

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**COMMITTEE – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009**

Agenda Item	9
Report No	PED 5/09

**Highland wide Local Development Plan**

**Report by Director of Planning and Development**

**SUMMARY**

The Highland wide Local Development Plan will be prepared over the course of 2009. It offers the opportunity to update the spatial strategy and land use vision for Highland as well as provide a consistent approach to planning policy throughout the area. It is being brought forward as one of two pilot projects in Scotland to demonstrate effective working with key agencies such as SEPA, SNH, Transport Scotland and Scottish Water. Members are asked to support the preparation of the Plan and note the key dates and milestones over the course of this year.

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The preparation of the Highland wide Local Development Plan is part of the Council's Programme for 2009-2011. The preparation of this new Local Development Plan will assist with the delivery of economic development for the area, whilst seeking to ensure that the key environmental assets of the area are protected. This report sets out the proposed content, form and timescales for the preparation of the new plan.

**2. Delivering Planning Reform**

2.1 A document called "Delivering Planning Reform" was launched by Scottish Government in October 2008 to set out the next steps in the modernisation and reform of the planning system.

2.2 To deliver planning reform the Scottish Government has been working with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to identify ways in which they can significantly increase participation and speed up the pace of planning reform. A number of pilot schemes are to be commenced throughout Scotland to show how the new Development Planning Regulations, which were laid before Parliament on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2008, will be implemented. Highland Council was chosen as one of the pilot authorities to deliver a new local development plan based on partnership working with SEPA, SNH, Scottish Water and Transport Scotland. The aim is to demonstrate the benefits of a partnership approach to the preparation of a new-style, concise, map-based plan. In the coming months the Highland Council will deliver a development plan which will:

- Be up to date to provide investors and communities with greater certainty
- Focus resources of the private sector onto matters of greatest significance
- Lead to improved planning applications that help speed up response times from the public sector
- Create a simpler and more transparent planning process
- Enable a greater understanding and co-operation across the public and private sector
- Deliver better developments more efficiently through partnership working.

### **3. Content and form of the Highland wide Local Development Plan**

3.1 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. The various policies that are to be replaced will be clearly set out as part of the next stage of the work. 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 (see map attached to this report). Ultimately the aim is to create and retain an up-to-date plan coverage on a five year cycle.

3.2 The Highland wide Local Development Plan will set out:

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

3.3 As noted above, the preparation of the Local Development Plan is an opportunity to put more of the local dimension to the National Planning Framework, through the preparation of a spatial strategy and vision for the area. This spatial strategy and vision will obviously reflect Council priorities and the aspirations of Highland communities. It will be prepared not only with partner agencies but also with the active involvement of neighbouring Local Authorities and the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

3.4 In seeking to provide a comprehensive policy base for planning decisions across the area, the Highland wide LDP will cover a wide range of policy to guide the determination of planning applications, and to provide certainty to developers and to communities. The policy areas to be covered are shown in appendix 1. The intention is to ensure that the planning policy which is prepared is as clear and transparent as possible, and builds in the aspirations of partner agencies where possible.

- 3.5 Members are aware that work is underway on preparing Supplementary Guidance on Housing in the Countryside, Developer Contributions and Open Space Provision. The new LDP will pick up these individual pieces of work when they are complete and ensure that they are given full planning status by being subject to the statutory provisions of the Planning Act. The intention of the new Plan will be to provide an overview of policy and for detail to be placed in Supplementary Guidance, which will have enhanced status under the new planning arrangements.
- 3.5 It is considered that within the context of the overall strategy and vision for the area, there are some key development areas which require to be taken forward in a formal Local Development Plan. These are development opportunities, such as those identified in the A96 Corridor, where the existing Local Plans do not fully reflect the changed circumstances, and where to wait for the formal review of the area Local Development Plans is not appropriate. Other areas may be identified through discussion with Members and communities.

#### **4. Timetable for the Plan**

- 4.1 An ambitious timescale has been set for the delivery of this LDP, bearing in mind that it is a Scottish Government pilot project. The recommended timeline from the new circular is shown in appendix 2, with the proposed timescale for the Highland plan added. The first step in the process will be a meeting/seminar with Scottish Government and with the partner agencies involved, which is being arranged by Jim Mackinnon, the Chief Planner.
- 4.2 The first formal stage in plan preparation is the production of the Main Issues Report, along with an updated Development Plan Scheme, a monitoring report and a draft Environmental Report. This will be presented to the March 2009 PED Committee, and will set out the various policy options available to the Council. This document will then be subject to formal public consultation before the preparation of the Proposed Plan later in the year.
- 4.3 With such a challenging timescale, getting the views of all the stakeholders involved is going to be a key task. It is proposed that various Members' workshops are held, and use made of the Ward Forums to debate key strategic issues. The Land Environment and Sustainability Strategy Group will be an important forum to debate relevant issues such as coastal development or crofting. Further details on all engagement opportunities will be contained within the updated Development Plan Scheme.

## **5. Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 5.1 A scoping report for the Highland wide Local Development Plan is currently being prepared, and an assessment of the various options within the Main Issues report will be contained within it.

## **6. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment Scoping exercise will be undertaken in advance of the Main Issues report being prepared, and the outcomes reported to the March 2009 PED Committee.

## **7. Community Engagement**

- 7.1 Community Engagement will be undertaken throughout the plan preparation process, and full details of how the Council will meet the national standards of community engagement will be set out in the revised Development Plan Scheme.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 This work is being carried out within the existing Service budget.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The preparation of the Highland wide Local Development Plan offers an opportunity to provide a bold spatial strategy and vision for future development patterns in Highland. It will also assist in providing further guidance for the A96 Corridor where significant infrastructure investment will be required over the next 20-30 years.

### **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 (i) That Committee support the ongoing preparation of the Highland wide Local Development Plan as a key part of the Council's Programme.
- (ii) That a Main Issues Report, updated Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement, draft Environmental Report and Monitoring Statement be brought to the March 2009 PED Committee for approval and subsequent public consultation.

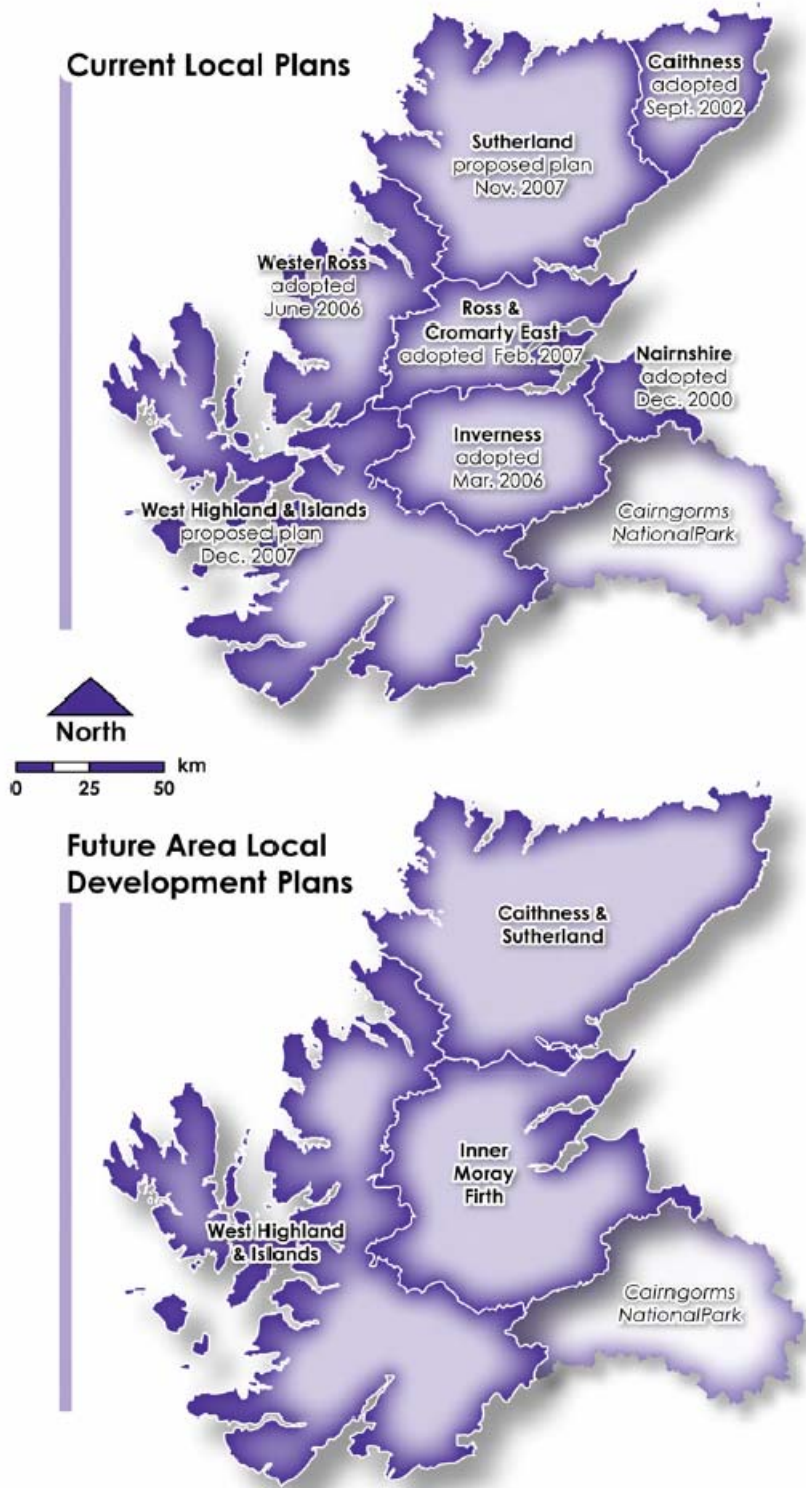
Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning and Development

Date: 13 January 2009

Author: Malcolm Macleod

**Map 1 – Area Local Development Plans to be prepared after the Highland wide Local Development Plan is adopted.**



## Appendix 1 - Planning Policy content of the Highland wide Local Development Plan

Topic	Policies	Context
Sustainable Design	<b>Designing for Sustainability Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to Designing for Sustainability Supplementary Guidance and associated “Sustainability Statements”.</li> </ul>
Place Making	<b>Design quality policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Residential Development Design and Layout Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Links to various Planning Advice Notes on layout and design</li> <li>• Links to revised roads guidance.</li> </ul>
Developer Contributions	<b>Developer Contributions Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance.</li> </ul>
Flood Management	<b>Flooding Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to Designing for Sustainability Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Links to Flood Management Supplementary Guidance</li> </ul>
Water and wastewater infrastructure	<b>Strategic policy and link to spatial priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to SEPA wastewater policy</li> <li>• Links to Infrastructure deficiencies and spatial priorities for investment</li> </ul>
Housing	<b>Strategic Land Supply Housing in the Countryside Affordable Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to Housing in the Countryside Supplementary Guidance. Revised hinterland boundaries set out as part of this plan if required.</li> <li>• Links to Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Links to Housing Land Supply and Population Projections work</li> </ul>
Retailing	<b>Retail Development Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Scottish Planning Policy.</li> <li>• Link to appraisal of existing and likely future retail provision in Highland.</li> </ul>
Open Space	<b>Open Space Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Scottish Planning</li> </ul>

		<p>Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Open Space Supplementary Guidance setting out the procedures to be followed and standards to be adopted.</li> </ul>
Access	<b>Core Path Plan network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to Core Path Plans which will eventually become part of the LDP</li> </ul>
Business and Industry	<b>Strategic Business and Industrial Land Supply Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to Inner Moray Firth Ports &amp; Sites Strategy</li> <li>• Links to Business and Industrial land audit/ liaison with HIE</li> </ul>
Agricultural land	<b>Safeguarding important agricultural or locally important croft land</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to outcomes from Shucksmith Report.</li> <li>• Working with Crofters Commission and linkages between planning and decrofting.</li> </ul>
Marine Planning	<b>Coastal Development Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Supplementary Guidance and associated work on Coastal Development</li> </ul>
Forestry	<b>Strategic forestry and woodlands policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Forest and Woodland Strategy</li> </ul>
Minerals	<b>Strategic minerals policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to Scottish Planning Policy.</li> <li>• Contributions to Scotland, UK and International markets</li> </ul>
Renewable Energy	<b>Strategic renewable energy policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Scottish Planning Policy.</li> <li>• Link to Renewable Energy Supplementary Guidance</li> </ul>
Natural and Cultural Heritage	<b>Strategic policies relating to international, national and local natural and cultural heritage features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close working with Scottish Natural Heritage.</li> <li>• Links to work on landscape</li> <li>• Links to protected natural heritage areas.</li> </ul>
Transport	<b>Strategic transport policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to Hi-Trans Strategy</li> <li>• Links to Local Transport Strategy</li> <li>• Links to Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Links to Residential Design and Layout Supplementary</li> </ul>

		Guidance
Waste management	<b>Strategic waste management policy</b> <b>Landfill site policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to potential waste management Supplementary Guidance.</li> <li>• Links to Area Waste Plan and revised Scottish Planning Policy/Waste Strategy.</li> <li>• Links to Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance</li> </ul>
Air Quality	<b>Strategic Air Quality policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to SEPA concerns</li> </ul>
Contaminated Land	<b>Contaminated Land policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to established Contaminated Land procedures</li> <li>• Re-use of brownfield land</li> </ul>
Tourism	<b>Support for tourism industry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to economic development and safeguarding of natural and cultural heritage.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 2 - HIGHLAND WIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN TIMETABLE

