

# **Highland Wide Local Development Plan**

## **Environmental Report**

**August 2009**

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**Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report  
Cover Note**

**PART 1**

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**PART 2**

**An Environmental Report is attached for:**

Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2009

**The Responsible Authority is:**

The Highland Council

**PART 3**

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**Date**

28<sup>th</sup> August 2009

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If you have any comments on this environmental report please send them to:

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If you have any questions please call Simon Hindson on (01463) 702261

Please send any comments by 5pm on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009

## Highland wide Local Development Plan

### Strategic Environmental Report - Environmental Report

#### Non-Technical Summary

The Highland Council have prepared a Strategic Environmental Assessment which looks at how the policy approaches and the spatial strategy of the emerging Highland wide Local Development Plan will affect the environment.

This section of the report is known as the non-technical summary and it will set out how we have prepared the environmental report, what the purpose of the Highland wide Local Development Plan and a summary of the affect the plan may have on the environment.

#### The Highland wide Local Development Plan

The area covered by the Highland wide Local Development Plan is shown in

the diagram below.



The Cairngorms National Park Authority is the Planning Authority in the area shown in grey on the diagram (left) and they will produce their own Local Development Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment in due course.

The Highland wide Local Development Plan will set the policies to tackle the big issues in Highland over the next 20 years. We hope to adopt the plan in 2011 and so it will look forward to 2031. The plan will be reviewed every 5 years.

The Highland wide Local Development Plan will also set out how development should and should not happen in Highland over the next 20 years and will set out how we will produce our new area local plans which will focus on land allocations at a local level.

The Highland wide Local Development Plan will

contain:

- **Vision** – what sort of Highlands in 20 years?  
*“By 2030, the Highlands will be one of Europe’s leading regions. We will have created sustainable communities balancing population growth and economic development across the area, and have built a fairer and healthier Highlands.”*
- **Spatial Strategy** – where are key growth areas?
- **General Policies** – issues like housing in the countryside, affordable housing, renewable energy, waste management
- **Supplementary Guidance** – look for the very detailed policy on open space, affordable housing, design etc.

#### The Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report looks at the environmental affect that the Highland wide Local Development Plan might have. We need to follow certain processes set out by the Scottish Government and take on board views from what is called the consultation Authorities and these are made up of;

- Historic Scotland;
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency;
- Scottish Natural Heritage.

In February 2009 we sent a scoping report to the consultation authorities asking their views on what we should look at to make sure we fully take into consideration the affects that the Highland wide Local Development Plan may have on the environment.

We have taken on board all of the advice the consultation authorities gave us and we have now produced this environmental report to go alongside the Main Issues Report we have produced for the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

Following is a summary of the Environmental Report:

The Highland wide Local Development Plan has been produced jointly with the Local Transport Strategy, Local Housing Strategy, and the Coastal Development Strategy and it takes into consideration each of these documents. The emerging plan also needs to take into consideration a number of other documents including those at a higher international level and those at a lower more local level. In total, the Highland wide Local Development Plan has a relationship with 249 different plans, programmes and strategies.

We need to consider the current environment in highland and look at the issues we need to tackle through this plan and this includes;

- It has a population of 217,440 and at 8.2 persons per square kilometre, is sparsely populated compared with other regions in Scotland.
- A large proportion of the land area is identified as “fragile” in terms of remoteness and scarcity of population.
- There are a lot of natural heritage designations cover a range of habitats in Highland. These sites have varying levels of protection at international, regional and local levels.
- There are a number of areas which are important to the built environment if they have important architecture or historical interest. The history of Highland region and relative remoteness, means that many archaeological features of all periods remain well preserved.
- There are 51 areas in Highland that are listed in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. National guidance requires the settings, as well as the gardens themselves, be safeguarded from unsympathetic development.
- Most Highland soils are very shallow, often due to shallow parent materials. In some parts of Highland, soil erosion is becoming increasingly significant. Peat is very common throughout Highland and Caithness and Sutherland contain one of the largest and most intact areas of blanket bog in the world, supporting a distinctive wildlife community.
- With a large geographical area and a low population size, Highland region is not affected by air pollution from extensive road networks and heavy industries as in other parts of Scotland. The air quality is reflected by the extensive number of lichen communities of international importance.
- The quality of the freshwater environment is also recognised internationally for its importance as a spawning ground for wild salmon and use by whiskey distilleries.

There are some environmental problems that this plan needs to address and these include;

- Stress on biodiversity and loss of habitat resulting from development.

- Conflicts between designated areas and economic development.
- Vulnerability of rare and endangered flora and fauna to changes in climate.
- Loss of local landscape character.
- Loss of native woodland cover.
- Loss of peat land cover.
- Increasing population putting increased pressure on the natural environment in terms of water supply, energy supply and transport links.
- Increasing population putting increased pressure on the natural environment in terms of water supply, energy supply and transport links.
- Ageing population.
- Loss of land for recreation.
- Lack of provision of affordable housing.
- Meeting recycling and landfill targets.
- Erosion.
- Potential contamination from nuclear decontamination and waste storage.
- Flooding, drainage and erosion resulting from infrastructure and changing climate.
- The need to sustain water supply and sewage treatment.
- Tidal and fluvial flood risk to new and existing development.
- Reduced quality of watercourses and the coastal environment.
- Negative impact of development on air quality.
- Lack of sustainable design
- Increase travel/energy needs
- Stress on the historical environment resulting from development.
- The challenge of managing access to the natural environment.
- Wind farm developments affecting scenery and wildlife.
- Development of new housing and infrastructure.
- Negative impact of development on traditional crofting settlement character.

### **Likely Affects of the Highland wide Local Development Plan**

The Highland wide Local Development Plan's strategy will have an impact at a regional level and in some cases at very local levels such as in Caithness, North Sutherland, Nigg, East Inverness and Nairn. In these areas there are some land allocations which are important to the development of the economy of Highland. The sites have been assessed using a series of questions based around the SEA Objectives.

The different policy approaches will have an impact at a more regional level and some of the approaches work with each other to have a bigger impact. This includes 17 out of the 30 different policy approaches working together to have a very positive impact on human health over the plan period. There are some policy approaches which may have negative affects on the environment and this includes the approach to business and industrial land. However where this is the case we will make sure that we can put things in place to stop there being a big impact on the environment.

As part of our assessment we looked at different alternatives to many of the parts of our spatial strategy and our policy approaches. These were looked at as part of our Main Issues Report as well and members of the public will have an opportunity to tell us what they think of both our preferred options and the alternatives as part of the consultation on that document. Each of these options and alternative were assessed against 17 SEA Objectives. These were used to describe, analyse and compare environmental affects of the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

Overall the following approaches are likely to have a significant affect on the Highlands as a whole;

- Wild land - Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments;
- Accessibility and Transport - Protect and enhance human health;

Maintain air quality;

Reduce the need to travel/increase opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport;

- Waste Management – Minimise Waste;
- Renewable Energy - Increase proportion of energy from renewable sources; and
- Small Crofting Townships - Value and Protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes

As mentioned earlier we will review the Highland wide Local Development Plan every 5 years. To help us to review the document we have set up a monitoring framework to see how affective our plan is.

If you have any comments on this environmental report please send them to:

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The Highland Council  
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If you have any questions please call Simon Hindson on (01463) 702261

Please send any comments by 5pm on **9<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of this Environmental Report and key facts

As part of the preparation of Highland Wide Local Development Plan, The Highland Council is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain PPS. SEA aims to:

- integrate environmental factors into PPS preparation and decision-making;
- improve PPS and enhance environmental protection;
- increase public participation in decision making; and
- facilitate openness and transparency of decision-making.

SEA is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The key SEA stages are:


<b>Screening</b>	determining whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether an SEA is required
<b>Scoping</b>	deciding on the scope and level of detail of the Environmental Report, and the consultation period for the report – this is done in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency
<b>Environmental Report</b>	publishing an Environmental Report on the PPS and its environmental effects, and consulting on that report
<b>Adoption</b>	providing information on: the adopted PPS; how consultation comments have been taken into account; and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS
<b>Monitoring</b>	monitoring significant environmental effects in such a manner so as to also enable the Responsible Authority to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and undertake appropriate remedial action.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- provide information on the Highland Wide Local Development Plan
- identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the PPS and its reasonable alternatives;
- provide an early and effective opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the public to offer views on any aspect of this Environmental Report.

The key facts relating to The Highland Wide Local Development Plan are set out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Key facts relating to the Highland Wide Local Development Plan**

<b>Name of Responsible Authority</b>	The Highland Council
<b>Title of Plan, Program or Strategy (PPS)</b>	Highland Wide Local Development Plan
<b>What Prompted the PPS</b>	The Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 requires Planning Authorities to produce Local Development Plans. The detailed regulations for this was brought forward through the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 which came into force on the 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2009.
<b>Subject</b>	Town Planning
<b>Period Covered by the PPS</b>	2010 - 2030
<b>Frequency of Updates</b>	Every 5 years in line with Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006
<b>Area Covered by PPS</b>	 <p>The map shows the Highland region of Scotland. A large area is shaded in light green and labeled 'Area covered by HwLDP'. A smaller area in the southeast is shaded in light grey and labeled 'Cairngorms National Park will produce a separate LDP'.</p>
<b>Purpose and/or Objectives of PPS</b>	The purpose of the HwLDP is to guide development of Highland over the next 20 years. HwLDP will inform the production of the area Local Development Plans and will be used as the primary tool for making decisions on applications for planning permission.
<b>Contact Point</b>	Simon Hindson, Graduate Planner <a href="mailto:Simon.hindson@highland.gov.uk">Simon.hindson@highland.gov.uk</a> (01463) 702261

## SEA activities to date

**Table 2** summarises the SEA activities to date in relation to Highland Wide Local Development Plan

**Table 2. SEA activities to date**

SEA Action/Activity	When carried out	Notes (e.g. comment on data availability, particular issues or any advice from the Consultation Authorities that has now been taken into account)
screening to determine whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects	<i>Not Applicable</i>	
scoping the consultation periods and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report	February 2009	
Outline and objectives of the PPS	April 2009	
relationship with other PPS and environmental objectives	April 2009	
environmental baseline established	April 2009	
environmental problems identified	May 2009	
assessment of future of area without the PPS	June 2009	
alternatives considered	June 2009	
environmental assessment methods established	June 2009	Workshop held with Consultation Authorities to look at a range of matters including assessment method more information available online at <a href="http://HWLDP.blogspot.com">http://HWLDP.blogspot.com</a>
selection of PPS alternatives to be included in the environmental assessment	June 2009	
identification of environmental problems that may persist after implementation and measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects	June 2009	
monitoring methods proposed	July 2009	
consultation timescales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timescale for Consultation Authorities</li> <li>• Timescale for public</li> </ul>	August 2009- November 2009	
notification/publicity action	November 2009	

A Number of other SEAs have been carried out by the Highland Council on other PPS' which are directly related to the HwLDP. A copy of these are available on request.

## Highland Wide Local Development Plan Context

### Outline and objectives of Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes “an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme”. The purpose of this section is to explain the nature, contents, objectives and timescale of the PPS.

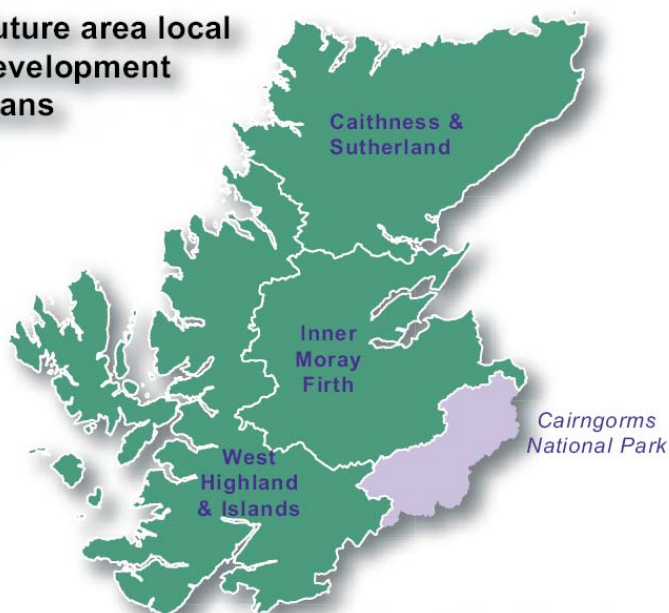
As a legal requirement of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, the Highland Council is preparing a Highland Local Development Plan as the new land use plan for development of a scale and nature that are of regional (Highland) significance. The plan will cover the period from 2010 – 2030 and replaces the Highland Structure Plan which was adopted in 2001. The plan will be reviewed within a 5 year cycle.

The Highland Council Local Development Plan extends over an area of 26,484 square kilometres and is an area of high quality natural environment and diverse historic background. It has a population of 217,440 and at 8.2 persons per square kilometre, is sparsely populated compared with other regions in Scotland. A large proportion of the land area is identified as “fragile” in terms of remoteness and scarcity of population.

The Highland wide Local Development Plan will update and replace parts of the Highland Structure Plan as well as parts of existing Local Plans which cover strategic policy issues.



### Future area local development plans



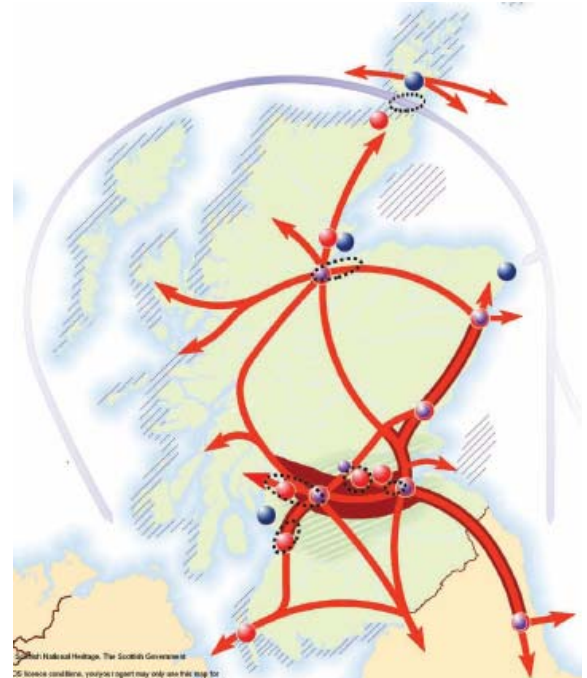
This LDP will also set the context for three Local Development Plans which will follow – one for the Inner Moray Firth area, one for the Caithness and Sutherland area and one for the West Highland and Islands area. Ultimately the aim is to create and retain up-to-date plan coverage on a five year cycle.

The Highland Local Development Plan will set out:

- The spatial strategy and vision for the area;
- Clear policy guidance for all types of development (including reference to Supplementary Guidance where appropriate);
- The development principles of key action areas (including the A96 corridor).

The preparation of the Highland Local Development Plan is an opportunity to put more of the local dimension to the National Planning Framework 2, through the preparation of a spatial strategy and vision for the area.

Whilst it will contain an action programme for certain significant land use proposals to be furthered through the area plans, the Highland Local Development Plan will not deal with specific sites outwith the A96 Corridor, Nigg and Dounreay. The eventual development strategy will consider broad directions of growth and development and a high level spatial distribution of likely development.



The Highland Wide Local Development Plan will cover the following topic areas;

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access</li><li>• Agricultural Land</li><li>• Air Quality</li><li>• Business and Industry</li><li>• Contaminated Land</li><li>• Developer Contributions</li><li>• Flood Management</li><li>• Forestry</li><li>• Gypsies and Travellers</li><li>• Retailing</li><li>• Sustainable Design</li><li>• Waste Management</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing</li><li>• Marine Planning</li><li>• Minerals</li><li>• Open Space</li><li>• Place Making</li><li>• Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage</li><li>• Major Development Opportunities</li><li>• Water and Waste Water Infrastructure</li><li>• Renewable Energy</li><li>• Tourism</li><li>• Transport</li><li>• Water Environment</li></ul> |
|---|---|

The Strategic Environmental Assessment will assess each of the different policy options for each topic, the different spatial strategy options, alternative development sites and in addition will assess how highland may develop without production of the Highland wide Local Development Plan.


The Main Issues Report for the Highland Wide Local Development Plan can be viewed online at <http://www.highland.gov.uk/developmentplans>.



## Relationship with other PPS and environmental protection objectives

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes an outline of the PPS relationships with other relevant PPS, and how environmental protection objectives have been taken into account in the PPS preparation. This section covers these issues and describes the policy context within which the PPS operates, and the constraints and targets that this context imposes on the PPS.


As the Highland Wide Local Development Plan covers such a large area and a wide base of topics there is a significant number of Documents which affects, and is affected by, other relevant PPS and environmental objectives.

It is not practical to include a full detailed list of these and how it affects, and is affected by, other relevant PPS and environmental objectives within the document, therefore this information is included in Appendix 1 - Relevant plans, programmes and Strategies. Below is simply a list of the documents which may affects, and is affected by, other relevant PPS and environmental objectives.

International	
	
1	EC Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC)
2	European Climate Change Programme (2005)
3	EC Directive establishing a framework for Community action in the Field of Water Policy Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)
4	EU Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)
5	European Commission White Paper: European Transport Policy for 2010 (2001)
6	The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)
7	Agenda 21(1992)
8	EC Directive On Public Access to Environmental Information (2003/4/EC)
9	The Lisbon Agenda Established 2000
10	UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. 'The Aarhus Convention' Adopted June 1998
11	The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
12	European Protected Species, Development Sites and the Planning System, Interim guidance for local authorities on licensing arrangements (2001) (SNH)
13	The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat 'The Ramsar Convention' Adopted February 1971
14	EU Soil Thematic Strategy (Consultation stage)
15	European Landscape Convention (2000)
16	Energy Services Directive
17	EC Air Quality Framework Directive
18	EC Birds and Habitats Directive
19	European Biodiversity Framework
20	European Framework on Sustainable Development
21	European Spatial Development Perspective

22	Kyoto Protocol (1992)
23	Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC
24	EC Waste Framework Directive
25	EC Directive on Landfill
26	The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
27	EC Bathing Waters Directive - 76/160/EEC
28	EC Shellfish Directives - 79/923/EEC and 91/492/EEC
29	EC Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks - 2007/60/EC
30	1992 OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic
31	EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution (2005)
32	Taking Sustainable Use of Resources Forward: A Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste (2005)
33	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)
34	EC Birds Directive (1979)
35	EC Habitats Directive (1992)
36	
<b>National</b>	
	
37	SEA Good Practice Guidelines (ODPM) 2005
38	UK Energy White Paper: Our Energy Future – Creating a Low Carbon Economy (2003)
39	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2000 – amended 2003)
40	The Future of Air Transport (2003) White Paper
41	Forestry Commission (2004) The UK Forestry Standard: The Government's Approach to Sustainable Forestry
42	Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended)1981
43	UK Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996
44	UK The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
45	UK Climate Change Bill
46	Scotland and UK Energy Policy
47	UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1995 and 1999
48	
<b>Scotland National</b>	
	
49	The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
50	Scottish Executive et al (2005) Securing the Future. The UK's shared framework for sustainable development
51	Scottish Executive: Choosing Our Future Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)
52	Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
53	Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006
54	Scottish Outdoor Access Code (2003)
55	Scottish Executive (2000) Rural Scotland : A New Approach
56	Scottish Executive (2006) Rural Development Programme for Scotland 2007-2013 The Strategic Plan
57	Scotland's Biodiversity (2004) It's In Your Hands. A Strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland

58	Scottish Historical Environment Policy (2008) (HS)
59	Scottish Executive(2001) A Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture
60	Scottish Executive (2004) Framework for Economic Development in Scotland
61	The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)
62	Scottish Executive (2001) A Smart Successful Scotland, Ambitions for the Enterprise Networks
63	Scottish Executive (2003) Securing a future: Scotland's Renewable Energy
64	Scottish Executive (2001) Potential Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in Scotland
65	Scottish Executive (2003) Let's Make Scotland More Active
66	Scottish Executive (2003) Improving Health in Scotland The Challenge
67	Delivering a Healthy Scotland Meeting the Challenge: Health Improvement In Scotland Annual Report (2006)
68	Forestry Commission Scotland (2005) Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme
69	Forestry Commission Scotland (2004) Framework Document for Forest Enterprise Scotland
70	Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and SNH (2003) Habitat Networks for Wildlife and People
71	The Scottish Executive publication, 'Better bathing waters: meeting the challenges of the revised Bathing Water Directive in Scotland' (2006) (SEPA)
72	Groundwater Protection Policy for Scotland SEPA Environmental Policy 19 (2003)
73	Policy on the culverting of Watercourses (policy26) SEPA (1998) (SEPA)
74	Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS)
75	The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 (CAR)
76	Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997
77	Scottish Executive's Locational Guidelines for the Authorisation of Marine Fish Farms in Scottish Waters (2002)
78	Passed to the Future (2002) Historic Scotland Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment
79	Forestry Commission Scotland: Scottish Forestry Strategy, 2006
80	Scottish Executive's Advice Note on Marine Fish Farming and the Environment, Jan 2003
81	SEPA Policy 27 (Addendum)
82	Scottish Executive Trunk Road Biodiversity Action Plan (TRBAP) (2000)
83	Position Statement: Policy and Supporting Guidance on Provision of Waste Water Drainage in Settlements (2006) (SEPA)
84	Scottish Water's Q and S III programme (first stage of Q and S III 2006-2010)
85	SNH Wildness in Scotland's Countryside – A Policy Statement
86	Scotland's Scenic Heritage (1978) Countryside Commission for Scotland
87	Scottish Climate Change Bill
88	Historic Scotland's Memorandum of Guidance on Listed buildings and Conservation Areas.
89	Meeting the Needs, Priorities, Actions and Targets for Sustainable Development in Scotland (2002)
90	National Waste Plan (2003) – New municipal waste recycling, and disposal targets to 2025 announced in January 2008.
91	Scottish Executive Policy Statement for Scotland - Designing Places
92	Nature Conservation (Scotland ) Act
93	Passed to the Future
94	Scotland's National Transport Strategy
95	Physical Activity Strategy
96	Scottish Executive Marine Coastal Framework (2005)
97	Scottish Historic Environment Policy 2
98	The Future of Housing in Scotland
99	Scottish Biodiversity Action Plan 2005-8 and 2008-2011
100	Priorities to Achieve Economic Growth
101	Draft River Basin Management Plan for the Scotland River Basin District (2008)
102	Scotland's Bathing Waters: A Strategy for Improvement (2002)
103	Strategic Asset Capacity and Development Plan (Scottish Water)
104	Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment (2002)
105	A Strategic Framework for the Aquaculture Industry
106	The Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations (2000)
107	Changing out Ways - Scotland's Climate Change Programme (2006)
108	Building a Better Scotland Infrastructure Investment Plan: Investing in the Future of Scotland (2005)

109	Zero Waste Scotland
110	SEPA Guidelines for Thermal Treatment of Municipal Waste
111	Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967
112	Natural Heritage Scotland Act 1991
113	Marine (Scotland) Bill 2009
114	A Five Year Species Action Framework: Making a Difference for Scotland's Species (SNH)
<b>Scottish National Planning Policy Tier</b>	
	
115	National Planning Framework for Scotland (2004) (National Planning Framework 2 is being progressed. It will set out the Scottish Government's strategic development priorities).
116	Scottish Planning Policy (2008)
117	Scottish Planning Policy Part 3 Consultation Draft (2009)
118	NPPG5 - Archaeology and Planning (1998)
119	NPPG13 - Coastal planning
120	NPPG14 - Natural Heritage
121	NPPG18 - Planning and the Historic Environment
122	SPP2 Economic Development
123	SPP3 Planning for housing (2003)
124	SPP4 Minerals
125	SPP6 Renewable Energy (Draft)
126	SPP7 Planning and Flooding (2004)
127	SPP8 Town Centres and retailing
128	SPP10 Planning for Waste Management
129	SPP11 Open Space and Physical Activity
130	SPP15 Planning for Rural Development (Feb 2005)
131	SPP17 Planning for Transport (2005)
132	SPP19 Telecommunications
133	SPP20 Role of Architecture and Design in Scotland
134	SPP21 Green Belts April 2006
135	SPP22 Planning for Fish Farming (2007)
136	SPP23 Planning and the Historic Environment (2008)
137	PAN 33 Development of Contaminated Land (2000)
138	PAN 39 Farm and Forestry Buildings
139	PAN 42 Archaeology – The Planning Process and Scheduled Monument Procedures (1994) (HS)
140	PAN 43 Golf Courses and Associated Developments (1994)
141	PAN 45 Renewable Energy
142	PAN 44 Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape (1994)
143	PAN 51 Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation (1997)
144	PAN 52 Planning and Small Towns (1997)
145	PAN 53 Classifying the Coast for Planning Purposes (1998)
146	PAN 56 Planning and Noise (1999)
147	PAN 59 Improving Town Centres (1999)
148	PAN 60 Planning for Natural Heritage (2000)
149	PAN62 Telecommunications
150	PAN 61 Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (2001)
151	PAN 63 Waste Management Planning (2002)
152	PAN 65 Planning and Open Space (2008)
153	PAN 66 Best Practice in handling Planning Applications affecting Trunk Roads (2003)
154	PAN 67 Housing Quality (2003)
155	PAN 68 Design Statements (2003)

156	PAN 69 Planning and Building Standards Advice on Flooding (2004)
157	PAN 71 Conservation Area Management (2004)
158	PAN 72 Housing in the Countryside (2005)
159	PAN 73 Rural Diversification (2005)
160	PAN 74 Affordable Housing (2005)
161	PAN 75 Planning for Transport (2005)
162	PAN 76 New Residential Streets
163	PAN 77 Designing Safer Places
164	PAN 78 Inclusive Design
165	PAN 79 Water and Drainage (2006)
166	PAN 81 Community Engagement (2007)
167	PAN 83 Masterplanning
168	PAN 84 Reducing Carbon Emissions in New Developments (2008)

<b>Regional</b>	
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169	A Smart, Successful Highlands and Islands (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2005)
170	NHS Highland Annual Report
171	Highland Area Waste Plan (SEPA, 2003)
172	Highland Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan (2005)
173	Highland Rail Report 'Room for Growth' HIE (2006)
174	Highland Rail – Traffic Growth Phase 1 Report HIE 2006
175	Highland Rail – Traffic Growth Phase 2 Report HIE 2006
176	Housing Highland's Communities: Local Housing Strategy (2006)
177	The Highland Council's Planning for Sustainability in the Highlands DPPG (2006)
178	Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines (2006) (currently being reviewed and will be replaced with SPG for On-Shore Wind Energy Developments)
179	Highland Council Local Transport Strategy (2000)(currently being reviewed)
180	Fisheries Development Strategy
181	The Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy (2001)
182	Regional Transport Strategy for the Highlands
183	City of Inverness Greenspace Strategy
184	A96 Corridor Master plan
185	Community Plan (Well Being Alliance)
186	Highland Climate Change Strategy
187	Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan
188	Inverness Local Plan
189	Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan
190	Wester Ross Local Plan
191	Sutherland Local Plan (South and East Sutherland Local Plan, North West Sutherland Local Plan and Golspie and Lairg Local Plan (part))
192	Caithness Local Plan
193	West Highland & Islands Local Plan (Lochaber Local Plan, Skye & Lochalsh Local Plan and Badenoch & Strathspey Local Plan (part))
194	Nairnshire local Plan
195	Supplementary Planning Guideline on Residential Development Layout and Design
196	Supplementary Planning Guideline on Developer Contributions
197	Open Space in New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance
198	Highland Access Strategy
199	Ports and Sites Strategy
200	Highland Renewable Energy Strategy

201	Highland Area Tourism Strategy (partnership strategy)
202	Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy
203	Draft Education and New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance
204	Draft Interim Housing in the Countryside Supplementary Guidance
205	Draft Loch Nevis Aquaculture Framework Plan (2009)
206	Loch Sunart Framework Plan (2004)
207	Loch Bracadale Framework Plan (2002)
208	Loch Hourn Framework Plan (2001)
209	Loch Inchard Framework Plan
210	Loch Eriboll Aquaculture Framework Plan (2000)
211	The Highland Council Waste Strategy (2009)
212	Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland Management Strategy
213	Caithness Local Biodiversity Action Plan
214	Sutherland Local Biodiversity Action Plan
215	Wester Ross Local Biodiversity Action Plan
216	Ross and Cromarty East Local Biodiversity Action Plan
217	Skye and Lochalsh Local Biodiversity Action Plan
218	Lochaber Local Biodiversity Action Plan
219	Inverness and Nairn Local Biodiversity Action Plan
220	Badenoch and Strathspey Biodiversity Action Plan
221	Draft Sutherland Core Paths Plan
222	Draft Lochaber Core Paths Plan
223	Draft Ross and Cromarty Core Paths Plan
224	Draft Skye and Lochalsh Core Paths Plan
225	Draft Caithness Core Paths Plan
226	Draft Inverness and Nairn Core Paths Plan
227	Highland Forestry and Woodlands Strategy
228	Landscape Character Assessments (Various Dates)
229	Natural Futures Series (SNH - Various Dates)
230	Single Outcome Agreement 2 (2009)
231	Highland Council Ward Profiles ( 2009)
232	RSE Inquiry into the Future of Scotland's Hill and Island Areas - Highland Council Response
233	Highland Council Unemployment Monitoring web pages (also includes other DWP benefits)
234	HIE Operating Plan 2008 - 2011
235	HIE Area Economic Profiles 2007
236	Review of Tourism Spend 2009
237	Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Strategy 2006 and subsequent updates
238	Sheltered Housing Review 2004
239	Highlands Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2008
240	Highlands Housing Needs Study 2003
241	Cairngorm National Park - Local Plan
242	School Roll Forecasts
243	Council Area Population Projections 2006 to 2031
244	Sutherland Draft Core Path Plan
245	Lochaber Draft Core Path Plan
246	Ross and Cromarty Draft Core Path Plan
247	Skye and Lochalsh Draft Core Path Plan
248	Caithness Draft Core Path Plan
249	Inverness and Nairn Draft Core Path Plan

This analysis, and that carried out as part of the Monitoring Report for the Highland wide Local Development Plan, has helped us to identify which topics need to be covered in the Highland wide Local Development Plan. This includes:

- Population Change
- Household Change
- Housing Land Requirement and Supply
- Housing in the Countryside
- Affordable Housing
- Planning for an Ageing Population
- Gypsy/Travellers
- Retailing
- Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage
- Previously Used Land
- Wild Land
- Water Environment
- Renewable Energy
- Flooding
- Waste Management
- Air Quality
- Design Quality
- Sustainable Design
- Business and Industrial Land (inc. Tourism)
- Accessibility and Transport
- Agricultural Land
- Subdivision of existing crofts
- Allocation of Inbye Land
- New Crofting Townships
- Small Scale New Crofts
- Coastal Development
- Forestry and Woodland
- Minerals
- Open Space and Physical Activity
- Access to the Outdoors
- Developer Contributions
- Green Frameworks
- Water and Waste Water Infrastructure

Not all of the above topics are considered “main issues” and therefore are not necessarily included in the Main Issues Report. However, all of the above topics will be included in the Proposed Plan which we will publish early 2010.

## Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of “the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme”, and “the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected”. This section aims to describe the environmental context within which the PPS operates and the constraints and targets that this context imposes on the PPS.

The purpose of this section is to provide enough environmental baseline data to:

- support the identification of environmental problems;
- support the process of assessing the environmental effects;
- provide a baseline against which future monitoring data can be compared.

A table of Baseline information and a series of maps which have been gathered as part of this Strategic Environmental Assessment are included in Appendix 2.

The following briefly describe the area that the Highland Wide Local Development Plan covers following the analysis of related plans policies and strategies:

The Highland Council Local Development Plan extends over an area of 26,484 square kilometres and is an area of high quality natural environment and diverse historic background. It has a population of 217,440 and at 8.2 persons per square kilometre, is sparsely populated compared with other regions in Scotland. A large proportion of the land area is identified as “fragile” in terms of remoteness and scarcity of population.

Natural heritage designations cover a range of habitats in Highland. In terms of international designation there are 13 Ramsar sites and 91 Special Areas of Conservation (SACS). In addition there are 367 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which cover important biological, geomorphological and geological areas. There are also 26 National Nature Reserves in Highland and in addition the Cairngorms National Park lies partly within the authority of the Highland Council. 16 National Scenic Areas are found within the Highland region and 46 Special Protection Areas. These natural heritage features are available at Appendix 2.

Areas which are considered to have special architectural or historic interest are designated as Conservation Areas. At present there are 30 Conservation Areas in Highland. Any building or structure which is considered to be of special architectural or historic interest is listed: Those of national importance are listed as “Category A”; those of regional importance “Category B”; and those of local importance listed as “Category C”. The number of listed building in Highland is 3014. They can be seen at Appendix 2.

There are 51 areas in Highland that are listed in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. National guidance requires the settings, as well as the gardens themselves, be safeguarded from unsympathetic development. The history of Highland region and relative remoteness, means that many archaeological features of all periods remain well preserved, including 1237 Scheduled monuments. These features have been identified on a map in Appendix 2 - Baseline Information Maps.

Most Highland soils are very shallow, often due to shallow parent materials. In some parts of Highland, soil erosion is becoming increasingly significant. Peat is very common throughout Highland and Caithness and Sutherland contain one of the largest

and most intact areas of blanket bog in the world, supporting a distinctive wildlife community. A map showing the extent of the blanket bog is shown in Appendix 2.

With a large geographical area and a low population size, Highland region is not affected by air pollution from extensive road networks and heavy industries as in other parts of Scotland. The air quality is reflected by the extensive number of lichen communities of international importance.

The quality of the freshwater environment is also recognised internationally for its importance as a spawning ground for wild salmon and use by whiskey distilleries. The many lochs and rivers that characterise the area are important for local economies and provide the scenic backdrop that encourages so many tourists to the area.

### **Data Availability**

Much information was available through the consultation authorities and the Scottish Government and there was a wealth of data on offer to the Highland Council to inform the baseline data for this Environmental Report. However, there are a number of factors which can limit the validity of this data:-

Some parts of Highland area have been more widely studied than others. Therefore, the quality and accuracy of information for some areas will be greater than for others.

Collation of data has been prominently gathered on a Highland wide basis, including the Cairngorms National Park, therefore, it has proved difficult at times to dissect this information for the area covered by the Highland Wide Local Development Plan only.

The data relevant to this Report is held in different forms. If information is held in databases and Geographic Information Systems it can be more easily queried than information which is only in the printed form in reports, books or even on websites.

## Environmental problems

Schedule 3 paragraph 4 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of existing environmental problems, in particular those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance. The purpose of this section is to explain how existing environmental problems will affect or be affected by Highland wide Local Development Plan and whether the it is likely to aggravate, reduce or otherwise affect existing environmental problems.

By looking at the baseline data we have been able to identify the following environmental problems which may be effected by the production of the Highland wide Local Development Plan;

SEA Issue	Potential Environmental Impact resulting from Highland Local Development Plan	Implications for Highland Local Development Plan
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	Stress on biodiversity and loss of habitat resulting from development. Conflicts between designated areas and economic development. Vulnerability of rare and endangered flora and fauna to changes in climate. Loss of local landscape character. Loss of native woodland cover. Loss of peat land cover.	The local development plan needs to ensure a balance between the demand for development while protecting the quality and character of the environments and ensure a key link with the access strategy and core path planning. The local development plan will identify areas of native woodland and ensure that the impact on these areas is fully considered in development proposals. The local development plan will seek to ensure that the impact on areas of important peat land cover is fully considered and that such areas are protected where appropriate.
Population	Increasing population putting increased pressure on the natural environment in terms of water supply, energy supply and transport links.	The local development plan will identify mitigation measures for development to ensure key infrastructure provision as detailed does not impact on the natural environment to a negative extent.
Human health	Ageing population. Loss of land for recreation. Lack of provision of affordable housing.	The local development plan will recognise the importance of recreation and seek to put a policy framework in place. Provide policy framework to allow the delivery of affordable housing.
Soil	Meeting recycling and landfill targets. Erosion. Potential contamination from nuclear decontamination and waste storage.	The local development plan will address this by having policy encouraging increased recycling facilities and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.
Water	Flooding, drainage and erosion resulting from infrastructure and changing climate. The need to sustain water supply and sewage treatment. Tidal and fluvial flood risk to new and existing development. Reduced quality	The local development plan will promote the sustainable use of resources, including water. It will seek to put in place a policy framework which takes into account any potential detrimental impact on watercourses or

	of watercourses and the coastal environment.	the coastal environment.
Air	Negative impact of development on air quality.	The local development plan should address this by encouraging green travel. It will identify any areas of poor air quality.
Climatic factors	Lack of sustainable design	The local development plan should address the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy policy, green travel and promoting sustainable design.
Material assets	Increase travel/energy needs	The local development plan should address green transport issues
Cultural heritage	Stress on the historical environment resulting from development.	The Local development Plan should protect the historic environment.
Landscape	The challenge of managing access to the natural environment. Wind farm developments affecting scenery and wildlife. Development of new housing and infrastructure. Negative impact of development on traditional crofting settlement character.	The local development plan should encourage responsible development of the natural landscape and a balanced approach to wildlife conservation, provision of services and economic development. It must ensure that a policy framework is in place which will ensure development fits with the existing landscape character and to ensure that good quality croft land is safeguarded from inappropriate development.

## **Likely evolution of the environment without the Highland wide Local Development Plan**

Schedule 3 of the Act requires that the likely evolution of the state of the environment without implementation of the PPS must be included in the Environmental Report.

While to fit with the act the likely evolution of the environment without the HwLDP will be considered however the production of a Local Development Plan for the area is a Statutory Duty of the Council and therefore it is not an option to not produce the plan. The approach that would be taken for Highland if the HwLDP was not taken forward would be to continue relying on the area development plans as there are no provisions to update the Highland Structure Plan through the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

Without the Highland wide Local Development Plan it is considered that the likely future changes to the area will be;

- Potential for a lack of consistency in planning decisions could lead to poor quality development across Highland potentially reducing the quality of townscape and landscape;
- An approach to issues such as air quality may not be taken forward as it is more of a strategic issue therefore having a potentially significant negative effect on climate change.

## SEA Objectives

A number of SEA objectives were identified at the Scoping stage and following comment from the consultation authorities these have been refined.

1	Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses.
2	Maintain, enhance and create green networks for wildlife and people.
3	Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments
4	Protect and enhance human health
5	Retain and improve quality, quantity and connectivity of publicly accessible open space.
6	Protect and enhance outdoor access opportunities and access rights including rights of way and core paths
7	Reduce contamination, safeguard soil quantity and quality
8	Minimise waste
9	Avoid impact to and where possible enhance the water environment
10	Maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge within carrying capacity (inc future capacity)
11	Maintain air quality
12	Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change
13	Increase proportion of energy from renewable sources
14	Reduce the need to travel/increase opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport
15	Protect and where appropriate enhance the historic environment
16	Value and Protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes
17	Conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value

## **Assessment of Environmental Effects and measures envisaged for prevention, reduction and offset of any significant adverse effects**

The purpose of this section is to predict and evaluate as far as possible the environmental effects of this Local Development Plan and its reasonable alternatives in accordance with Section 14 of the Act and to set out measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment.

The baseline information from the previous sections is applied to consider whether the Highland wide Local Development Plan and its alternatives are likely to have significant environmental effects (positive and negative).

### **Outline of the reasons for selecting alternatives**

As part of the production of a Local Development Plan a main issues report must be produced detailing the different areas which will be covered by the Local Development Plan and reasonable alternatives to this approach. This has been the main driver for selecting reasonable alternatives.

For the purpose of the Strategic Environmental Assessment the Council will also look at the alternative of not producing a Highland Wide Local Development Plan as a reasonable alternative, this has already been considered to an extent in the section on Likely evolution of the environment without the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

The reasons for selecting the alternatives below have been born out analysis of the current policies contained in both the findings of the Monitoring Report, Highland Structure Plan (2001), the existing local plans, emerging local plans and national policy and guidance.

### **Alternatives to which SEA was applied**

There are some topics which will be covered by the Highland wide Local Development Plan which are not to be considered as “main issues” and are therefore not included in the Main Issues Report. Alternatives to all topics to be covered by the Highland wide Local Development Plan will be covered by this environmental report and are included in Appendix 3.

The vision of the Highland wide Local Development Plan is taken from the vision contained within the Highland Council Corporate Plan which previously has been subject to a Strategic Environment Assessment.

## Assessment Methodology

The reasonable alternatives described above have been assessed against the range of environmental issues set out in Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Comments from the Consultation Authorities (SNH, SEPA and The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) have been taken into account regarding the methods, scope and level of detail in this Environmental Report.

As described in the scoping report for the Highland wide Local Development Plan we will be using an assessment matrix for the assessment of the policy options. This has been adjusted following comment from the consultation authorities both at the Scoping Report stage and the during the SEA Workshop held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009.

In addition we will be assessing specific site allocation in certain areas using an approach similar to that contained in the Sutherland and West Highland and Islands Local Plans Strategic Environmental Assessment. Only sites identified as strategic will be identified in the Highland wide Local Development Plan and as such these are the only sites that will be assessed for significant impact on the environment. These sites will wholly be contained within the following areas;

- A96 Corridor between Inverness and Nairn;
- Nigg Fabrication Yard and surrounding master planned area; and
- The area covered by the Dounreay Development Framework.

Given previous experience of Strategic Environmental Assessment and following discussion with the consultation authorities we have adjusted our template to have a greater emphasis on the justification for our assessment score to ensure we can describe our reasoning for our assessment more clearly and in a more robust manner. Mitigation opportunities will not be identified in the matrices but in a SEPARate section of this Environmental Report. This will again be done topic by topic. It is hoped that by carrying out the Strategic Environmental Assessment at an early stage in the plan making process that the best form of mitigation will be adjustment of the plan options identified in the section above to either have less of a negative affect on the environment or a more positive affect on the environment. Also by using this approach it is envisaged that it will be easier to track how the mitigation measures have been integrated into the proposed plan when that stage of plan preparation is reached.

Assumptions may be made when assessing each of the policy alternatives and these will be identified and recorded through the matrix again to make it clearer how the assessment has been carried out and the reasoning behind the final scores.

While the consideration of a number of questions/issues will be undertaken as part of the assessment a “final score” will be attributable to each of the sections of the matrices by looking at the overall matrix on and balancing the relevance of the significant issues affecting that policy option.

A summary of the policy alternative assessment matrices are contained At the start of Appendix 4. The completed versions of the matrices can be found in Appendix 4 (Policy Approaches) and Appendix 5 (Proposed Site Allocations).

## Assessment of alternatives - cumulative and synergistic effects

Having identified the preferred policy approach through the SEA Assessments, and in some cases balancing these with social and economic factors, the potential for cumulative and synergistic effects must also be considered. This will look at how as a whole the plan may have a more significant affect than in part and it will also identify linkages between the two.

We believe that it would be beneficial to assess the cumulative impacts of the Spatial Strategy seperatly to the general policy approaches of the HwLDP. This is because the policy approaches aid in delivery of the spatial straegy and while inter-related the assessing the spatial strategy together with the policy approaches may lead to confusion and not allow for the cumulative affects to be highlighted.

The below table read horizontally will aid in identifying the cumulative effects of the preferred policy approaches which will be present in the proposed Highland wide Local Development Plan. The pages following this summary will highlight how this cumulative affect has been identified and if it is likely to be a negative affect how this can be mitigated.

### Key for Policy Approaches:

*(The SEA Objective number relates to the numbered SEA approaches in the table earlier in the document)*

<b>1</b>	Housing Land Supply	<b>16</b>	Business and Industrial Land (inc. Tourism)
<b>2</b>	Housing in the Countryside	<b>17</b>	Accessibility and Transport
<b>3</b>	Affordable Housing	<b>18</b>	Agricultural Land
<b>4</b>	Planning for an Ageing Population	<b>19</b>	Sub-Division of Existing Crofts
<b>5</b>	Gypsy/Travellers	<b>20</b>	Allocation of Inbye Land
<b>6</b>	Retailing	<b>21</b>	New Crofting Townships
<b>7</b>	Developer Contributions	<b>22</b>	Small Scale New Crofts
<b>8</b>	Natural Cultural and Built Heritage	<b>23</b>	Coastal Development
<b>9</b>	Previously Used Land	<b>24</b>	Forestry and Woodland
<b>10</b>	Wild Land	<b>25</b>	Minerals
<b>11</b>	Water Environment	<b>26</b>	Open Space and Physical Activity
<b>12</b>	Renewable Energy	<b>27</b>	Access to the Outdoors
<b>13</b>	Flooding	<b>28</b>	Green Frameworks
<b>14</b>	Waste Management	<b>29</b>	Water and Waste Water Infrastructure
<b>15</b>	Air Quality	<b>30</b>	Design Quality

## Assessment of Cumulative Effects – Policy Approaches - Summary

SEA Objective	Policy Approach in Plan																														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
1	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	+	=	=	=	=	-	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	=	+	=	=	+	=	=	
2	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	-	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	+	=	=	
3	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	++	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	+	=	+	=	=	=	
4	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	=	+	+	=	=	+	=	=	=	++	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	+	+	+	=	+	+	
5	+	=	+	=	=	=	+	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	
6	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	
7	+	+	+	=	=	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	+	-	=	=	=	=	=	
8	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	++	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+
9	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=
10	+	+	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
11	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	-	++	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+
12	+	+	+	=	=	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	-	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=
13	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	-	=	-	=	++	=	+	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+
14	+	+	+	+	=	+	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	++	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+
15	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	-	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
16	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	=	-	=	=	=	-	=	+	=	=	=	++	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	+
17	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	=	-	=	=	=	-	+	=	=	=	+	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=

## Assessment

Following is an assessment of the cumulative impacts on each SEA Objective if the preferred option are taken forward.

### SEA Objective 1

*Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses.*

It is anticipated that there will be a **positive cumulative impact** if the preferred policy option is taken forward. This would be due to the positive impact there is likely to be at a regional scale in terms of a number of policy approaches. While there is a positive impact at a highland wide scale if each of these policy approaches is followed there may be a slight negative impact on this SEA with regard to the Business and Industrial approach. This is due to allocation of sites and uses on the sites and this can be mitigated to give a neutral impact however this will need to be secured on a case by case basis.

### SEA Objective 2

*Maintain, enhance and create green networks for wildlife and people.*

It is anticipated that there would be an overall **neutral cumulative impact** on this SEA Objective if the preferred policy option is taken forward. While there are a number of approaches which will have a positive impact at a highland wide scale, these are unlikely to be significant enough to ensure that a positive affect can be felt at a wider scale. If the policy approach to green frameworks were to be built out to a Highland wide scale rather than focussing on the A96 corridor it would be likely that there would be a significant positive affect due to the opportunities this policy approach brings.

### SEA Objective 3

*Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments*

It is anticipated that there would be a **positive cumulative impact** on this SEA Objective if the preferred policy options are taken forward. There are a number of policy approaches which have a positive impact on this SEA Objective and the policy approach to Wild Land has a significantly positive affect at a highland wide level. There are also many other local level positives in objectives such as the approach to green frameworks however it is unlikely that this could have an impact at a Highland wide Level therefore was not taken into account in the assessment of cumulative impacts.

### SEA Objective 4

*Protect and enhance human health*

Due to the number of policy approaches that will have a positive impact on this SEA Objective it is likely that there will be a **significantly positive cumulative impact** on this SEA Objective. Again there are also many other local impacts however these have not been taken into account as they will not affect the highland's as a whole. There is potential for there to be greater affect if further mitigation is secured when appropriate.

### SEA Objective 5

*Retain and improve quality, quantity and connectivity of publicly accessible open space.*

There is likely to be a **positive cumulative impact** on this SEA Objective if the preferred policy approaches are brought forward. This impact could have been significant if some of the policy approaches had a more regional impact. For example the policy approach to open space and physical activity could have a greater impact if it was focused on providing a green network

throughout highland, however due to the scale of the area this is not possible. It will be important to assess the impact the Open Space in New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance has on increasing open space as a proportion of that at a highland wide scale, this will be done through on going monitoring that was proposed as part of the SEA on the document

### **SEA Objective 6**

*Protect and enhance outdoor access opportunities and access rights including rights of way and core paths*

It is likely that there would be an overall **neutral cumulative impact** if the preferred policy approaches are followed. This is due to the low relevance that this topic had to many of the policy approaches. While some topics are likely to have a positive impact on this approach this will be more at a local level rather than a Highland wide level.

### **SEA Objective 7**

*Reduce contamination, safeguard soil quantity and quality*

It is likely that there would be an overall **neutral cumulative impact** on this SEA Objective if the preferred policy approaches are followed. While there may be certain policy approaches (ie Previously Used Land) which will have a significant affect at a local level these are unlikely to impact on the wider area and therefore the cumulative affect would remain neutral.

### **SEA Objective 8**

*Minimise waste*

It is likely that there would be an overall **neutral cumulative impact** on this SEA Objective if the preferred policy approaches are followed. Many of the approaches have low relevance to this SEA Objective however there is a topic which specifically addressed this SEA Objective and this may have a significant positive impact.

### **SEA Objective 9**

*Avoid impact to and where possible enhance the water environment*

It is likely that there would be an overall **neutral cumulative impact** on this SEA Objective if the preferred policy approaches are followed. Again many of the approaches have low relevance to this SEA Objective however there is an approach which specifically addresses this objective and it is likely that this would have a positive affect at a regional and a more significantly positive impact at a local level.

### **SEA Objective 10**

*Maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge within carrying capacity (inc future capacity)*

It is likely that there would be an overall **positive cumulative impact** on the SEA objective if the preferred policy approaches are followed. While there are only a limited number of approaches which are likely to have a positive impact these are in areas which are directly relevant to this topic. There may be more locally specific issues which have been identified through site assessments.

### **SEA Objective 11**

*Maintain air quality*

It is likely that there would be an overall **positive cumulative impact** on the SEA Objective if the preferred policy approaches are brought forward. Again there are only a limited number of approaches which are likely to have a positive impact there are in areas which are directly relevant to this SEA Objective. In addition as there is an approach which directly addresses this objective.

### **SEA Objective 12**

*Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change*

Due to the number of approaches which are likely to have a positive impact upon this SEA Objective it is likely that there may be a **significantly positive cumulative impact** if the preferred approaches are brought forward in the proposed plan. The business and industrial approach is likely to have a negative affect and this may reduce the cumulative impact slightly however if appropriate mitigation is secured then this should not be significant.

### **SEA Objective 13**

*Increase proportion of energy from renewable sources*

Given that there is a policy approach which will directly and indirectly address this SEA Objective and the cumulative affect of a number of other approaches which may have a positive affect on this SEA Objective it is likely that there will be a **significantly positive cumulative affect**. While there are a small number of approaches which are likely to have a negative impact this should not have an impact as they do not directly relate to the SEA objective.

### **SEA Objective 14**

*Reduce the need to travel/increase opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport*

It is likely that there would be an overall **significantly positive cumulative impact** on the SEA Objective if the preferred policy approaches are brought forward. There is a policy approach which directly tackles this SEA Objective and there are a number of other approaches which will contribute to a positive affect on the SEA Objective.

### **SEA Objective 15**

*Protect and where appropriate enhance the historic environment*

As there is a policy approach which will directly tackle this issue by ensuring varying levels of protection are given to elements at a local, regional and national scale it is likely that there will be a **significantly positive cumulative impact**. While it is anticipated that there may be a negative impact on this objective through the business and industrial approach, it is likely that positive mitigation will be secured to ensure that this does not have a significant affect on the wider approach of the plan.

### **SEA Objective 16**

*Value and Protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes*

While some policy approaches will ensure a significantly positive impact (ie New Crofting Townships) it is likely that overall there will be a **neutral cumulative impact** if the preferred policy approaches are brought forward. This is due to there not being a policy approach which will directly tackle the issue and the slight negative impact of a number of the approaches, however as non of these directly tackle the objective it is unlikely that they would cumulatively have a negative impact.

### **SEA Objective 17**

*Conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value*

It is likely that there would be an overall **positive cumulative impact** if the preferred approaches are followed. This is due to the number of approaches which will indirectly have a positive affect on the objective.

## Assessment of Cumulative Effects – Spatial Strategy - Summary

### Key

1	Inverness	7	Smaller Settlements in the A96 Corridor
2	The A96 Corridor	8	Caithness and North Sutherland
3	Developer Contributions in the A96	9	Nigg and Easter Ross
4	East Inverness	10	Development of Local Centres
5	Nairn	11	Wider Countryside and Fragile Areas
6	Tornagrain		

SEA Objective	Spatial Strategy Elements											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
2	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=
3	=	=	=	=	=	++	++	=	=	+	+	=
4	+	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=
5	+	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=
6	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
7	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	+	=	=	=
8	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
9	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
10	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
11	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
12	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
13	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=
14	+	=	=	=	=	+	+	=	=	+	+	=
15	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
16	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
17	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=

### Cumulative Effect of the Spatial Strategy

Many of the elements of the spatial strategy, while all pulling in the direction of the vision, they have very localised affects therefore not cumulatively working together to have an affect on the SEA Objectives at a regional level.

While it is unlikely to have a cumulative affect at a highland wide level it should be noted that the spatial strategy is driven by economic growth and social cohesion. Given that this is the case it is important to note that the Spatial Strategy will have significantly positive cumulative affect on SEA Objective 3 and SEA Objective 14 and there is likely to be no significant negative environmental affects at a highland wide level.

## Potential Mitigation Measures

By assessing both the alternative policy approaches and the potential cumulative affects of the preferred policy approaches it is possible to identify appropriate mitigation.

It is recognised that the early assessment of the alternatives helps to identify any potential problems early on in the plan making process and as such much of the mitigation will be carried out through the development of the Highland wide Local Development Plan through the main issues report and to the proposed plan.

In all cases standard mitigation will be secured to ensure there is little/no negative impact on the environment.

However in one case (Business and Industrial (inc. Tourism)), where it may not be possible to do this below is a table showing the proposed mitigation.

<b>Policy approach needing mitigation</b>	<b>Reason why it needs mitigation</b>	<b>Potential mitigation measures</b>
Business and Industrial Land	This option was chosen given the potential social and economic benefits. While environmental impacts were taken into account there were some issues that may not be sufficiently mitigated on an ad-hoc basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate discussion should be held with Historic Scotland and SNH to ensure the flexible approach does not have an impact on heritage interests.</li><li>• Adverse air quality will be mitigated by ensuring the proposed policy approach to air quality is followed in the determination of decisions.</li></ul>

## Assessment of Compatibility between Policy Approaches

In accordance with best practice when assessing such a broad based document it was considered appropriate and beneficial to assess the compatibility of all of the preferred policy alternatives contained within the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

The table below shows where there has been an incompatibility between the preferred policy approaches. Where this is the case an explanation and mitigation is suggested.

### Key:

<b>1</b>	Housing Land Supply	<b>16</b>	Business and Industrial Land (inc. Tourism)
<b>2</b>	Housing in the Countryside	<b>17</b>	Accessibility and Transport
<b>3</b>	Affordable Housing	<b>18</b>	Agricultural Land
<b>4</b>	Planning for an Ageing Population	<b>19</b>	Sub-Division of Existing Crofts
<b>5</b>	Gypsy/Travellers	<b>20</b>	Allocation of Inbye Land
<b>6</b>	Retailing	<b>21</b>	New Crofting Townships
<b>7</b>	Developer Contributions	<b>22</b>	Small Scale New Crofts
<b>8</b>	Natural Cultural and Built Heritage	<b>23</b>	Coastal Development
<b>9</b>	Previously Used Land	<b>24</b>	Forestry and Woodland
<b>10</b>	Wild Land	<b>25</b>	Minerals
<b>11</b>	Water Environment	<b>26</b>	Open Space and Physical Activity
<b>12</b>	Renewable Energy	<b>27</b>	Access to the Outdoors
<b>13</b>	Flooding	<b>28</b>	Green Frameworks
<b>14</b>	Waste Management	<b>29</b>	Water and Waste Water Infrastructure
<b>15</b>	Air Quality	<b>30</b>	Design Quality

√	Compatible Policy Approaches
X	Incompatible Policy Approaches
0	No Clear Link

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				
30	√	√	√	√	0	√	√	√	0	0	0	√	0	√	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	√	0	√	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0		
29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
28	√	√	√	0	0	0	√	√	0	√	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	√	√	0	√	0	√	0	
27	√	√	√	0	0	0	√	0	0	√	√	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	0	√	√	0	√	0	√	0	
26	√	√	√	√	√	0	√	0	0	√	√	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	0	√	√	0	√	0	√	0	
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	√	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	√	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	√	√	√	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
21	√	√	√	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
20	0	√	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
19	√	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
17	√	√	√	√	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	√	0	0	√	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	√	0	√	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	√	0	√	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	√	0	0	0	0	√	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	√	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	√	√	√	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	√	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	√	√	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	√	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Summary

Through this assessment it can be seen that there should not be any compatibility issues between the policy approaches which are to be contained within the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

## Measures envisaged for the prevention, reduction and offsetting of significant adverse effects

Schedule 3 paragraph 7 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires an explanation of “the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.” The table below sets out any environmental problems that are likely to remain following the implementation of the Highland wide Local Development Plan and summarises proposed measures for the prevention, reduction and offset of significant adverse effects. The Plan impact, mitigation measures and how the mitigation will be actioned are yet to be finalised and as such this section will be updated following advice from the consultation authorities on this Environmental Report, and will be published prior to proposed plan stage of the HwLDP.

SEA Issue	Existing Environmental Problems	Plan Impact	Mitigation Measures	Actioned By
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	Stress on biodiversity and loss of habitat resulting from development. Conflicts between designated areas and economic development. Vulnerability of rare and endangered flora and fauna to changes in climate. Loss of local landscape character. Loss of native woodland cover. Loss of peat land cover.			
Population	Increasing population putting increased pressure on the natural environment in terms of water supply, energy supply and transport links.			
Human health	Ageing population. Loss of land for recreation. Lack of provision of affordable housing.			
Soil	Meeting recycling and landfill targets. Erosion. Potential contamination from nuclear decontamination and waste storage.			
Water	Flooding, drainage and erosion resulting from infrastructure and changing climate. The need to sustain water supply and sewage treatment. Tidal and fluvial flood risk to new and existing development. Reduced quality of watercourses and the coastal environment.			
Air	Negative impact of development on air quality.			
Climatic factors	Lack of sustainable design			
Material assets	Increase travel/energy needs			
Cultural heritage	Stress on the historical environment resulting from development.			
Landscape	The challenge of managing access to the natural environment. Wind farm developments affecting scenery and wildlife. Development of new housing and infrastructure. Negative impact of development on traditional crofting settlement character.			

This column will look at how the policies in the HwLDP will affect the environmental problems

This will set out how these affects will be mitigated

This will set out who will be responsible.

## Monitoring

Section 19 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Responsible Authority to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Highland wide Local Development Plan. This must be done in such a way as to also identify unforeseen adverse effects and to take appropriate remedial action.

It is considered good practice for monitoring:

- fit a pre-defined purpose, help to solve problems, and address key issues;
- is practical and is customised to the PPS;
- is transparent and readily accessible to the public;
- is seen as a learning process and a cyclical process relating closely to the collation of the environmental baseline.

The proposed SEA monitoring activities will be set out following additional discussion with the consultation authorities. For this monitoring to be effective it will need to be linked to both the SEA Objectives and the Plan Objectives. The baseline data set out earlier in this report sets the scene for any monitoring which is to take place. Below is a draft monitoring framework. To accompany the proposed Highland wide Local Development Plan we will publish a fuller framework for monitoring of the impact of each policy approach.

## Draft Monitoring Framework

SEA topic	What sort of information is required?	Where can the information be obtained?	When could remedial action be considered?	Who is responsible for undertaking the monitoring?	How could the results be presented?	What actions could be taken?
Air quality	Reduction in no <sup>2</sup> emissions.	Highland council local air quality management: progress reports	When HWLDP is reviewed	THC environmental health	Biannually	Review site allocations
Water quality	Improvement to water quality and maintain ecological status of fresh water bodies in rivers and coastline.	Bathing and river water quality and abstraction rates of rivers in area - SEPA	When the water quality of particular water bodies has not improved or suddenly deteriorates	SEPA	Annually	Review the action programme of LDP Review development allocations
	Increase the number and duration of bathing water areas passing bathing water quality (ec guideline standards	River basin management plan - SEPA	When it is identified that planning permission is being granted for development not in accordance with policy	I&R team at THC		
	Reduction in diffuse pollution and phosphates within river catchment areas	General monitoring by I&R team at THC				
	Reduction in point source pollution in water courses.					
	Reduction in the					
					Discuss future actions with head of planning and building standards and area planning and building standard manager.	

	number of planning applications granted permission in functional floodplains					
	Increase in the number of development schemes that incorporate water efficient technologies					
Soil	Remediation of contaminated land	THC contaminated land team.	If the number of contaminated land sites has not reduced annually	THC contaminated land team	Annually	Review action programme of LDP Review LDP policies
	Reduction in the area of prime agricultural land developed	Planning applications	When the plan is reviewed or when it is identified when planning permission is being granted for development not in accordance with policy	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review LDP policies
	Meeting landfill allowance TARGETS	Quarterly land fill allowance scheme - SEPA	If level of biodegradable municipal waste does not decline	SEPA	Annually	Review the action programme of LDP Revised LDP and

						waste strategy
Biodiversity	The number of notified or qualitative interests (e.g. Protected habitats and species) adversely affected by new development	General monitoring by I&R at THC	When proposals are supported as departures from LDP policies	I&R at THC	Annually	Review LDP policies
	Proportion of required open space being natural/wild areas and augmenting habitats	Open space audit	When HWLDP is reviewed	I&R at THC	Biannually	Review LDP policies and/or SG
Climatic factors	Decrease in the proportion of people travelling to work or study by car	Highland local transport strategy (draft)	When LDP is reviewed	Tec services THC	Annually	Review LDP
	Reduction in the number of properties at risk from flooding	Flood prevention and land drainage (Scotland) Act 1997 biennial reports Coastal development strategy (draft)	When LDP is reviewed	I&R team at the Coastal planning team	Biennially	Review of LDP policies and allocations
Human health and population	Increased provision and accessibility to open spaces	Open space audit	Review of LDP	I&R team at THC	Biannually	Review action programme of LDP Review LDP policies and SG

	Improvement to the issues highlighted in the SIMD affecting highland	SIMD	Review of LDP	I&R team at THC	Biennially	Review LDP policies and land allocations
	Increase in the number of regeneration schemes re-developed	SOA 2	Review of LDP	I&R team at THC Community planning partnership	Annually	Review the settlement strategy
Cultural heritage	Decline in the number of listed buildings and archaeological sites at risk from human or natural impacts	General monitoring by I&R team at THC	When proposals are supported as departures from LDP	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review of LDP policies
	Increase in the number of buildings renovated/ in regeneration schemes in urban and rural areas	SOA 2 progress reports Planning applications	When historic buildings within regeneration schemes remain undeveloped	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review of spatial strategy Review of LDP policies
	Reduced numbers of historic buildings as 'at risk'.	Buildings at risk register	When number of at risk buildings remains static or increases When proposals are supported as departures from	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review LDP and land allocations

			LDP.			
Landscape	Decline in quality of landscape and townscape including negative visual impacts	General monitoring of HWLDP by I&R team at THC	When proposals are supported as departures from LDP	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review LDP and land allocations
	Reduction in the number of planning applications granted planning permission either as departures or against officers recommendation	General monitoring of HwLDP by I&R team at THC	When proposals are supported as a departure from LDP	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review LDP policies and land allocations
Material assets	Increase in the number of waste management facilities built that address the need identified in the waste strategy	General monitoring of HWLDP by I&R team at THC	When it is identified that elements of the waste strategy is not being delivered	SEPA TEC services at THC	Annually	Review of action programme for LDP Review LDP policies, land allocations and waste strategy
	Increase and enhance the number of waste water treatment works and water works built	Scottish water SEPA	When land allocations are constrained	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review of action programme of LDP Review of settlement strategy

						Review LDP policies and/or land allocations
	Decrease in waiting list figures for affordable housing	Highland housing register	When list figures for affordable housing remain static or increases	Housing and property at THC	Annually	Review settlement strategy Review LDP policies and land allocations
	Increase in redevelopment of brownfield sites.	Employment and housing land audit Vacant and derelict land survey	When the amount of brownfield land increases or remains static	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review LDP action programme Review policies and/or land allocations
	Increase in the use of sustainable materials in new build	Housing land audit (densities) Planning applications	When proposals are supported as departures from LDP	I&R team at THC	Annually	Review LDP policies

## Next steps

The closing date for comments on this environmental report is the **9<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 5pm**. Following this the comments received will be carefully considered in the preparation of the revised environmental report which will accompany the Proposed Plan due for publication late 2009.

The following table details the key stages in the production of the Highland wide Local Development Plan and when further SEA activity will be appropriate.

Stage	HwLDP	SEA	Time Scale
1	Publication of the Main Issues Report and Monitoring Statement	Publish a Environmental Report and make it available for comment by the community and the Consultation Authorities for a total of 6 week.	August 2009
2	Publish the proposed plan, land ownership schedule, and proposed action plan.	Publish Revised Environmental Report and Appropriate Assessment (if required)	Early 2010
3	Prepare and consult on changes we make to the plan. Assess feedback from the consultation and further assess the results of the SEA	Assess major effects the proposed changes will have on the environment	Mid 2010
4	Examination of the Plan		Mid-Late 2010
5	Publish Post Examination changes and modified proposed plan	Publish and Send SEA and Appropriate Assessment including any modifications to Ministers	Late 2010
6	Put plan into place and monitor our progress	Publish post adoption statement and submit to SEA Gateway	Early 2011