

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

Reference Number:	<b>HWLDP-MIR-57</b>
Organisation/Individual:	Keeping Nairnshire Colourful – Annie Stewart

**Action:**

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

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

**Issues Raised in Response:**

Purpose of Main Issues Report	
NPF2 for Scotland	
Vision for the Highlands	x
Inverness and A96	
The A96 Corridor	x
Phasing of Development	
Developer Contributions	
East Inverness	
Nairn	x
Tornagrain	
Smaller Settlements in A96	
Caithness and North Sutherland	
Easter Ross and Nigg	
Development of Local Centres	
Wider Countryside and Fragile Areas	
Population and Housing	
Housing in the Countryside	
Affordable Housing	
Planning for an Ageing Population	
Gypsies/Travellers	
Retailing	
Developer Contributions	
Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	x

Previously used Land	
Wild Land	
Water Environment	
Renewable Energy	
Flooding	
Waste Management	
Air Quality	
Sustainable Design	
Business and Industrial Land	
Accessibility and Transport	
Agricultural Land	
Subdivision of Existing Crofts	
Allocation of Inbye Land	
New Crofting Township	
Small Scale New Crofts	
Coastal Development	
Forestry and Woodland	
Minerals	
Open Space and Physical Activity	
Access to the Outdoors	
Comments on Consultation Process (+ve)	
Comments on Consultation Process (-ve)	

**Key:**

<b>Background</b>	<b>Spatial Strategy</b>	<b>Policy Options</b>	<b>Consultation</b>
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**Notes:**

Comments mainly focus on A96 Corridor and Nairn, also Energy

Action Sheet Completed by:	GW
Date:	8/12/09

**Dawn Sutherland**

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**From:** Annie Stewart [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 November 2009 18:52  
**To:** devplans  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Highland wide Local Development Plan consultation



Comment on HWDP  
for KNC.doc (3...

Dear Devplans team,

I am writing to send the comments from the Keeping Nairnshire Colourful Committee. The voluntary group aims to promote horticulture in Nairn and

The comments are attached below in a "Word" document of 4 pages.

We would be grateful for an acknowledgement that our comments have been received. We have only addressed the issues most relevant to our work in Nairn.

I have also sent a copy of our comments to our four elected local councillors.

Yours sincerely  
Mrs A Stewart

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## **KEEPING NAIRNSHIRE COLOURFUL**

**Comments on the Highland wide Local Development Plan Main Issues Report on behalf of the Committee members: Dougie Gray (Chairman), Sylvia Walker (Treasurer), Dick Youngson, Archie McLaren, Donald Green, Angela Mackay and Annie Stewart**

### **The Vision:**

The plan is based on the vision that the Highlands “will be one of Europe’s Leading regions”.

**There is no clear indication of what the Highlands will be leading in: a quality area to live and work in, industry, technology, (eco) tourism, renewable energy, food production? The vision must be far more specific to inform the plan and determine the local plans.**

The vision includes “sustainable communities balancing population growth and economic development”.

**Again there is no explanation of what kind of economic activity there will be. This will be key to growth and define any future development. The plan also seems to contradict this statement by suggesting that the bulk of any new development should be concentrated in one area, namely Inverness and the A96 Corridor, rather than being spread more evenly between all the communities of the Highlands.**

### **The A96 Corridor:**

The draft plan seems to seek to implement the A96 Corridor framework which sets out ambitious goals for urban development and residential expansion along the Corridor. At the same time, it refers at length to the safeguarding and enhancement of existing natural assets and the environment (agriculture, fishing, tourism, recreation/amenities, and related service industries).

**There is no acknowledgement of the potential conflict between these demands on land use. Instead the plan seems to favour development (e.g. prime agricultural land can be developed “if essential... for settlement strategy or necessary to meet an established need”). The pressure is most acute in the case of the A96 corridor, where development proposals are concentrated along a coastal zone with land which is agriculturally-productive, environmentally-important, and tourism-focused.**

The future growth envisaged seems to be largely housing development to accommodate a projected major population boom in the Highlands in the next 20 years. The plan suggests that the bulk of this population will need/want to be accommodated in Inverness and along the A96 Corridor.

**There has been a significant increase in the population in the last twenty years but there are no statistics to show that a similar increase is realistic for the future. The plan should be more realistic. If the Highlands is to be sustainable as a whole it makes no sense to create one large conurbation stretching from Inverness to Nairn. There must be more proportional development of all areas of the Highlands.**

***Q2: We do not agree with the preferred option to develop the Corridor as outlined in the A96 Corridor Framework for the reasons outlined above. We would like to see a more realistic level of development in this area and a more holistic approach to land use which will provide sustainable communities.***

***We also disagree that such dense development should be included in the plan without adequate provision for improvements to the infrastructure of the area.***

***However, we would support an option to widen the search for long term expansion sites to the rest of the Inner Moray Firth to allow a more balanced spread of development around Inverness.***

### **Nairn:**

Nairn has been identified as “an important element of the A96 Corridor” offering a long term growth opportunity for Inverness. This implies that Nairn’s future role will be to service a greater Inverness. The population of Nairn is set to double. The areas to the west, south and north of Inverness have been virtually dismissed for similar development because of geographical, physical and infrastructure constraints. These are considered expensive options whereas the land along the Corridor is flat, well drained and has better transport links. In short it is the cheap and easy option and therefore attractive to developers. On the other hand the plan identifies Nairn as having a distinctive role, a better outlook and climate than the other areas around Inverness.

**Nairn is a distinctive, attractive and historical town with an important role as a tourist destination and a cultural centre surrounded by productive farmland. Its outlook and climate is what is attractive to its residents and visitors. We want it to retain its unique character. Its attractive natural environment, leisure facilities and surrounding productive farmland should be enhanced to service the local population, residents in the surrounding area and tourists.**

**The plan fails to recognise the importance of tourism in Nairn. It should take much greater account of the vital role of tourism as a driver of economic activity, a significant employer, a stimulus to investment, an increasing source of revenue, and a sector that requires and is dependent on the sensitive and sustainable management of the unique natural assets of the area. Urban sprawl and lack of infrastructure impoverish the resident and tourist experience.**

**The plan makes no mention of the importance of the farmland around Nairn. There is likely to be an increased demand for locally produced food. This farmland must be protected.**

Lochloy and Sandown are considered to be the priority areas for development. Other areas to the south and west of the town are also being considered to meet the proposed housing demand. The plan shows that much of the housing development, particularly at Sandown, will be high and medium density.

**While there is and will continue to be a housing need in Nairn any dense development will threaten Nairn’s unique character and its tourist trade. The proposed developments at Delnies and to the south seem to offer more suitable levels of density. The Delnies development also utilises the natural assets of Nairn to provide economic growth by enhancing tourist and outdoor leisure opportunities. The southern proposals seek to contribute to the regeneration of**

the town centre. Both of these are welcome and compliment Nairn's existing character.

**Nairn needs opportunities for economic growth and better retail facilities, not just more housing.**

**Equally important to us are the regeneration of the town centre and the safeguarding of the green spaces within it such as the Farmers' Showfield, Viewfield Park and areas for allotments.**

**The protection and enhancement of Nairn's natural assets and environment (the beach, coastal outlook, riverside and rural hinterland) should be given as much priority as identifying land for development, not least because of the importance of these assets to the tourism-based economy of the town. We want to keep the vistas to the coastline and across the Moray Firth. We want to conserve the green spaces and the areas of fragile environment such as the woodlands and wetlands in the west. We want an attractive western gateway, not a dense housing development.**

The Plan also states that "The full development of the A96 Corridor Framework depends upon a number of improvements to the infrastructure between Inverness and Nairn. These.....include dualling the A96, a new bypass for Nairn .....improvements to the wastewater treatment around Nairn and a new water supply for Inverness and Nairn."

**The need for an improvement to the infrastructure of Nairn has long been identified. This needs to be addressed before more pressures are created by new development. A Nairn bypass is essential now to relieve the flow of traffic through the town. Indeed any development to the south is impossible without a new road.**

No mention is made of Nairn's links to the south and east of the town.

**These links are important to us as residents and to our visitors. The A96 and the Moray Firth do not stop at Auldearn as the plan does, nor does the railway. Plans for Nairn's transport development should also look east and south, not just west to Inverness.**

*Q5: We do not agree with the preferred option which seeks to identify large areas around the town for mainly high and medium density housing development to accommodate a doubling of the population. We do not think this increase in population is either realistic in the current economic climate or desirable for Nairn.*

*We prefer a more limited but balanced plan of development for Nairn that may include sites at Delnies and to the south but does not threaten the farmland and natural environment surrounding the town. This should provide some new housing, bring much needed economic growth to Nairn, regenerate the town centre and enhance the leisure facilities and tourist opportunities.*

*We want to see a Nairn bypass and other improvement to the town's infrastructure included in the plan.*

### **Safeguarding Our Environment**

**Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage**

**It is its natural heritage that defines the Highlands and this must not be threatened. We hope the Highland Biodiversity and Environment Officers have been given sufficient opportunity to give their input to this consultation.**

***Q19: We agree with the preferred option, in particular that developers take a positive and holistic approach to local biodiversity in making planning applications***

#### **Sustainable Development and Climate Change**

The plan concentrates on developing larger onshore wind farms and exploring sites for marine renewables to meet the Scottish Government's targets for reducing emissions. Both of these will make a huge impact on the natural environment. There is only passing mention of hydro-power and other technologies such as biomass and energy from waste. These produce energy far more efficiently, have far less impact on the environment and can benefit local communities.

***Q23: We do not agree with the preferred option. While we are not averse to wind farms we would prefer a more limited expansion of sites for these. We are concerned about the impact proposed wind farms on the Dava Moor will have on the local biodiversity, natural environment and fragile peat bogs in Nairnshire. We are also concerned about how plans for marine renewables will affect the marine ecology of the Moray Firth.***

***We would welcome plans to develop other technologies for renewables which would have less impact on the landscape and seascape around Nairn and would bring benefit to the local community.***

29 October 2009