

SUMMARY

- The finalised Housing Land Audit shows that there is an effective land supply of 11,498 housing units in Highland for the five years between 2006 and 2010.
- The key constraints affecting the housing land supply are: water supply and wastewater treatment; phasing/ownership; and physical.
- In the first six months of 2006 670 new dwellings have been completed.

HOUSING LAND AUDIT

Scottish Planning Policy 3 (Planning for Housing) issued by the Scottish Executive in 2003 states that "Planning authorities should carry out regular monitoring of housing completions and availability of effective land by preparing a housing land audit". It continues that "The aim of the audit process is to ensure that, at all times, sufficient effective land is available to meet the housing land requirement for at least the following five years". On this basis, and following guidance set out in the Scottish Executive's Planning Advice Note 38 (Housing Land), The Highland Council has produced a Housing Land Audit with a base date of 31 December 2005.

The Audit sets out the context to the supply of housing in the area, and details all sites identified for housing in Local Plans throughout the area, as well as windfall sites which have received planning permission for housing and have not yet been built out. For each of these sites, a number of key pieces of information has been collected and brought together. Of critical importance are the likely build rate (programming) of development on each site and the identification of any constraints holding up development.



CONSULTATION

During May and June 2006, the Planning & Development Service undertook a consultation exercise on its Draft Housing Land Audit. All known owners and developers of housing sites allocated within local plans were contacted to confirm that the information prepared internally for the Draft Audit accurately reflected the status of the site.

There were approximately 120 respondents providing information on 200 individual sites. Strategic Highland wide responses were also received from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Communities Scotland and SEPA. Scottish Water provided capacity information on their assets in the Highlands.

The Draft Housing Land Audit was also discussed at meetings of the Local Housing Development Forums held in each Council Area. Communities Scotland, the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust, local housing associations, Highland Housing Alliance, The Highland Council Planning and Development and Housing Services, SEPA and Cairngorms National Park Authority were represented.



HOUSING LAND AUDIT RESULTS

The responses received during the consultation period have been incorporated into the finalised Audit. This provides an updated position statement on the availability of housing land within Highland. A summary of this information is set out in Table 1.

The conclusion is that there is an effective land supply of 11,498 housing units in Highland for the five years between 2006 and 2010. This comprises programmed development of 7,535 units on Local Plan housing sites with extant planning permissions on windfall sites (those that have not been specifically allocated for housing within Local Plans) providing a further 3,963 units. The delivery of some of the effective land supply is based on the removal of existing water and wastewater infrastructure constraints. The Council understands that these constraints will be removed over the next few years as part of Scottish Water's ongoing investment programme.

The overall identified effective supply figure of 11,498 exceeds the Structure Plan requirement of 6,500 units, giving an additional four years supply of effective land. When the figures are examined at Highland Council Area level the same positive picture emerges, ranging from a minimum supply of 6.3 years in both Nairn and Ross and Cromarty to a maximum supply of 17.2 years in Badenoch and Strathspey.

Table 1: Land Supply for Housing

Area	2006 - 2010					2011+	
	Structure Plan Housing Requirement (1)	Local Plan Effective Land Supply (2)	Windfall (3)	Total Effective Supply (Local Plan + Windfall) (4)	Number of Years' Supply	Local Plan Effective Land Supply (5)	Local Plan Constrained Land Supply (6)
Badenoch & Strathspey	420	1023	418	1441	17.2	611	58
Caithness	355	543	394	937	13.2	1070	243
Inverness	2260	2544	1343	3887	8.6	2465	6
Lochaber	500	716	365	1081	10.8	295	395
Nairn	315	297	98	395	6.3	205	0
Ross & Cromarty	1810	1694	604	2298	6.3	3303	606
Skye & Lochalsh	550	455	456	911	8.3	515	173
Sutherland	290	263	285	548	9.4	714	80
Total	6500	7535	3963	11498	8.8	9178	1561

Figures given are the number of housing units.

- 1 Housing requirement as set out in Policy H1 of the Structure Plan
- 2 Number of housing units on Local Plan housing sites programmed between 2006 and 2010.
- 3 Number of housing units with planning permission on windfall sites (sites not specifically identified for housing within Local Plans) as at December 2005.
- 4 The delivery of some of the units may be affected by the lack of adequate water and drainage systems.
- 5 Number of housing units on Local Plan housing sites programmed for delivery in 2011 and beyond. These units are still considered to be effective but are subject to phasing or ownership issues.
- 6 Number of housing units on Local Plan housing sites that are subject to physical or infrastructure (other than water or waste water treatment provision) constraints. These are not considered to be part of the effective land supply.

KEY CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING THE HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

Scottish Water: Water and Wastewater

Recent discussions between Council officials and Scottish Water have led to a more accurate picture of the capacity of Scottish Water assets. 2,749 house units from the Housing Land Audit's land supply (Local Plan allocated and windfall) are subject to water and/or wastewater constraints. A further 2,379 house units are in water supply areas and/or wastewater treatment areas that are nearing capacity.

Phasing/Ownership

Table 1 shows that, on land allocated for housing within the Local Plans, there are 9,178 housing units programmed for development in 2011 and beyond that are considered to be effective. 6,436 of these relate to the completion of sites where initial construction commenced before 2011. The remaining 2,742 units are subject to phasing (land programmed for longer term supply) or ownership (land not currently available) issues. There are, however, no physical constraints preventing development on these sites.

Physical

Table 1 shows that a further 1,561 housing units on land allocated for housing with the Local Plans are considered to be constrained and not deliverable before 2011. These sites are constrained by physical factors such as: poor ground conditions; contamination; infrastructure (other than water and waste water provision); and land use.

RECENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Housing completions are calculated quarterly and are based on completion certificates issued through The Council's Area Planning and Building Standards Offices.

The number of housing completions by Highland Council Area between January 2000 and June 2006 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Housing completions by Highland Council Area 2000 – 2006

AREA	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006*	Total
Badenoch & Strathspey	46	39	89	80	135	105	73	567
Caithness	61	80	94	84	108	104	49	580
Inverness	416	425	437	544	427	575	248	3072
Lochaber	61	70	92	86	85	73	57	524
Nairn	106	66	66	125	96	108	53	620
Ross & Cromarty	228	219	246	254	295	218	115	1575
Skye & Lochalsh	94	67	60	79	96	101	51	548
Sutherland	35	37	50	37	45	60	24	288
Total	1047	1003	1134	1289	1287	1344	670	7774

Figures given are the number of housing units.

* January to June 2006

NEXT STEPS

- The completed Housing Land Audit will be made available on [The Council's website](#) on a site by site basis. Figure 1 (overleaf) gives an example of the information that will be presented.
- Having identified the key constraints affecting housing development in Highland, the Planning & Development Service will seek to resolve these by informing the investment programmes of its partners and the ongoing review of Local Plans.
- The Housing Land Audit is an annual position statement on the supply of housing land. The next audit will be prepared in January 2007 with a base date of 31 December 2006.
- The Planning & Development Service intends to incorporate more information on affordable housing requirements and developer contributions into the next Housing Land Audit.

Reflecting recent growth in the population of Highland, there was an increase of some 4.4% in the number of new dwellings completed in 2005 (1,344) compared with 2004 (1,287).

There have been 670 new dwellings completed within the first six months of 2006. If this rate continues through the rest of the year there will be a similar number of new dwellings completed compared with 2005.



Figure 1: Housing Land Audit Site Information - Example

