

The Highland Development Plan Scheme 2010

Sgeama Plana Leasachaidh na Gàidhealtachd 2010

Making Places
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PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

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The Highland
Council
Comhairle na
Gàidhealtachd

Spring 2010
Errach 2010

The Development Plan Scheme 2010

Sgeama Plana Leasachaidh na Gàidhealtachd 2010

What is a Development Plan Scheme?

A Development Plan Scheme sets out how we will be preparing our plans for using new land over the next year. This document makes it easier for you to find out how far we have developed our plans and how you can get involved.

The scheme sets out our programme for preparing and reviewing local development plans and guidance. In this document we will let you know:

- how our planning is going; and
- when we will be starting work on the area local development plans.

The scheme includes:

- a timetable for producing the local development plans;
- what is involved at each stage of making these plans; and
- details of how and when you can expect to be involved (our participation statement).

What is planning?

Planning guides how we will develop and use land in the future. It is about:

- where development should or should not take place; and
- how it fits in with its surroundings.

We need to promote and support development while protecting and improving the natural and built environment in which we live, work and spend our leisure time. If we pay careful attention to layout, design and construction, we will develop places where people want to be.

What is a local development plan?

We use a local development plan to guide how we will use land in the future and to consider the appearance of cities, towns and rural areas. It shows where development, including regeneration, should happen and where it should not. A local development plan needs to set out ambitious and long-term targets for the future.

What will be in this Development Plan Scheme?

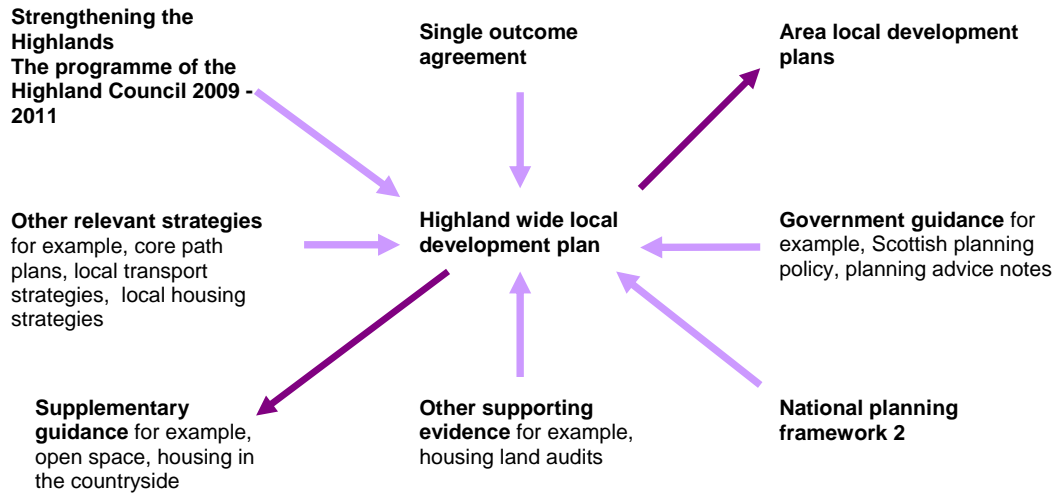
We have already started work on the local development plan for Highland so, in this Development Plan Scheme, we will let you know how this work is going and what we are going to do next.

This year we will also start producing the first area local development plan – the Inner Moray Firth local development plan — and we will let you know about the first stages of this too.

Finally, this document will let you know about how and when we will be producing 'supplementary guidance' — very detailed guidance for certain topics.

Links to other plans and strategies

The diagram below explains how the local development plans will relate to other plans, policies and strategies.



For information on any of these documents, please contact the development plans team using the details at the end of this document.

Preparing local development plans

A' Deasachadh Phlanaichean Leasachaidh Ionadail

When we prepare local development plans, we need to follow certain steps which are set out in Scottish Government regulations.



To find out more about how all local authorities in Scotland will be producing local development plans, see the Scottish Government's 'Guide to the Planning System' available online at www.scotland.gov.uk/planning or contact the development plans team using the details at the end of this document.

Assessing the plans

To make sure the local development plans take account of their effect on the environment and do not badly affect European nature conservation sites or any particular social group, we will be carrying out the following assessments.

- **A Strategic Environmental Assessment** - This assessment makes sure that the plan takes full account of:
 - plant and animal life (flora and fauna);
 - population and human health;
 - soil, water and air;
 - the climate;
 - material assets (for example footpaths);
 - cultural heritage; and
 - the landscape.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland will closely examine this assessment.

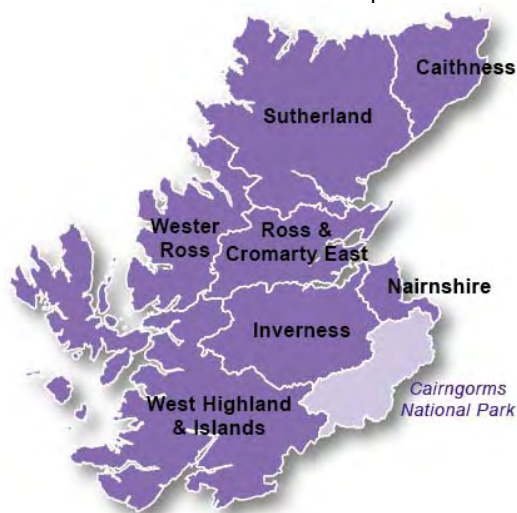
- **A habitats regulations appraisal (including appropriate assessment)** - This assessment considers any effect there may be on important environmental areas known as Natura 2000 sites (protected sites for plants and animals that are rare or in danger). This involves looking at why the site is designated a Natura 2000 site and how it might be affected. We will work closely with Scottish Natural Heritage to prepare this assessment.
- **An equalities impact assessment** - This looks at how the plans might affect different groups in the community. We carry out this assessment at a very early stage to make sure that one group in particular is not affected.

We must carry out these assessments for all local development plans, but we may also choose to carry out other assessments. If we do, we will make sure that we clearly explain what they are in the introduction to the local development plan and on our website.

Planning development in Highland

Leasachadh Dealbhaidh sa Ghàidhealtachd

At present we have a number of local plans in Highland. The area each one covers is shown on the map below.

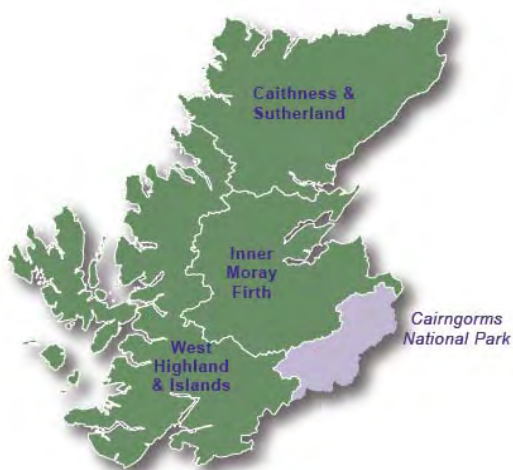


In an area as large and diverse as Highland, it would be difficult and confusing to have just one local development plan. So, we have agreed with the Scottish Government to have four plans.

- A Highland-Wide Local Development Plan which will set out the policies we will use when considering all planning applications. This will look at issues such as:
 - housing in the countryside;
 - flooding; and
 - waste management.

It will help us to have a consistent set of policies right across Highland. This plan will also identify how Highland as a whole can grow and identify certain areas which are very important to its future.

- Three area local development plans which will set out the existing and possible future uses of land in each of the towns and villages in the area. We will have one of these plans for each of the three areas shown on the map below.



We provide services within the Cairngorms National Park. However, they control the planning and, in time, will be producing a local development plan for their area. See www.cairngorms.gov.uk for details.

The Highland-Wide Local Development Plan

Plana dealbhadh ionadail na Gàidhealtachd air fad

What we have done so far

In August 2009 we published our main issues report. This set out the different ways we could tackle the important issues in Highland such as:

- areas suitable for growth; and
- how we could develop policies for different areas.

We have had a lot of feedback on this report during and following our 13-week consultation. We have made all our responses to this feedback available online. You can also see summaries of all the meetings we have held about producing the plan on our blog at hwldp.blogspot.com.

The next step – the proposed plan

The next stage of producing our Highland-Wide Local Development Plan is the proposed plan. This document will take account of all the views made during the consultation on the main issues report and will provide a more final view on the content of the plan. The proposed plan will contain the following.

- **A vision** – what the Highlands could be in 20 years.
- **A spatial strategy** – where development could go.
- **Development management policies** – policies to help decide planning applications.
- **A proposals map** – showing what type of development could happen and where.

There will be a public consultation on this stage of the plan and we would like to encourage you to get involved. We will be contacting everyone who has responded to the main issues report and any landowner affected by the land allocations on the proposals maps. You can find more information on how you can get involved on page 10.

The table below sets out what we will do over the coming months to have a more up-to-date consistent plan for the whole of the area.

Main areas of work on the Highland-Wide Local Development Plan	Strategic Assessment (SEA)	Environmental	Date
Publishing the proposed plan and holding a 15-week public consultation	Holding a formal consultation on the environmental report		June 2010
Making any changes following the consultation	Reviewing and making any necessary changes		September to November 2010
Sending the plan to Scottish Ministers	None		December 2010
Scottish Ministers examining the plan	None		January to March 2011
Publishing the changes following the Scottish Ministers' examination	Reviewing and making necessary changes		March 2011
Adopting and publishing the plan	Adopting the SEA alongside the plan		May 2011
Adopting and publishing an action plan for putting the plan in place	Preparing and publishing a Post-Adoption SEA Statement		May 2011

The Inner Moray Firth local development plan

Plana Dealbhaidh Ionadail Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh

This is the first of our area local development plans. It covers the area of Highland which has the highest population and where there is the most pressure for development.

During the first stage of producing this new plan, we will ask all landowners in the area to let us know if they have land that they would like to see developed. We will call this the 'call for sites'. We will ask landowners:

- to let us know where the land is;
- what they would like to see developed there (for example housing or shopping areas); and
- if there is anything which may prevent their land being available for development (for example, is it likely to flood).

Once the call for sites is complete, we will be holding events in each community council area to discuss how the community would like these sites, and any others, to develop. We will also be working closely with the community to look at the need for new services in the area, from improved waste-water treatment works to better sports facilities.

We will then produce a main issues report setting out what we think are the best options for development and giving reasonable alternatives. We will have identified these through the community consultation events.

Below is a table detailing the timescales for these first stages of producing the Inner Moray Firth local development plan. We have set out here only what we believe we will complete before we publish the next Development Plan Scheme in spring 2011.

Main areas of work on the Inner Moray Firth local development plan	Strategic Assessment (SEA)	Environmental	Date
Landowners' call for sites	Scoping (identifying and describing work to be done)		September 2010
Community events	None		January 2010 to February 2011
Publishing the main issues report and holding 15-week public consultation	Environmental report		March 2011 to May 2011
Considering responses to the main issues report	Any recommended changes		May 2011 to August 2011

We will have more detail on the remaining stages of producing the Inner Moray Firth local development plan in the next Development Plan Scheme.

Supplementary guidance

Iùl Leasachail

As mentioned earlier, we need to produce detailed guidance on certain topics. Our supplementary guidance will cover either:

- certain topics such as open space; or
- how much building should be carried out on certain sites that have been identified for development.

Over the next year, we will be producing supplementary guidance to give extra detail on policies or site allocations in the developing local development plans. Some of the main pieces of supplementary guidance we will be producing will include the following.

Siting and design guidance for housing in the countryside - This supplementary guidance will give examples of best practice for fitting developments in the countryside into their surroundings. Expected May 2010.

Wind energy – We are producing this guidance to make sure we can both protect the environment and also take full advantage of the wind as a resource for producing energy in this area. Expected May 2010.

Developer contributions - This guidance will set out how we can make sure we can put in place proposals for new infrastructure (such as new roads or open spaces). It will provide clear, consistent guidance for service providers, developers and the community. Expected August 2010.

Waste management – We are preparing this guidance on how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste to help developers with their plans for managing waste at the design stage of any proposed development. This is in line with the way they design the other essential services needed during the development (such as ways of dealing with waste water). Expected May 2010.

While these are some of the most important subjects for supplementary guidance, we will be producing more including:

- residential layout and design (expected September 2010);
- planning for managing floods (expected spring 2011); and
- a number of design briefs for sites identified for development in the existing local plans.

We already have some guidance in place. This is known, in most cases, as interim supplementary guidance as we have not yet fully accepted it in the development plan. These documents may change as a result of our work on the Highland-Wide Local Development Plan.

- Affordable housing (2008)
- Designing for sustainability in the Highlands (2006)
- Education and new residential development (2009)
- Forestry and woodland strategy (2006)
- Housing in the countryside (2009)
- Houses in multiple occupation (2008)
- Inner Moray Firth ports and sites strategy (2006)
- Open space in new residential development (2009)
- Renewable energy strategy (2006)
- The Highland Council access strategy (2008).

What other work will we be doing in 2010?

The development plans team is also working on the following important projects during 2010.

- **The Sutherland local plan** - We are currently working towards adopting this local plan which will replace a number of existing local plans in the area. We hope to adopt the Sutherland local plan in spring 2010.
- **The West Highlands and Islands local plan** - We are currently working towards adopting this local plan which will replace a number of existing local plans in the area. We hope to adopt the West Highlands and Islands local plan in summer 2010.

Involving the community in the planning system

A' Com-pàirteachadh na Coimhearsnachd san t-siostam dealbhaidh

Involving you in all the work that we do is very important to the success of the planning system.

Our commitment to involving you

While preparing **all** our development plans (including supplementary guidance) we will ask your opinion on the issues, policies, proposals and guidance regularly, and we will consider the comments you make. We will encourage people from all sections of the community and from all over the Highlands to take part.

We hope that by making this commitment to involving you, we can produce a plan that:

- is well supported;
- is good for the environment; and
- meets the needs for development in the future.

Who are we already involving?

We are continually working to identify who has an interest in the local development plans and supplementary guidance. This is a long list and we recognise that we have not identified everyone. So, we are always trying to identify and work with other organisations and community groups who may have an interest in the planning system in Highland.

On our website (www.highland.gov.uk/developmentplans) we have a list of all the organisations who we keep up to date with the work of the development plans team. If your organisation or group would like to be added to this list, please contact us using the details at the end of this document.

We understand that many people do not belong to organised groups. We need to reach out to the wider public in different ways so as many people as possible can get involved easily. There are certain groups who have been less involved in planning in the past, so we are working hard to make sure we can involve them.

Standards for involving the community

We will continue to use the national standards for involving the community set out by the Scottish Government in Planning Advice Note 81: Community Engagement. This will allow you to have your say and be listened to. We will be using these standards alongside other guidance on involving the community.

The table below sets out each standard for involving the community and what it means.

Standard	What it means
Involvement	We will identify and involve people and organisations who have an interest in what we are doing.
Planning	We will gather evidence of what we need people to be involved in, and the resources available, and use this evidence to agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why we want to involve people and organisations; • what we will involve them in; • how long it will take; and • what we will do to involve them.
Support	We will identify and overcome any problems that could stop people getting involved.
Methods	We will use methods of involving people and organisations that meet our and their needs.
Working together	We will use clear procedures that allow the people and organisations taking part to work together effectively and efficiently.
Sharing information	We will make sure that we share information between the people and organisations taking part.
Working with others	We will work efficiently with others who are interested in getting involved in planning.
Improvement	We will develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the people and organisations taking part.
Feedback	We will provide the results of involving the community to the wider community and agencies they affect.
Monitoring and evaluation	We will monitor and assess whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we gathered the information we needed by involving people; and • the process met these national standards for involving the community.

To make sure we meet and, where possible, go beyond the standards for involving the community, we will be using 'Visioning outcomes in community engagement' (VOICE). This is a database developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre to help local authorities to get the best out of involving communities. You can find out more about VOICE at www.scdc.org.uk/voice.

Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery

This guidance by Planning Aid Scotland will help us to work towards involving the community more effectively. This document (also known as SP=EED) has three separate levels which work together to make involving the community in the planning system more effective.

Level 1 - Giving information

Level 2 - Consulting and listening

Level 3 - Partnership

You can find out more about SP=EED on the Planning Aid Scotland website (www.planningaidscotland.org.uk).

How can you get involved?

In the past, some people have felt that they have not been able to get involved in the planning system for a number of reasons including:

- documents written in very technical language;
- not knowing about the planning process;
- not being given enough opportunities to be involved; and
- not trusting the planning authority due to past experiences.

Over the past year we have been trying different methods of getting people involved and changing people's opinions about planning. To get you involved and keep you up to date, we have:

- attended local events;
- held information days in local shopping areas; and
- made more information available online including the Highland-Wide Local Development Plan blog.

This Development Plan Scheme is the first step to telling you about how we are planning development in Highland this year. Over the next year we will continue to:

- work closely with the local media to let you know about how you can get involved;
- make responses to our consultations available online;
- ask you for feedback on how we are getting you involved;
- make our website more accessible and make better use of information technology in our consultations;
- provide paper copies of all of our newly published and consultation documents in our service points, libraries, planning offices and other important local facilities;
- provide regular updates by email and post on the work that we are doing;
- provide email addresses and direct-dial phone numbers so you can contact the people producing the plan;
- work closely with community groups and volunteers to encourage people to get involved in planning;
- use ward meetings and committees to update you on how work is progressing; and
- provide easy-to-understand guides about certain aspects of development planning.

If you have a group or organisation who would like to know more about development planning in Highland, please contact us and we will be very happy to come and give a presentation and answer any questions you or your group may have.

Any questions?

Ceistean Sam Bith?

If you have any questions about this Development Plan Scheme, or if you would like printed copies for your group, please contact Simon Hindson using the details below.

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Our customer service charter

Ar còir seirbheis luchd-cleachdaidh

Our customer service charter sets out the standard of customer service you can expect from the development plans team.

We want to:

- develop plans, policies and strategies that are user friendly, easy to access and relevant;
- make contacting us easy;
- make sure the service we provide meets your needs; and
- make sure that you receive the highest level of customer service.

If you feel we are not meeting these standards, please let us know so that we can review, improve and deliver excellent customer service.

We will be **responsive**.

- We will provide a prompt response to your enquiries.
- We will do our best to meet our commitments to you. If we cannot do this, we will let you know why.
- We will want to solve problems when things go wrong.

We will offer **quality services**.

- We will be polite at all times and we will wear name badges.
- We will work to our procedures and service standards.
- If you ask, we will treat your enquiries in confidence and in line with the relevant laws.

We will **listen** to you and keep you **informed**.

- We will welcome your views on our work through feedback on our consultations.
- We will listen carefully to your enquiry and make sure we understand it fully before we do anything.
- We will actively ask for your views through our consultations.
- We will keep you informed about the progress of our work with you. We will tell you when things go wrong and why, as well as when things go right.
- We will tell you about other services, including those we don't provide but which may be helpful to your enquiry.

Seirbheis an Dealbhachaidh is Leasachaidh