

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

Reference Number:	HWLDP-MIR-97
Organisation/Individual:	Mr J D Moore

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		Previously used Land	
NPF2 for Scotland		Wild Land	
Vision for the Highlands		Water Environment	
Inverness and A96		Renewable Energy	
The A96 Corridor		Flooding	
Phasing of Development		Waste Management	
Developer Contributions		Air Quality	
East Inverness		Sustainable Design	
Nairn		Business and Industrial Land	
Tornagrain		Accessibility and Transport	x
Smaller Settlements in A96		Agricultural Land	
Caithness and North Sutherland	x	Subdivision of Existing Crofts	
Easter Ross and Nigg		Allocation of Inbye Land	
Development of Local Centres		New Crofting Township	
Wider Countryside and Fragile Areas		Small Scale New Crofts	
Population and Housing		Coastal Development	
Housing in the Countryside		Forestry and Woodland	
Affordable Housing		Minerals	
Planning for an Ageing Population		Open Space and Physical Activity	
Gypsies/Travellers		Access to the Outdoors	
Retailing		Comments on Consultation Process (+ve)	
Developer Contributions		Comments on Consultation Process (-ve)	
Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage			

Key:

Background	Spatial Strategy	Policy Options	Consultation
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Notes:

<p>Support for the marine renewable potential in the Pentland Firth Transport improvements, especially rail links North Suggested wording for expanded preferred option</p>

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

H.C. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE		
02 NOV 2009		
PASS TO	INITIALS	DATE
RH		
MM		
FILE REF:		

Baile-an-Or',
 10 Wester Links,
 FORTROSE,
 Ross-shire IV10 8RZ.
 Scotland.



28th October 2009

Director of Planning and Development
 The Highland Council,
 FREEPOST SC05568
 INVERNESS IV3 5BR.

Dear Sir,

RESPONSE TO THE 2009 HIGHLAND DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 19/10/09

In respect of the above I wish to comment on Questions 8 and 28b as follows:

Question 8

Action Plan for Caithness and North Sutherland - Do you agree with our preferred option? If not, tell us why. Are there other alternatives that should be considered?

I welcome and support the recognition given within the Plan to the priorities concerning the Dounreay decommissioning and the Pentland Firth tidal power generation project. It is nevertheless extremely important that a much greater assertive and meaningful recognition is given to the massive economic development potential afforded not only by the Pentland Firth project alone but also in respect of the West of Shetland Oil and Gas exploration potential. The Pentland Firth scheme in particular is an internationally strategically important renewable energy resource which has the potential to meet most of Scotland's and a major part of the UK's energy needs. The environmental benefits of the Pentland Firth scheme are also of massive importance in view of the recognised necessity of carbon emissions reduction which the renewable energy from this tidal power scheme can significantly achieve. This scheme, and future oil and gas exploration, also have the potential to generate several hundred million pounds of income per year from Caithness and the Far North. It should be fully recognised by the Council that the Scottish Government has made it very clear that it regards the Pentland Firth project as one of the greatest possible importance for the future and the Council must do everything to support that.

The income therefrom would impart massive and welcome benefits to the Highland Council and the Scottish Government, which are both facing serious financial difficulties as a consequence of the

credit crunch. Nevertheless, the importance of major transport link improvements of which the rail link, to the Far North in particular, in this context cannot be overstated. I welcome the recognition given in the accompanying map of Caithness to the need to upgrade the rail links the more so in respect of the rail line to Caithness where, in it's present state, it is being increasingly recognised and acknowledged as too slow and inadequate to meet present requirements let alone the needs of the above developments.

Major improvements are needed to the railway in order to help bring about the improvements outlined in this section. Rail improvements are recognised as giving major benefits to areas they serve, as can be seen from such improvements recently taking place in Scotland, e.g. Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine and of course elsewhere in the UK. Rail also has proven environmental benefits in terms of transport related carbon emissions reduction compared to road and air transport. These considerations need to be bore in mind and I request the inclusion of major rail improvements to Caithness, particularly including the Dornoch Rail Link (about which your Department already has the full details in it's possession provided by the Dornoch Rail Link Action Group)in the list of Main Issues affecting Caithness.

Question 28b

Accessibility and Transport - Do you agree with our Preferred Option? If not, tell us why. Are there any other alternatives that should be considered?

I note the recognition for the necessity of transport upgrades for the Highand Region although I am very seriously concerned at the content of this section for two reasons:

- 1) Good, competitive, reliable and fast railway links are particularly and critically important given the current economic, social and environmental concerns for developing the Highlands economy. I do not feel that the subsuming of the accessibility and transport section within the "competitive, sustainable and adaptable Highland economy" gives sufficient credence to this priority.
- 2) The importance of rail improvements must be given much more prominence and priority than they are now. It is extremely important that rail transport is treated on the same level as road transport as the current section is too heavily road oriented. The environmental and socio-economic benefits of rail must be recognised in planning transport for the Highlands as a whole.

I note the necessity for improving the Inverness-Wick and Highland Main lines as shown in the accompanying maps. It is nevertheless very important that the importance of rail improvements are given the fullest support and clarification possible and that the Accessibility and Transport section is converted into a standalone section of any Plan. Good transport links are increasingly recognised at every level as being vital to the economic well-being of the areas served by such links.

This applies particularly to rail links - the Far North Line particularly. Rail enjoys significant

environmental benefits in that it emits one half of the carbon dioxide emissions per passenger kilometre and one tenth those per tonne kilometre of freight carried compared to road transport. This differential will increase as more of the Scottish rail network is electrified. Rail is also a much safer form of transport than road.

It is with these reasons in mind that I ask for the Accessibility and Transport section to be made a stand-alone section and that the following bullet point is inserted:

- 1. "Highlighting the massive economic, social and environmental benefits (as easily recognised elsewhere) which rail links improved with major strategic upgrades including the Dornoch Rail Link can achieve particularly for the Northern Highlands commensurate with the strategic developments identified in Section 4 for Caithness and North Sutherland"**

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

John D. Moore