helmsdale to Forsinard

From the small fishing village of Helmsdale take the single track road towards Melvich and to the heart of the peatlands. You will pass Baile an Or - the site of Scotland's goldrush in 1869, where people still pan for gold today! The landscape opens up with wonderful views of Ben Armine (704m) and Ben Klibreck (961m) to the west and the Ben Griams to the north.

24 miles north of Helmsdale you will reach Forsinard and the RSPB Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve.

### RSPB Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve

Accessible by train, car or bike.

Visitor Centre open daily.

09.00 – 17.00 April to October.

Next to the Visitor Centre, the Dubh-lochain Trail is a great way to explore the bog without getting your feet wet, taking you to the Flows Lookout and through peatland pools. The trail and tower are open at all times.

Guided walks are led by RSPB Scotland staff on a regular basis during the summer.

#### Flows Lookout Tower

*Image: Neil Cowie*



## Travelling through the Flow Country by road

### A9: Helmsdale to Thurso

When the A9 turns inland at Latheron follow the road for 5 miles. At Loch Rangag there is an information point and sweeping views to the south and west over peatlands, including *Blar nam Faoileag*, the bog of the seagulls. The impressive open landscape is framed to the north and south by windfarms.

There are two walks close to here listed in the 'Suggested Walks' section of this booklet.



Loch Rangag  
Image: John Wright

Continue north for 18 miles and you will arrive at Thurso, the most northerly town on the UK mainland.

Discover the Flow Country

## Suggested walks

For more information  
please check our website at  
[theflowcountry.org.uk](http://theflowcountry.org.uk)

Image: Iain Sarjeant

## Suggested walks

1

### Forsinain Trail

(6.5km)

The Forsinain Trail explores the landscapes that make the Flow Country so special, taking you through farmland, open hill ground and former plantation. The farmland is an important feeding ground for birds like golden plover, dunlin and curlew. The trail also takes you past an area of dubh-lochain and a small loch where red-throated divers sometimes breed.

**To get there:** Travelling north up the A897, the starting point is 4 miles north of Forsinard. Park at the RSPB Scotland car park opposite the concrete bridge.

Start point co-ordinates:  
NC 903 485



**Red-throated diver**  
Image: Chris Gomersall  
(rspb-images.com)

**Forsinain Trail in autumn**  
Image: Sydney Henderson



2

### Loch a'Mhuilinn Walk

(1.6km)

A short walk with two branches, both leading to the loch. Along the walk you will be able to see areas where people have cut peat in the past for household fuel.

**To get there:** Turn off the junction on the A838 signposted to Talmine and Melness (on the right if you are heading west). Head along this road until you see a small car park on the left, close to a turn off to Melness House.

Start point co-ordinates:  
NC 579 607

Image: Andy Hay



3

### Strathy Pools Walk

(3.2km)

A track leads out to the phone mast and an extensive panoramic view over the North Sutherland part of the Flow Country.

**To get there:** From Strathy, head west on the A836 and park in the first marked parking space just outside the village on the left.

Start point co-ordinates:  
NC 825 652



## Suggested walks

4

### Munsary Reserve

(9.5km)

The reserve at Munsary is managed by Plantlife Scotland. There is a 6-mile return walk along a farm track, along which you can see common heathland and wetland plant species.

**To get there:** Heading North on the A9 beyond North Rangag turn right at Achavanich onto the road signed to Lybster. About 820m from the junction, turn left onto a track, cross a cattle grid and park by the sign on the right

Start point co-ordinates:  
ND 186 423

More information can be found on [plantlife.org.uk](http://plantlife.org.uk)

Image: Andy Hay



**Bog cotton**

Image: Paul Turner,  
RSPB

Image:  
Shenaz Khimji



5

### Flows of Leanas (Camster wind farm)

(6 km)

A circular walking and bike route, with good views of peatland in different stages of restoration.

**To get there:** From Latheron take the A99 north towards Wick. Shortly after Lybster take a left turn signposted to Grey Cairns of Camster. After the Cairns (which are on the left hand side as you head north) you will see the wind farm and a track turning off to the right.

Start point co-ordinates:  
ND 257 461

Other walks in the area can be found on  
[walkhighlands.com](http://walkhighlands.com)  
[highlifehighland.com/rangers](http://highlifehighland.com/rangers)  
[highland.gov.uk](http://highland.gov.uk)

## Visitor information

The Peatlands Partnership welcomes responsible access in line with the Scottish Access Code.

Please dress appropriately for the conditions bearing in mind the weather can change quickly in the Flow Country. Please also help to safeguard sensitive peatland habitats and species by taking marked trails and paths where they exist.

For information about volunteering opportunities in the Flow Country contact:  
**Forsinard@rspb.org.uk**

Volunteers tending  
native trees  
*Image: Lorne Gill, SNH*



## The Flows by train

The Far North Line is one of Britain's most impressive railway journeys and crosses the heart of the Flow Country. It runs from Inverness to Wick and Thurso, passing dramatic coastline, peat-brown rivers and some tiny stations that serve just a couple of houses.

Train by Loch Lucy  
*Image: James Carter*



The journey offers unique views of the peatlands, and you can download a series of audio guides from Scottish Natural Heritage that reveal the hidden secrets of the landscape passing by the window. 'View from the Train' is available on the izi.travel app which you can download for apple and android OS, or on Youtube.