

10. REAY



Background

Reay (popn. 300) is located on the north coast some 15km. west of Thurso and just 2 km. west of Dounreay. It overlooks the dune fringed Sandside Bay and links area to the north, which is a valuable wildlife habitat, local scenic and recreational resource. The settlement area is in two distinct parts, Old Reay to the east and New Reay to the west linked by the A836 road. Both parts of the village have been expanded in recent years due to demand from commuters to Dounreay and Thurso.

While the village and its immediate hinterland became part of the Sutherland Area in May of 1999, Reay still has an important supporting role to play in the Caithness Economic Strategy. This is mainly because it is a commuter settlement and there is an expectation that it will continue to offer an attractive choice of location in the West

Caithness housing market area. Unfortunately there are very few jobs based in the village and identification of additional land for small business activities would help in this regard.

There is a modest range of services spread throughout the whole village and the community wishes to attract more facilities, notably a post office, small hotel/restaurant/public house and a doctor's surgery. However, additional population may be needed to support them. The loss of the post office and one of the petrol outlets in recent years illustrate how fragile facilities can be. The existing facilities, combined with the availability of significant housing opportunities could attract more residents from the upsurge in decommissioning activity at Dounreay. The A836 running through the village is a major tourist route linking North Sutherland with John O'Groats. Opportunities exist to develop commercial facilities to take advantage of this and derive local benefit in association with Sandside Bay. There is also a range of historical and archaeological features in and around the village that would merit more in the way of interpretation. The strategic location of the village as a gateway to Caithness and Sutherland offers scope for the establishment of a visitor orientation centre in association with other facilities.

The rate of housing development in the past 10 years has been affected by a run down of activities at Dounreay. Projection of future house building requirements on this basis suggests that 12 to 15 houses might be built in the village in the next 10 years. However, with the anticipated increase in the Dounreay workforce in this time a higher rate of between 2 and 5 per year is planned for. Allocations are also made on a

much longer term basis of up to 25 years, consistent with those proposed for other key settlements in West Caithness.

In addition to Sandside Bay, the golf course and a small playing field are the main recreational facilities. The need to upgrade the playing field has been identified locally and the inclusion of play areas in association with new development would be of considerable benefit. Policies for the protection of surrounding farmland, the links and the Sandside House woodland will help to maintain the setting of the village, avoid piecemeal development and so assist its proper development.

Community Input

The main issues put forward by the community at the workshop in the Spring of 1998 were:

Village

NEW REAY – sheltered housing; shared ownership housing; post office; public house; surgery; public toilets.

OLD REAY – clinic; care facilities for the elderly;
RECREATION GROUND AREA – develop football pitch; restaurant; civic amenity site (skip).

Countryside

SANDSIDE BAY/BEACH – marina; camp site; keep toilets open; protect/interpret/landscape historic site (ice house); sports field; play area; improve water quality; tidy up beach; manage for wildlife.

DOUNREAY – protect historic site/list/preserve sphere; retain existing use; science park; industrial site; open storage; no nuclear waste repository.

Development Factors

Spare capacity exists in most service networks to accommodate a significant level of development. Limiting development to a maximum rate of 7 dwellings per annum over an 8 to 10 year period will avoid overloading the primary school and a significant reduction in the water pressure. A few infill opportunities remain in each part of the village. Maintaining the separation between Old and New Reay is important to preserve the distinction between them. Ribbon development along the main road is also undesirable on road safety grounds. Difficult ground conditions and the amenity of the land around the Sandside Burn limit development to the north. Archaeological features, especially Big Keoltag, and steeply rising ground to the south should also be avoided. Limited expansion at Keoltag would help the feasibility of housing and provide opportunities for small business development. The proximity of the village to Dounreay requires any planning applications to be referred to the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the Health and Safety Executive.

Objectives

The Plan seeks to:

- identify opportunities for small business development;
- encourage housing development in a choice of locations
- sustain and expand the range of services and facilities, including those available to tourists; and
- protect the edges of the village from encroachment by unplanned development.

Policies

In the built up area of the village, Primary Policies and Settlement Policies apply as shown on the Inset Map. Site and area specific policies, proposals and development opportunities are as follows.

H: Housing

1. The Council will favour infill development in the areas shown subject to satisfactory access. This includes the remaining plots in Phase 1 of Keoltag development. On two of the plots opposite the garage views are sought on the option of a small travel lodge/pub/restaurant development on the main road frontage (see 6b).

2. Land allocated for new development is shown in Table 2.

3. At Keoltag, 5.5ha. of land is allocated for up to 33 houses which should be guided by a master plan or overall layout (see Table 3). Tree planting should be undertaken along the along south and east boundaries. All buildings should be set back the requisite distance from power lines.

4. The Council will maintain a strong presumption against housing development on land immediately outwith the village boundary and more specifically on land between to the two parts of the settlement.

B: Business

5. Land at the east end of Old Reay is allocated for small business and light industrial. Appropriate screening and planting should be provided within the periphery.

<i>SITE REF</i>	<i>AREA (ha.)</i>	<i>CAPACITY</i>	<i>COMMENTS</i>
<i>2(a) west of the Crescent, New Reay</i>	<i>0.27</i>	<i>2 - 4</i>	<i>2 detached or 4 semi-detached. Access from A836.</i>
<i>2(b) west of the Avenue, New Reay</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Access from the south. Flood protection measures.</i>
<i>2(c) North of the Terrace, New Reay</i>	<i>1.53</i>	<i>15 - 20</i>	<i>Single access from A836 to serve most of the development; RS4 policy (layout plan required).</i>
<i>2(d) east of Old Reay</i>	<i>1.46</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Single access from A836; RS4 policy (layout plan required); equipped play area; planting adjacent to burn and along the south boundary; part of site may be suitable for a surgery.</i>

S: Special Uses

6. The Council will favour the siting of a small hotel/public house within the village. Views are sought on the following alternative locations:

- (a) in the vicinity of the golf clubhouse;
- (b) opposite the Garage (see 1);
- (c) conversion of an existing property at Old Reay; or
- (d) as an extension to the public hall.

Consideration should also be given to a mixed use development at locations (a) and (d) to include a visitor orientation centre, surgery, public toilets and post office.

7. Primary Policy PP4 applies to the existing sewage works and a safeguarding area around it.

A: Amenity

8. The Council will consider improvements to the playing field.

9. The Council will consider environmental improvements to the old Graveyard.

SITE REF	PHASE	AREA	CAPACITY	COMMENTS/REQUIREMENTS
3(a)	1	1.1	7	
3(b)	2	2	10	equipped play area and remote footpath link towards the school
3(c)	3	1	7	
3(d)	4	1.4	9	

Dounreay Consultation Zone

10. A 5 km Nuclear Safeguarding Zone is delineated around Dounreay within which any planning applications shall be the subject of consultation with the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the Health and Safety Executive.



Photo: Above - housing development at Keoltag
Left – Village hall