

Highland wide Local Development Plan - Main Issues Report Consultation Summary and Actions Sheet

Reference Number:	HWLPD-MIR-063
Organisation/Individual:	Woodlands Crofts Officer - Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Action:

Immediate Response Required	
Meeting required with Respondent	X
Issue for Area Local Development Plan	
Further Information Required	
Other (Please Specify)	

If no box ticked - issues raised will be dealt with in preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Issues Raised in Response:

Purpose of Main Issues Report		Previously used Land	
NPF2 for Scotland		Wild Land	
Vision for the Highlands		Water Environment	
Inverness and A96		Renewable Energy	
The A96 Corridor		Flooding	
Phasing of Development		Waste Management	
Developer Contributions		Air Quality	
East Inverness		Sustainable Design	
Nairn		Business and Industrial Land	
Tornagrain		Accessibility and Transport	
Smaller Settlements in A96		Agricultural Land	
Caithness and North Sutherland		Subdivision of Existing Crofts	
Easter Ross and Nigg		Allocation of Inbye Land	X
Development of Local Centres		New Crofting Township	X
Wider Countryside and Fragile Areas		Small Scale New Crofts	X
Population and Housing		Coastal Development	
Housing in the Countryside		Forestry and Woodland	X
Affordable Housing		Minerals	
Planning for an Ageing Population		Open Space and Physical Activity	
Gypsies/Travellers		Access to the Outdoors	
Retailing		Comments on Consultation Process (+ve)	
Developer Contributions		Comments on Consultation Process (-ve)	
Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage			

Key:

Background	Spatial Strategy	Policy Options	Consultation
------------	------------------	----------------	--------------

Notes:

- General and specialised comments and advice regarding crofting and agriculture

Action Sheet Completed by:	GW
Date:	09/12/09

Dawn Sutherland

From: McIntyre, Jamie [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 November 2009 12:25
To: devplans
Cc: Katie Briggs
Subject: Highland wide Local Development Plan - Main Issues Report

Dear Sir or Madam

Please find attached my response to the Main Issues Report of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

Regards

Jamie McIntyre

<<Main Issues Report - Response.doc>>

Jamie McIntyre
Woodland Crofts Officer
Community Land Unit
Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Strontian
ACHARACLE
PH36 4JA
Tel: [REDACTED]

www.hie.co.uk/woodland-crofts.htm
www.forestry.gov.uk/woodlandcrofts

*A partnership post between Forestry Commission Scotland
and Highlands & Islands Enterprise*

**Register on the Scottish Community Land Network to receive your regular e-newsletter on community
land issues - <http://www.communityland.org.uk>**

+++++ The Forestry Commission's computer systems may be monitored and communications
carried out on them recorded, to secure the effective operation of the system and for other lawful
purposes. +++++

The original of this email was scanned for viruses by the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) virus
scanning service supplied exclusively by Cable & Wireless in partnership with MessageLabs.

On leaving the GSI this email was certified virus-free

This email has been scanned by Netintelligence
<http://www.netintelligence.com/email>

The alternative option proposed by the council also has merit, however it might not be sufficiently flexible to accommodate situations where a clear public interest exists to deviate from it. Hopefully the preferred option, if effectively implemented, will provide sufficient safeguards.

Q31 Crofting & Agriculture: Allocation of inbye land

We agree with the Council's Preferred Option.

Q32 Crofting & Agriculture: New Crofting Township

We agree with the Council's Preferred Option. In particular:

- We believe that a policy basis should be available for considering proposals outwith Local Development Plan reviews.

Q33 Crofting & Agriculture: Small Scale New Crofts

We agree with the Council's Preferred Option. However:

- Thought needs to be given as to how the requirement for woodland crofts, that a woodland management plan should be submitted, will be managed: who will assess this? Will it be the HC forestry officer? The aim if possible should be to avoid increasing workloads and to use existing mechanisms where possible. For example, a management plan might already have been approved as part of an SRDP contract, potentially obviating the need for separate assessment.

We do not support the Council's alternative option. We consider the issue is not simply one of absolute necessity, but rather desirability also, especially in respect of sustainability issues: to have crofters 'on site' minimises unnecessary travel to/from the crofts, is likely to improve the management of the land by having a continual presence on it, and increases the chance that the croft will be used to contribute as much as possible towards the food and fuel needs of the crofter and his family.

We believe sufficient safeguards exist through the Council's preferred option, if effectively implemented, that potential abuses of the system can be avoided.

Q35 Forestry & Woodland

We agree with the Council's Preferred Option. However:

- We suggest that the interim review of the Forestry Strategy includes consideration of woodland crofts issues. Legislative and policy changes which support and enable woodland crofts occurred after the Strategy was prepared and thus woodland crofts are not considered within it. Transport costs and their consequences are also worthy of consideration in any review, as these are expected to keep rising and support moves to 're-localise' our society and economies (as do climate change issues).

It may be that a woodland management model based on woodland crofts and local utilisation has potential to address the issue of 'landlocked' forests which occur in various places throughout the Highlands.

Highland wide Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report, August 2009

Woodland Crofts Officer Response

Comments are restricted to those areas directly relevant to woodland crofts, except where indicated.

Q11 Wider Countryside and Fragile Areas

We agree with the Council's Preferred Option. In particular:

- It would be helpful if a consistent approach to development in the countryside was taken across the area.
- Development needs to be supported in fragile areas.

Q27 Sustainable Design

We agree with the Council's Preferred Option. In particular:

- Supplementary guidance on sustainable design and strong planning support for it are essential. This should identify when sustainability issues take priority over more traditional requirements eg orientation of a building to maximise solar gain rather than to mimic existing settlement patterns.

Q29 Crofting & Agriculture: Agricultural Land

To take a holistic view of the potential for local land in general to contribute to local needs, which is relevant to woodland crofts as well as agriculture, suggests we offer an opinion here although the question appears to be framed primarily around agriculture rather than crofting or woodland crofting as such; the principle involved, as it relates to better quality land, is however the same.

- We do not agree that protection should only be offered to land in classes 1, 2 or 3.1 of the Macaulay Institute Land Capability for Agriculture Classification (LCA). We believe that better quality land should be assessed on the basis of its local abundance, and protected (or not) accordingly. As such we prefer the alternative option proposed by the Council which offers protection to additional categories of agricultural land than just classes 1, 2 and 3.1.

The rationale for our view is simple: within the crofting counties there is almost no land which falls into these classes¹. Land, particularly in the west and the islands, is generally poorer quality and as such any better land is disproportionately important locally – even if it falls into classes 3.2 and below – and thus should not be developed except in exceptional circumstances.

1. A 2006 study by the Macaulay Institute found that less than 1% of IACS registered land in the Less Favoured Areas was classified under the LCA as class 1, 2 or 3.1. The coverage of the LFA is broadly comparable with the crofting counties.

Q30 Crofting & Agriculture: Subdivision of Existing Crofts

We agree with the Council's Preferred Option.

(However the wording is a little ambiguous: what appears to be under discussion is decrofting to provide house sites, rather than subdivision for agricultural purposes).

- We would like the wording of bullet 3 altered to include reference to woodland crofts ie opinions on the value of the land for woodlands and woodland crofting can also be taken into account in the planning decision.