



THE
HIGHLAND
STRUCTURE PLAN
SUSTAINABILITY
APPRAISAL
SUMMARY REPORT

December 1999



**The
Highland
Council**
Comhairle na
Gaidhealtachd

SERVING The Highland Community

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This report details the sustainability appraisal carried out on the Highland Structure Plan. The concept of appraising Development Plan policies has attracted wide interest in recent years, and essentially requires that the impacts of a policy, plan or programme are formally assessed and taken into account before a decision is made on whether the action should proceed.

1.1.2 The appraisal carried out on the Highland Structure Plan is based on the concept of Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA), which has been described as:

"a formalised, systematic and comprehensive process of evaluating the environmental impact of a policy, plan or programme and its alternatives, including the preparation of a written report on the findings of that evaluation and using the findings in publicly-accountable decision-making".

1.1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment is now part of the legislation relating to the consideration of major planning applications, and SEA is an extension of this principle in order to highlight the likely and possible environmental effects of strategic plans and programmes set against a checklist of sustainable parameters.

1.1.4 The appraisal carried out on the Highland Structure Plan did not follow the traditional model of SEA, in that the wider implications for sustainability were assessed in the process. This meant that, in line with recent government guidance stressing the need to ensure that policies are consistent with sustainable development objectives, economic and social impacts were also considered, rather than focussing simply on environmental impacts.

1.1.5 This report is divided into four parts. The first part outlines the background to the sustainability appraisal process, noting the overall policy context as well as the main benefits of the exercise to the structure plan process. The report then sets out the sustainable development objectives of the Highland Structure Plan, which were adopted as the baseline sustainability criteria for the appraisal. The third part of the report describes how the appraisal was carried out, including a description of how policies were scored in terms of their impact on sustainable development. Finally, the results of the appraisal are summarised.

2.1 BACKGROUND

2.1.1 SEA has gained in importance in recent years. In England and Wales there is a statutory requirement that local planning authorities must have regard to environmental considerations when preparing their development plans. The Department of the Environment issued PPG 12 on Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance in 1992. In this document it was made clear that a systematic Environmental Appraisal (EA) is the most effective way for an authority to demonstrate that this requirement has been met in the development plan. Following extensive consultation the Good Practice Guide to the Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans (1993) was also published by the Department of the Environment to assist local authorities when undertaking this task. In Scotland, there has been no formal guidance about EA, although National Planning Policy Guideline 1 (NPPG) recommends that with regard to structure plans special attention should be given to ensure that strategic policies are consistent with broader environmental objectives and sustainable development, in line with current national policy and any wider international obligations.

2.1.2 It is clear from this that there is increased concern that the concept of sustainable development is taken account of in structure plans. All recent NPPGs and Planning Advice Notes (PANs) make similar statements. It is expected that the Scottish Executive will publish a PAN on environmental appraisal in the near future indicating the Scottish perspective.

2.1.3 The Highland Council recognised that the appraisal process should cover a wider range of potential impacts in line with the Structure Plan's principles of sustainable development. The appraisal set out to:

- identify the direct and indirect effects that would be likely to arise from the implementation of each policy, proposal and recommendation;
- recognise the negative impacts arising from policies and permit steps to be taken to mitigate these where possible;
- ensure that the key principles of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social principles) are given due attention and integrated fully, within the Highland context, at the policy formulation stage; and
- establish confidence in the Plan's content through the involvement of other Highland Council Services, as well as partner agencies.

2.1.4 Other benefits were also gained from the appraisal. These stem principally from the requirements placed on development planning through Government guidance and the European Commission, and include:

- satisfying planning guidance from the Government, in particular that contained in NPPG 1 which advocates the use of appraisal in the preparation of development plans in Scotland;
- improving chances of success in bidding for European and national funding. The Structure Plan has a contribution to make to the Highland economy and environment through its role as an advocacy document, and provides a land-use strategy on which to base requests for funding; and
- advancing local authority commitment to the principles laid out in Sustainable Development - The UK Strategy. All authorities are being encouraged to integrate environmental considerations properly into development plan preparation. In doing so it is considered that they will be able to prepare plans that reflect sustainable development objectives.

2.1.5 In setting up the appraisal process it was agreed that, in line with guidance, the appraisal should be straightforward, comprehensive and iterative.

3.1 THE SUSTAINABLE OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 The Highland Structure Plan vision is founded on three interdependent principles of sustainable development. Reflecting the local context these are expressed as:

- supporting the viability of communities;
- developing a prosperous and vibrant local economy; and
- safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environment.

3.1.2 The realisation of the Plan's vision has required the setting of objectives which conform to the principles of sustainable development. In the short-term, these objectives have been used to develop the Structure Plan to aid the development control and local planning process. They can, however, also be used as criteria for monitoring the policies of the Plan thereby The Council can develop a pragmatic approach without losing sight of our long-term objectives.

3.1.3 Fifteen sustainable objectives have been identified in The Highland Structure Plan. These are to maximise:

- community empowerment and decision-making;
- the diversification of the regional and local economies;
- the quality and number of employment opportunities;
- accessibility to and quality of housing;
- the safety, enjoyment, and diversity of towns and villages;
- standards of health for all;
- the effectiveness and efficiency of infrastructure provision;
- accessibility to community facilities and services;
- accessibility to education and training;
- the maintenance and enhancement of the cultural heritage, including landscape and Gaelic language;
- the quality of the built environment;
- biodiversity;
- the optimal use of renewable and non-renewable resources;
- the efficiency of energy use; and
- the quality of air, water and land.

3.1.4 The scoping exercise for the appraisal firstly involved assessing these objectives against the Plan's three sustainable development principles to determine their appropriateness as criteria against which to judge the sustainability of the Plan. These objectives were subsequently adopted as the criteria against which policies, proposals and recommendations should be assessed.

4.1 STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

4.1.1 The appraisal of the Plan took place in two stages. The first stage was carried out on the Consultative Draft Plan in partnership with key partners and other Council Services. This appraisal was used as an integral consideration in preparing the final Draft Plan. The second stage was carried out by the Planning and Development Service on the finalised Plan, focussing specifically on any new policies or policy changes which had been included since the appraisal on the Consultative Draft.

4.1.2 The first stage in the appraisal process involved a full day workshop to assess the policies, proposals and recommendations in the Draft Plan. A wide range of Council Services and other organisations were invited to participate (a full list of attendees is given in Appendix 1). This meant that consideration of impacts was given from a number of perspectives and that the appraisal did not rely solely on staff involved in the preparation of the Plan. The participants also benefited by:

- trialing a process which will be useful in the context of their own plans and strategies, as well as providing input to The Council's internal Local Agenda 21 review; and
- ensuring that the indirect effects of the Structure Plan's policies were considered in the context of each Service or organisation present.

4.1.3 The structure of the day primarily involved working in small groups. Each group looked at a selection of the Structure Plan policies relating to the economy, the community, the environment and infrastructure. The purpose of the day was to test the proposed policies against the sustainability criteria, but not to generate alternatives or to discuss the wider policy context (these would come through written responses or through separate informal discussions).

4.1.4 For every policy, proposal or recommendation within the Plan, the following question was asked for each of the 15 sustainability criteria:

What will be the effect of the policy, proposal or recommendation on achieving the sustainability objective? For example, what impact will Policy RD1 (the preparation and implementation of area sustainability strategies) have on maximising community empowerment and decision making (the first of the objectives)?

4.1.5 A simple scoring system was drawn up, as shown in Figure 1, which recorded whether the policy, proposal or recommendation would have positive, negative or neutral impacts on the achievement of each of the sustainability objectives of the Plan. Indirect effects were also recorded within the appraisal process. An overall score was not given for each separate policy, but general conclusions on the overall impact were drawn out when the assessment was written up.

Figure 1: Scoring sheet for sustainability appraisal

Highly significant positive benefit for sustainability which is of considerable importance in terms of its overall policy implications	++
Significant or measurable positive benefit for sustainability	+
Neutral effect	0
Significant or measurable adverse effects on sustainability - but not so serious as to demand mitigation through policy revision	-
Highly adverse impacts on aspect(s) of sustainability which seriously demand to be addressed through revision of current stated policy	--
Policies which have mixed positive and negative implications	+/- or ++/- etc.
Indirect positive or negative impacts on sustainability	(+) or (-)

4.1.6 During the course of the workshop exercise wide ranging discussion took place on the policies within the Plan. The analysis of the workshop results, as well as the subsequent work carried out on the revised Plan by the Planning and Development Service, allowed an objective assessment of how each policy was seen in sustainability terms. Where significant negative implications for sustainability were identified a close review of the policy has been carried out, taking into account the reasons for such an assessment and any mitigating factors (for example, the relationship the policy has with other parts of the Plan, especially the General Strategic Policies, rather than being viewed in isolation).

4.1.7 The output from both stages of the exercise was a matrix, as set out in Appendix 2. This gives an easily viewed representation of the impacts of the Plan contents on sustainability. A detailed record sheet of the comments made regarding each policy appraisal has also been prepared and is available separately from this report.

4.1.8 It is important to recognise from the start that completing the matrix inevitably meant making some value judgements. This could not be avoided but the process was set out to be as consistent, explicit and as considered as possible. It also became clear that any impact would depend largely on how the policy was implemented, and where possible the overall policy context has been taken into account in assessing policies for further action.

4.1.9 The sustainability appraisal process has helped to focus attention on the environmental, economic and social implications of the policies set out within the Structure Plan. Policy conflicts, linkages and interactions have been identified and the potential scale of impacts on the achievement of sustainable development recorded.

4.1.10 The appraisal concluded that the Highland Structure Plan does contribute to the achievement of sustainable development for the future of Highland. In several instances, however, policy conflicts have been identified, particularly in terms of land uses such as minerals and waste management. These potential conflicts will be monitored closely as the policies, proposals and recommendations of the Plan are implemented.

5.1 SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES AND RESULTING POLICY CHANGES

Part One: The Strategy

General strategic policies - The General Strategic Policies were assessed as contributing significantly to sustainable development. Following discussion through both the appraisal groups and consultation responses, an additional policy, referring specifically to the precautionary principle was added for assessing development proposals where the potential impacts are uncertain.

Integrated rural development - Overall, these policies offer a considerable positive benefit to the achievement of sustainable development, and no major negative impacts were identified. Particular emphasis has been placed on the potentially positive impact these policies could have on community empowerment and decision-making. New policies relating to National Parks were added to this section and these indicate a high level of positive support to sustainability particularly in terms of landscape impact.

Part Two: The Policies

Housing - The housing policies were generally assessed as having a positive impact on sustainability, particularly in terms of sustaining our communities. There were, however, a number of issues raised relating to the allocation of land for housing in terms of the potential impact on social and economic sustainability objectives in areas where lower levels of housing were allocated. The housing allocation figures were subsequently altered in the light of new population and housing objectives. These allow for a broader range of scenarios in terms of population change and distribution.

Whilst the policy on new settlements was welcomed as positively contributing to a range of sustainable objectives it was felt that any development must be subject to comprehensive planning in terms of transport, infrastructure, design and servicing. The policy was amended to set out criteria against which proposals will be assessed.

Retailing - The appraisal of this section of the Plan recognised many positive impacts that the policies, proposals and recommendation could have. In particular, the economic benefits of retail development were identified, as well as the benefit of ensuring a range and choice of goods for local people. Concern was raised regarding the potentially negative impacts on town centres or smaller settlements if large scale out of town shopping was permitted. Changes to the wording of the text and policies were, therefore, made to reflect the need for large strategic proposals to be accompanied by a retail assessment.

Services and Facilities - The provision of services and facilities throughout the Highlands was recognised by the appraisal as contributing positively to the social objectives of sustainable development without adverse economic and environmental impacts. There were, therefore, no recommendations for changes to this section.

Sport and Recreation - Most of the policies, proposals and recommendations in this section were assessed as positively contributing to the achievement of the Plan's sustainable objectives. The main area of concern related to the development of existing and new skiing facilities. Particular emphasis was placed on the potentially negative impact on biodiversity, as well as on the environment and social stability of affected areas. Changes made to the General Strategic Policies, including the addition of criteria to Policy G2 and the addition of a policy on the precautionary principle have addressed these concerns.

Business and Industry - The Business and Industry section of the Plan in general contributes positively to sustainable development, although some negative elements were identified. The identification of sites and land allocations has positive impacts on the ability to attract investment and encourage diversification of local economies, with the knock-on effect of improving the maintenance of existing services and facilities. Specific concerns were raised, however, in terms of the effects that industrial development could have on the quality of air, water and land, as well as on the biodiversity of particular areas. Changes to the Plan in terms of the identification of a portfolio of sites throughout Highland relate in part to ensuring positive economic and social benefits, whilst in combination with the General Strategic Policies mitigating against adverse environmental impacts. The large single user site at Delny, for example, has been reduced in scale to reflect nature conservation concerns in terms of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar site.

For oil and gas developments, several negative impacts were discussed as part of the appraisal. These will require to be assessed carefully, particularly in respect of the potentially negative impact on community and environmental resources. Additions to the General Strategic Policies have improved the context within which such proposals will be assessed, enabling the negative elements of the policies to be more fully mitigated against. Strategic Policy G2 was strengthened to make it more comprehensive, in particular to safeguard residential and community amenity.

Tourism - Tourism policies within the Structure Plan were appraised as generally contributing to the achievement of the sustainable objectives. The concerns identified in terms of the policy supporting tourism developments, particularly in relation to the potential negative impact on housing for local people, are addressed through other policies in the Structure Plan, most notably ensuring that affordable housing in rural areas is provided. The remaining tourism policies are all generally positive, since they promote the development of tourism that is in keeping with the Highland environment.

Agriculture and Crofting - No major negative sustainability issues relating to agriculture and crofting were identified. Particularly positive elements relate to the potential offered to diversify farm incomes and the support and encouragement of crofting as a sustainable form of land use.

Fisheries and Aquaculture - Overall, the development of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors was seen as positively contributing to the achievement of the Plan's sustainable objectives. A number of concerns were however raised during the appraisal, in terms of the potential for environmental and infrastructural damage from both marine and freshwater fish farms. Through the appraisal on the Consultative Draft Plan, and consultation responses, policies have been strengthened to further ensure high levels of environmental protection without diminishing the economic potential of fish farming in Highland. The benefits that the implementation of these strengthened policies can bring are viewed mainly in terms of employment opportunities, the knock-on impact on housing availability and community stability. It is also important to note that the implementation of these policies will be seen in the context of both the General Strategic Policies and improved coastal zone management initiatives that will mitigate against the potentially negative impacts identified.

Forestry - The appraisal of forestry policies generally concluded positively in terms of potential impacts on sustainability. Whilst some concerns remain relating to elements of environmental impact, no major changes were recommended, although a positive policy relating to community woodlands has been added to the finalised Plan. In addition a recommendation was added to the Transport and Communications section of the Plan, relating to the transportation of timber, reflecting concerns set out in the appraisal. Highly positive impacts on sustainability are in terms of community empowerment and decision-making, particularly in relation to policies on community and amenity woodlands. Other positive benefits include improvements to the quality of the landscape and the quality of air, water and land across the whole range of policies.

Minerals and Peat - The many impacts of mineral workings inevitably mean that it is an issue that causes debate in terms of sustainable development. Although policies were generally assessed in a positive light, some significant concerns were identified. Negative impacts identified through a range of policies in this section related to the potential landscape impact as well as wider environmental and natural heritage damage. The potential impact upon residential amenity was also highlighted. Given the nature of mineral working and the continuing need for new materials, the content of the General Strategic Policies was added to (in particular Policy G2 Design for sustainability), to address concerns such as those outlined above. An additional policy referring to the need to adopt the precautionary principle was also added to the Plan.

Particular attention focussed upon the potentially negative impacts of the policy relating to large coastal quarries. The impacts are largely in terms of landscape, damage to the environment and effect on residential amenity of those in close proximity to Loch Eriboll. The Policy and supporting text was amended to omit specific reference to the Loch Eriboll area. The policy now provides for possible examination of the scope for potential development as a refinement of the broad search areas included in NPPG 4. Rigorous criteria against which any proposal would be assessed have been added, in addition to the criteria already set out in the General Strategic Policies. Whilst some potentially negative impacts remain, the changes made address the issues raised in the appraisal.

Energy Production - The development of renewable energy in the Highlands sits well within the overall principles of sustainable development, although a number of issues were raised through the appraisal. Overall, most policies were appraised as having highly positive benefits on maximising the optimal use of renewable or non-renewable resources. The main areas of concern related to wind farms, and particularly the visual and noise impact on communities close to these developments. The existing policy does, however, aim to safeguard communities from a number of these concerns, particularly when the policy is seen in the context of Strategic Policy G2.

Nature Conservation - Overall, no significant negative impacts on sustainability were identified in terms of nature conservation. Highly positive benefits are achieved in terms of the maintenance and enhancement of the cultural heritage as well as strong benefits for the development of "green" tourism and community involvement. Two new policies relating to biodiversity were added to this section of the Plan. Maximising biodiversity is one of the sustainable objectives of the Plan and policies were therefore positive. Throughout the appraisal process reference was made to the potential impacts certain land uses, such as mineral extraction could have on the biodiversity of an area. The new policies and supporting text address these concerns, by highlighting the significance of Highland's biodiversity, outlining the aims of the Highland Local Biodiversity Action Plan and indicating the benefits of this process in the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

Landscape - Policies in this section of the Plan generally have a neutral impact on the majority of the sustainable objectives, although there are a number of positive benefits which are of clear importance in the implementation of the policies, proposals and recommendations. These relate particularly to the impact upon the preservation of the cultural heritage, including landscape.

Built and Cultural Heritage - This section of the Structure Plan was appraised as positive for the advancement of the Plan's sustainable objectives. Clearly, the preservation, enhancement and interpretation of our built and cultural heritage are important for future generations. There were no major negative issues raised, and therefore no recommendations to alter the policies and proposal.

Transport and Communications - Whilst the development of an integrated transport strategy for Highland scored positively in the appraisal, several negative impacts were recorded, particularly relating to the development of the trunk road network. Potential negative impacts were identified for a number

of the sustainable objectives, but particularly in terms of environmental impact. It was recognised, however, that whilst the aim of reducing travel by car is a clear objective for sustainable development, there are still priorities for road improvement in Highland, which remain necessary for economic and community development. In order to safeguard landscape, policies on road networks now refer to the "Fitting Roads" guidance.

Priority road improvements, when implemented in conjunction with an upgrading of a more efficient public transport infrastructure, will reduce some of the negative impacts associated with this part of the appraisal. Amendments to the Plan, including new policies on the transportation of timber as well as cycling and improvements to port facilities, have contributed to the positive impacts on sustainability of this section of the Plan.

Waste - The development of an integrated waste management infrastructure has clear implications for the achievement of the Plan's sustainable objectives, and was particularly highlighted through the appraisal. The first part of this section, relating to waste management principles and waste minimisation and recycling, scored well in the assessment, after having been strengthened from the Consultative Draft.

The policy framework for waste management facilities is generally positive in terms of a number of objectives, but particularly in respect of maximising the effectiveness and efficiency of infrastructure provision. One concern from the appraisal of the Consultative Draft was that these waste disposal policies were not specific enough, and should address the issue more directly. In the light of these and other concerns, policies were added which better reflect the requirements Highland will have for waste management. A number of potentially negative implications have, however, been noted, particularly in terms of policies on landfill/form and waste combustion with energy recovery. These relate particularly to the safety and enjoyment of towns and villages and to the quality of air, water and land. To mitigate against this an additional bullet point, referring specifically to the importance of protecting controlled water resources, was added. Amendments to the text were also made to include reference to separation distances between operational areas of landfill/form sites and inhabited dwellings in order to protect residential amenity. The need for an integrated waste management strategy is apparent and the concerns outlined in the appraisal can be successfully mitigated against through the new policies and the General Strategic Policies, as well as careful siting of facilities and high standards of site management.

The policies relating to Dounreay were assessed as generally positive, specifically in terms of the employment opportunities which remain at the site through decommissioning and remediation. The potentially negative impact of activities on standards of health was raised during the appraisal, and it was also noted that there could be negative impacts in terms of diversification and employment opportunities in relation to the policy on the import of nuclear waste matter. A new recommendation was added which relates to the development of a nuclear waste management strategy for the complex as a whole, including monitoring the performance at Dounreay on safety and environmental matters. This will enable the concerns of local communities on issues such as health and economic development to be addressed.

Utilities - The main sustainability issues in terms of utilities relate to the need to mitigate against any environmental or visual impact that these developments may lead to, which can be achieved through the General Strategic Policies. Policies on electricity, gas and water supplies are broadly positive, with particular benefits in terms of improvement in infrastructure provision. The potential negative impacts of telecommunications in terms of health, landscape and built heritage issues contributed to the addition of a policy and two new recommendations to reflect both Council policy regarding the siting of

telecommunications equipment (particularly the presumption against such equipment within the boundary of "sensitive properties") and the need to ensure closer control over significant free standing telecommunications masts.

Natural Hazards - The development of measures to protect the Highland area from the risks associated with natural hazards positively contributes to the sustainable objectives of the Structure Plan. In this respect, no major policy alterations were recommended from the sustainability appraisal.

APPENDIX 1 - PARTICIPANTS IN STRUCTURE PLAN SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

Alan Fay, Scottish Natural Heritage
Andrew Brown, Planning and Development Service, The Highland Council
Andy Dorin, Planning and Development Service, The Highland Council
Ann Clark, Chief Executives, The Highland Council
Anne Cowling, Planning and Development Service, The Highland Council
Bob McKinnon, Social Work Service, The Highland Council
Bob Shannon, Planning and Development Service, The Highland Council
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Cameron Kemp, Roads and Transport Services, The Highland Council
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Tom Inglis, Scottish Environment Protection Agency

APPENDIX 2 - SUSTAINABILITY SCORING

OBJECTIVES - To maximise:															
POLICIES	Community empowerment and decision-making	Diversification of the regional and local economies	Quality and number of employment opportunities	Accessibility to and quality of housing	Safety, enjoyment and diversity of towns and villages	Standards of health for all	Use of infrastructure provision	Accessibility to community facilities and services	Accessibility to education and training	Maintenance and enhancement of the cultural heritage	Quality of the built environment	Biodiversity	Optimal use of renewable and non-renewable resources	Efficiency of energy use	Quality of air, water and land
GENERAL STRATEGIC POLICIES															
Policy G1 Conformity with strategy	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy G2 Design for sustainability	(+)	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy G3 Impact assessments	0	0	+/-	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+/-	+	0	0	+
Policy G4 Community benefit and commitment	++	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	0
Policy G5 Integration of environmental and community interests	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	++	+	+	0	0	0
Policy G6 Conservation and promotion of the Highland heritage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	++	+	+	++
Policy G7 Partnerships and community planning	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy G8 Precautionary principle	0	0/-	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT															
Policy RD1 Area sustainable development strategies	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy RD2 Land Management Orders and compulsory purchase powers	++	+ / (-)	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	+ / (-)	+ / (-)	+	+	0	+
Policy RD3 Cross compliance	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy RD4 Management of the natural and cultural heritage	+ / -	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	++	++	+	0 / +	0	++
Policy RD5 National Parks	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	++	+	+	+	0	+
Recommendation RD6 National Parks	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	++	+	+	+	0	+
Policy RD7 Community land management	++	+ / -	0	0	0	0	-	+	0	+	0	+ / -	+ / -	+ / -	+ / -
Policy RD8 Community land ownership	++	+ / -	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
HOUSING															
Policy H1 Housing allocations for Areas 1998-2017	+ / -	+ / -	+ / -	0	+ / -	+ / -	+	+	+	+ / -	0	(+) / -	0	+	-
Policy H2 New settlements	0	+	+	++	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
Policy H3 Housing in the countryside	0	+ / 0	+ / 0	++	+	+	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy H4 Affordable housing	0	+ / 0	0	++	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
Policy H5 Affordable housing	+	+	+	++	++	+	+ / -	+ / -	+ / -	+	+	0	+ / -	+	0
Policy H6 Affordable housing in rural areas	+	+	+	++	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	0
Policy H7 Housing for varying needs	0	0	0	++	+	+	+	++	++	0	+	0	+	+	0
Policy H8 Access arrangements for new and existing development	0	0	0	-	0	0	+	+	0	+ / -	+ / -	0	+ / -	0	0
RETAILING															
Policy R1 Shopping hierarchy	+ / -	0	0	0	+ / -	+ / -	+	+	0	-	+ / -	0	0	+ / -	0
Policy R2 Everyday shopping needs	0	++	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	+ / -	+ / -	+	+	+	0
Proposal R3 Rural Shop Support Fund	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+
Policy R4 Major foodstores	+	0	+	0	+	0 / +	++	++	0	+	+	0	+	+	+

OBJECTIVES - To maximise:

POLICIES	Community empowerment and decision-making	Diversification of the regional and local economies	Quality and number of employment opportunities	Accessibility to and quality of housing	Safety, enjoyment and diversity of towns and villages	Standards of health for all	Use of infrastructure provision	Accessibility to community facilities and services	Accessibility to education and training	Maintenance and enhancement of the cultural heritage	Quality of the built environment	Biodiversity	Optimal use of renewable and non-renewable resources	Efficiency of energy use	Quality of air, water and land
Policy R5 Town centre shopping	+/-	0	0	0	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	-	+/-	0	0	+/-	0
Policy R6 Comparison shopping	+	++	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	0
Policy R7 Shopping facilities in the countryside	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	0/-	0	0	0	0	0
SERVICES AND FACILITIES															
Policy S1 Services and facilities	0	+	+	0	+	+/0	+/0	++	+	0/+	0	0	0	+	0
Proposal S2 Education facilities	+	+	+	0	+	0	0/+	+	++	+	0	0	0	0	0
Recommendation S3 Health and social work services	0	0/+	+	+	+	++	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy S4 Community safety	+	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
SPORT AND RECREATION															
Policy SR1 Provision of new sports facilities	0	+	+	0	+	++	0	++	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy SR2 Sports facilities and open space provision	0	0	0	+	++	++	+	+	+	+	++	++	+	0	+
Policy SR3 Golf development	0	(+)	(+)	0	(+)	0	0	(+)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy SR4 Launch and mooring facilities	0	(+)	(+)	0	+	0	+	0	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	0
Policy SR5 Access	++	+	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	0	+/-	0	+/-	0/-
Proposal SR6 Access and paths	+	+	+	0	+	++	0	+	0	+	0	+/-	0	0	0
Proposal SR7 Countryside Around Towns	0	0	0/+	0	++	+	0/+	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	+
Policy SR8 Skiing developments	0	-	+	0/-	+	+	+/-	0	+	0	+/-	-	0	0	0
Policy SR9 New skiing developments	0	++	++	0	+	+	-	0	0	-	0	--	+/-	-	-
Policy SR10 Wild Land	-	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	+	0	0	++	0	+	0	0	+
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY															
Policy B1 Industrial and business sites	0	+	+	0	+/-	0	+	0	0	0	0	-	+	+	-
Policy B2 Industrial and business sites	0	++	++	0	+/-	0	+	0	0	(-)	0	-	+	+	-
Policy B3 Local industrial land supply	-	+	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	0	0	0
Policy B4 Oil and gas support bases	-	+/-	+/-	-	-	0	-	0	0	-	-	-	0/-	0	-
Policy B5 Oil-related development at Nigg and in Caithness	0/-	+/-	+/-	0	0/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	++/-	+/-	+/0
Policy B6 Diversification of Dounreay	+	++	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0
Policy B7 Business development in rural areas	0	++	++	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0
Policy B8 Adding value	0	++	++	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	+	+	0
Policy B9 Telematics	0	++	+	0	0	0	++	+	++	0	0	0	+	+	0
TOURISM															
Policy T1 Highland Tourism Strategies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy T2 Tourism developments	0	+	++	-	+	0	+	+	(+)	+/-	+	0	0	0	0
Policy T3 Self catering tourist accommodation	0	+	+	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	0

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Policy T4 Hostel accommodation	0	+/-	+/-	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy T5 Strategic tourist routes	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0
Policy T6 Scenic views	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0
AGRICULTURE AND CROFTING															
Policy A1 Safeguarding of agricultural land	0	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+/-	+	+	+
Policy A2 Farm income diversification	0	++	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+/-
Proposal A3 Farm income support	0	0	+	0	(+)	(+)	(+)	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	+
Recommendation A4 Agri environmental programmes	0	(+)	0/(+)	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	++	+	0	+
Recommendation A5 Crofting	++	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	++	0	+	+	0	+
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE															
Policy FA1 European fisheries	(+)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(+)	(+)	0	(+)
Policy FA2 Inshore fishery management	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
Policy FA3 Fishery orders in capture fisheries	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
Policy FA4 Freshwater fisheries	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(+)	(+)	0	(+)
Proposal FA5 Fish Farming Framework Plans	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+/-	0	+/-	+	0	0/-
Policy FA6 Fish farm developments	0	(+)	+	+	0	0	-	+	+	+/-	0	--	+/-	0	-
Policy FA7 Fishery orders in aquaculture	0/-	+/-	+/-	0	0/(+)	0	-	0	0	0	0	0/-	+	0	+
Proposal FA8 Freshwater fish farming	-	+	+/-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	-
Policy FA9 Game fisheries	0	(+)	(+)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(+)	0	(+)	(+)	0	(+)
Recommendation FA10 Fishery research	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(+)	0	(+)	(+)	0	(+)
Policy FA11 River management works	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	+
FORESTRY															
Policy F1 Forestry developments	0	+	+	0	0	0	0/-	0	0	++	0	+	+	0	0/+
Recommendation F2 Financial incentives	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+/0	0	+/-	+	0	++/-
Policy F3 Native woodlands	0	(+)	(+)	0	0	0	0	0	0	++/(-)	0	++	+	0	++
Policy F4 Community woodland	++	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	(+)	0	+	+	0	+
Policy F5 Amenity woodlands	++	0	0	0	++	(+)	0	+	(+)	+/0	+	+	+	+	+
Policy F6 Short-rotation coppicing	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+/-
Policy F7 Consultation on forestry development proposals and the disposal of Forestry Commission land	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MINERALS AND PEAT															
Policy M1 Mineral resources	0	+/-	+/- -	0	-	0	+/-	0	0	--	0	-	+/-	0	-

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Policy M2 Mineral extraction	0	+	+	0	0	-	0	+	+	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+	-
Policy M3 Protection of mineral deposits	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	-	++	0	-
Policy M4 Protection of mineral deposits	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	+/-	0	+
Policy M5 Large coastal quarries	0	+/-	+/-	0/+	-	0	0	+	0	--	0	-	+	0	-
Policy M6 Mineral wastes	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	++	+/-	+
Policy M7 Peat extraction	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	+
ENERGY PRODUCTION															
Policy E1 Distributed renewable energy developments	-	+	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	0	0	0/-	0/-	+/-	++	+	+/-
Policy E2 Wind energy developments	0	(+)	(+)	0	-	0	+	0	0	-	+/-	-	++	+	(+)
Policy E3 Wind farm safeguarding	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	+/-	0	+
Policy E4 Hydro energy developments	0	+	(+)	0	0	0	+	0	0	(-)	0	-	++	+	+/-
Recommendation E5 Abstraction controls	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	(+)	(+)	(+)	0	+
Recommendation E6 Offshore energy developments	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy E7 Centralised renewable energy developments	0	+	+	0	(-)	0/-	+	0	0	0	+/-	0	++	++	+/-
Policy E8 Small community renewable energy projects	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+/-	0	++	++	+/-
NATURE CONSERVATION															
Policy N1 Nature conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	+	+	0	+
Policy N2 Interpretation and enjoyment	0	+	+	0	+	(+)	0	0	(+)	++	0	+	(+)	0	+
Recommendation N3 Review of Sites of Special Scientific Interest	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	++	+	+	+
Policy N4 Local Biodiversity Action Plans	(+)	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	(+)	+	0	++	+	+	+
Proposal N5 Local Biodiversity Action Plans	++	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	++	+	+	+
LANDSCAPE															
Recommendation L1 Landscape areas of international importance	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	+	0	+
Recommendation L2 Review of National Scenic Areas	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	+	0	+
Proposal L3 Regional Scenic Areas and Coasts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	+	0	+
Policy L4 Landscape character	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	+	0	+
BUILT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE															
Policy BC1 Preservation of archaeological sites	0	0	0	0	(+)	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	+	0	0
Policy BC2 Archaeology, tourism and education	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	++	0	0	+	0	0
Proposal BC3 Archaeological Heritage Areas	0	(+)	(+)	0	+	0	0	0	(+)	++	0	0	0	0	0
Policy BC4 Listed buildings and Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	++	++	0	+	+	0
Policy BC5 Gaelic heritage	0	(+)	(+)	0	(+)	0	0	0	+	++	0	0	0	0	0

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TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS															
Policy TC1 Modal shift	+	+	+	+	++	+	++	+	+	0	+	0	+	++	+
Policy TC2 Multi-modal interchanges	0	+	+	0	+	0	++	+	+	-	0	-	(+)	+/-	(-)
Proposal TC3 Integrated Local Transport Strategy	+	0	0	+	++	+	++	+	+	0	+	0	+	++	+
Recommendation TC4 Trunk roads	0	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	++	+	+	-	0	-	-	-	-
Recommendation TC5 Multi-modal corridors	0	+	+	0	+	0	++	+	+	-	0	-	(+)	+/-	(-)
Policy TC6 Road network improvements	0/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+	++/-	+	+	-	+/-	0	-	0	-
Policy TC7 Transportation of timber	0	0	(+)	0	+	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	+	+/-	+/-
Policy TC8 Service facilities	0	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy TC9 Car parking	0	0	0/+	0	++	0/+	++	++	0	+	++	0	0	+	+
Policy TC10 Cycling	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+/0	0	0	0	0	++	+
Policy TC11 Public transport	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy TC12 Passenger rail improvements	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	+
Policy TC13 Tain - Golspie rail link	0	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	+	-	0	-	+	+	+/-
Policy TC14 Air transport	0	++	++	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0/-	0/-	0/-
Policy TC15 Ferry services	0	0	0/+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0
Policy TC16 Improvements to port facilities	0	+	+	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+/-
Policy TC17 Harbour improvements	0	+	+	0	(+)	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	0
Recommendation TC18 Tanker traffic in the Minch	0	0	(+)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	++
Recommendation TC19 Rural fuel prices	0	+	+	0/+	+	0	+	++	0	+	+	0	+	+	+
Recommendation TC20 Rural filling stations	0	+	+	0/+	+	0	+	++	0	+	+	0	+	+	+
WASTE															
Policy W1 Waste management	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
Policy W2 Waste minimisation	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+
Policy W3 Reuse and recycling	0	(+)	(+)	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	+	(+)
Policy W4 Waste disposal	0	0	+	0	(-)	(+)	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	(-)
Policy W5 Facilities for the waste management network	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	+
Policy W6 Landfill/form	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+	-
Policy W7 Waste combustion with energy recovery	0	+	+	0	-	0/-	+	0	0	-	-	0/-	++	+	0/-
Policy W8 Doumrey decommissioning and remediation	0	++	++	0	+	-	-	0	+	+/-	0	+	+	+	++
Recommendation W9 Development of nuclear waste management strategy	++	0	+	0	+	(+)	(+)	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+

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Policy W10 Import of nuclear waste material	-	-	-	0	+	+	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	+
Policy W11 Sewerage	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy W12 Air quality	0	0	0	0	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++
UTILITIES															
Policy U1 Electricity distribution network	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	+/-	0	0	0	+	0
Policy U2 Gas pipelines	0	+	+	(+)	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0
Policy U3 Water supplies	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+
Policy U4 Telecommunications	0	+	+	0	0	0/-	+	+	++	0/-	0/-	0	0	+	0
Policy U5 Telecommunications and Council property	0	-	-	0	+	++	-	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
Recommendation U6 Telecommunications and electro-magnetic fields	0	-	-	0	+	++	-	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
Recommendation U7 Telecommunications and planning requirements	0	-	-	0	+	++	-	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0
NATURAL HAZARDS															
Proposal NH1 Flood consultation areas	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	(+)	0	0	0	0
Proposal NH2 Flood Appraisal Group	0	0	0	+	++	0	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	+
Policy NH3 Integrated Catchment Management Plans	+	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	+
Policy NH4 Coastal erosion	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	+
Proposal NH5 Land instability	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
Policy NH6 Radon gas	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0