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## 1 The Wester Ross area

1.1 This local plan covers an area of almost 3500 square kilometres, from Inverpolly and Achiltibuie in the north to Applecross, and Lochcarron in the south and east, towards (but not including) Achnasheen.

1.2 It has a population of around 6000 people, most of whom live and work in small and scattered crofting and fishing communities around the coastline. However, almost half of the population live in the four main villages of Ullapool, Aultbea, Gairloch and Lochcarron. Ullapool, with a population of 1300, is the largest of these, offering a high level of services to a wide area of population within Wester Ross and beyond into parts of Sutherland. The new secondary school and supermarket have recently added to the services available.



1.3 The area is dominated by rugged mountains, remote glens and long steep straths (mountain valleys), with fast-flowing rivers that empty into sheltered bays and sea lochs. The landscape is an attractive combination of mountain, moor, loch and coast, which offers outstanding scenery. The high quality of the environment is reflected in the fact that much of the area is recognised by national or European government as having a high value for landscape and nature conservation.

1.4 Over the past 20 years the area has experienced significant changes. While the population has been growing, it has also been ageing. In 2001 almost 20% of the population was aged 65 or over. The area has been under considerable pressure for second and holiday homes. Almost a quarter of all houses in Wester Ross are second or holiday homes, but in Torridon this rises to 40%. Ullapool in particular has experienced major development pressure, with a high demand for new housing in an area with severe physical limits, due to things such as its landscape and steep rocky ground. Road improvements have made the larger settlements to the east more accessible, although there are still large sections of single-track A roads.

1.5 You can find facts and figures about a range of social, economic and environmental issues in appendix 1.

1.6 A lot of the terms we use in this document are explained in the glossary at the end of the plan.

## 2 The purpose of the plan

2.1 The purpose of the plan is to help achieve the vision for the future of Wester Ross. It does this by guiding new development to appropriate locations by:

- identifying areas of land for development; and
- setting out the conditions we will use to assess applications for planning permission.

You **must** read this plan with the Highland Structure Plan (see section 3). You can get the structure plan (and all the other documents we have produced and mentioned in this plan) from:

The Highland Council  
Planning and Development Service  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness  
IV3 5NX.  
Phone: 01463 702507  
Website: [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

2.2 This local plan replaces the following local plans.

- Applecross, Gairloch and Lochcarron Local Plan 1985
- Ullapool Village Plan 1995
- Gairloch Village Plan 1996
- Lochbroom (Landward) Local Plan 1999.

### 3 Linking with other plans and strategies

#### Planning policy documents

3.1 This plan forms part of a series of national and local planning policy documents that developers have to take into account when drawing up development proposals. We consider all of the following when making decisions on planning applications.

#### 3.2 National planning policy

National planning policy is set out in 'Scottish Planning Policy' and 'National Planning Policy Guidelines'. We must take these into account when preparing local plans and considering planning applications. You can get a full list of these policy guidelines (and advice on detailed matters and best practice in 'Planning Advice Notes', which are also produced by the Scottish Executive) by contacting:

Scottish Executive  
Planning Division  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ.  
Phone: 08457 741741  
Website: [www.scotland.gov.uk/planning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning)

#### 3.3 The Highland Structure Plan

The Highland Structure Plan is our main planning document and sets out the strategic framework for the future development of Highland as a whole. It contains many general and detailed policies, including housing, minerals, renewable energy and utilities (gas and electricity). Scottish Ministers approved the current structure plan in March 2001.

3.4 The structure plan, along with the local plan, forms the 'development plan' for an area. Under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, we must make decisions on all development proposals in line with the development plan, unless material considerations mean otherwise.

#### 3.5 The Indicative Forestry Strategy (IFS)

The IFS forms part of the Highland Structure Plan and offers strategic guidance for establishing a range of woodland, including native woodland. The IFS which was approved by the Secretary of State for Scotland in 1994, has now been updated by the Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy.

#### 3.6 Development plan policy guidelines

We produce a number of development plan policy guidelines that are associated with the development plan. The guidelines provide more detailed guidance on interpreting specific policies that are set out in the structure plan and local plan.

3.7 The local plan does not repeat the policies set out in these documents. It translates them so that they are relevant to the situation in Wester Ross and transfers them onto a map. The development plan policy guidelines which are available from us include Housing in the Countryside, Affordable Housing and Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands.

## **Other plans and strategies**

3.8 We recognise the importance of working with other agencies. As a result, we must take account of other plans and strategies that cover the Wester Ross area and deal with wider issues. Even where these relate to land use, they are not repeated in the local plan. However, we should still take them into account as they may be material considerations. In appendix 2, we have given a summary of those that are most relevant to this local plan. We will also need to take account of new and updated strategies that are produced during the life of this local plan.

## 4 The main issues for the plan area

4.1 Public consultation exercises have highlighted the main issues for Wester Ross as follows.

<p><b>Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the economic sectors on which the economy is based.</li> <li>• Maintaining and supporting existing economic activities.</li> <li>• Reducing the dependence on seasonal employment.</li> <li>• Creating new jobs linked with managing the environment.</li> <li>• Making better use of existing industrial and commercial infrastructure.</li> <li>• Continuing to reduce unemployment.</li> <li>• Increasing opportunities for jobs based in information technology.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing for an increasing population and an increasing number of households.</li> <li>• Providing for more housing.</li> <li>• Meeting the need for affordable housing.</li> <li>• Reducing the effect of the high number of second and holiday homes.</li> <li>• Achieving sustainable design.</li> <li>• Making sure that land is available for housing (including using crofting land selectively).</li> <li>• Overcoming factors which make development difficult (including high infrastructure costs and poor ground conditions).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extending the availability of broadband.</li> <li>• Improving investment in roads, water and sewage, and considering the effect of European Union directives.</li> <li>• Considering whether upgrading electricity power lines (as part of the link from the Western Isles to the Central Belt) is appropriate.</li> <li>• Promoting best practice for construction and design.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fragility and services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing for an ageing population.</li> <li>• Recognising that population growth is uneven (with decline in some areas).</li> <li>• Maintaining and improving existing services.</li> <li>• Making sure that everyone has equal access to services, public transport and waste services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural and cultural heritage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining a high-quality natural heritage.</li> <li>• Recognising the high number and extensive coverage of European and national designations (covering landscape and natural conservation).</li> <li>• Taking account of cultural heritage sites (including historical landscapes, archaeological sites and historic buildings).</li> <li>• Dealing with demand for development while protecting the quality and character of the environment.</li> <li>• Recognising the importance of recreation and tourism.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Coast</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balancing the effect of fish-farm developments against the quality of the environment.</li> <li>• Recognising the relationship of development between the coast and the land.</li> <li>• Looking at the possibility of further developing the coast, including marinas and renewable energy, for the benefit of local communities.</li> <li>• Aiming to benefit from the rich natural variety and quality of marine life.</li> <li>• Investigating the marine cultural heritage.</li> </ul>

4.2 It is important we recognise that these issues are much broader than what the local plan covers. They are also linked to one another, and action taken to deal with one issue may affect another. You can get more information on economic development, housing and natural and built heritage issues from a series of 'topic monitoring reports'. Please contact our Planning and Development Service if you would like a copy.

## 5 Working towards the vision

5.1 We have based this plan on a vision for Wester Ross:

'Thriving, developing and working communities, maintaining a strong sense of identity, living in one of the finest landscapes in the UK.'

5.2 When creating the vision, we considered:

- the results of public consultation exercises;
- the issues that Wester Ross faces;
- the Scottish Executive's vision for rural Scotland;
- the visions from the Highland Community Plan and Highland Structure Plan; and
- the aims and objectives of other plans and strategies that cover the Wester Ross area.

5.3 Here are some ways in which the vision will be reflected.

- **An increasing population** across all age groups.
- Everyone is **able to rent or buy suitable housing at a price they can afford**, by building on the work of the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust and local housing associations in villages such as Torridon and Shieldaig.
- Everyone has **better access to high-quality services** (particularly for the more remote rural areas) by using imaginative solutions such as the possible emergency helicopter landing area at Lochcarron and community centres (for example, the one at Achiltibuie).
- The **economy is prosperous** across all sectors, from the traditionally strong tourism sector to new sectors such as information technology, and economic prosperity spreads beyond the largest centres of Ullapool and Gairloch to smaller villages such as Lochcarron and Kinlochewe.
- We promote **year-round tourism** as well as new employment opportunities that are appropriate to the area (this might include information technology, small-scale renewable energy, such as individual wind turbines, and specialist manufacturing).
- We **upgrade the main roads**, including Achnasheen to Gairloch and Achnasheen to Lochcarron, and regularly maintain all other routes.
- We **improve infrastructure** by making sure that as many people as possible have access to broadband, improving public transport to provide more frequent links to, for example, Dingwall and Inverness, increasing the supply of waste facilities such as the recycling centre in Lochcarron and supporting the creation of the Trans Highland Cycle Route from Dingwall to Ullapool.
- We have an **outstanding natural and cultural environment** which is renowned for its mountains, lochs and coast that future generations can enjoy, but which is also recognised as offering economic opportunities.

5.4 The local plan will not achieve the vision alone. Although we can contribute significantly through the actions set out our corporate plan, we will need to depend on a wide range of agencies, businesses and the community working together. We will also need to depend on other partnership and individual agency strategies, such as the Community Plan, Community Economic Development Plan, the Local Transport Strategy, Highlands of Scotland Tourism Strategy and the Natural Heritage Futures.

## 6 The strategy of the plan

6.1 Our structure plan identifies seven themes for Highland as a whole. The policies set out in this local plan broadly reflect these themes. This section outlines how each of the strategic themes is reflected in the policy section (section 9) of the plan.

### **Protecting and promoting the identity of Wester Ross**

- Protecting areas and species which are recognised for their natural and cultural heritage value.
- Preserving the existing pattern of building within settlements.
- Identifying and protecting important local features which contribute to the area's identity.
- Highlighting how European Union directives could affect development proposals.

### **Using the natural environment positively and wisely**

- Identifying the scope for development within the countryside in relation to the importance of the natural heritage features it contains, and the nature and scale of development.

### **Improving access to goods, services and markets**

- Making sure that new development is close to existing services and mainly within existing communities.
- Highlighting where contributions from developers for access and other infrastructure need to be associated with new development.
- Identifying areas that are having difficulties maintaining their population and services.

### **Maintaining the existing settlement hierarchy**

- Focusing development within existing settlements.
- Recognising the role of Ullapool, Gairloch and Lochcarron as local centres.
- Making sure that there is enough land for housing.

### **Creating an improved business environment**

- Identifying land for business and industry in the four main settlements.
- Highlighting the need for a framework plan allowing for a range of activities for the Kishorn Yard.

### **Dealing with the need for quality living environments**

- Promoting sustainable design.
- Helping to provide land for affordable housing where there is a known need.
- Promoting the adoption of sustainable drainage systems and measures to control flooding.

### **Working with the community and other agencies**

- Improving how the community can get involved.
- Building on the work of existing partnership groups.
- Carrying out discussions with community councils.

## 7 Geographical aspects of the strategy

7.1 The local plan recognises the need for a number of approaches to respond to different pressures and to put different parts of the strategy into practice in distinct geographical areas. The strategic themes highlight three areas where a different policy approach is needed. These are:

- settlement development areas;
- countryside; and
- fragile areas.

We give details of how these are defined and their effects below.

### Settlement development areas

7.2 A number of parts of the strategy highlight the importance of supporting existing communities. As a result, we have defined settlement development areas. These are the preferred areas for most types of development, including housing. This is consistent with the Structure Plan Policy H3, which says that housing development will generally be within existing and planned new settlements. Because of this, we will meet the housing requirements (as shown in appendix 3) within the settlement development areas. This makes best use of existing infrastructure and services (including collecting waste and the fire services) and protects the character of the surrounding countryside. When defining settlement development areas we have taken account of a number of things, including:

- the quality of neighbouring croft or agricultural land;
- the type of land;
- the ability of the landscape to allow for development;
- the pattern of existing settlements; and
- the availability of infrastructure.

The plan aims to allow enough room for future development (including infill development) while recognising the physical limits due to the landscape and ground conditions. As a result, where possible we have drawn the boundaries of the settlement development areas relatively widely around the existing built-up areas.

### Land allocations

7.3 The strategy recognises that most of the future growth of Wester Ross will be in the three villages of Ullapool, Gairloch and Lochcarron (defined as local centres in the Highland Structure Plan). These are the communities:

- which have experienced the greatest development pressures;
- where the main services are;
- where the best transport links are; and
- where larger-scale industrial and business development is the most practical.

As a result, land is specifically allocated here for general housing to meet most of future housing need in Wester Ross. The housing allocations are based on an assessment of the future size of the population and number of households (and take account of the

need for housing for people who already live in the area as well as people who may move into the area) but also allow for ineffective housing stock and possible changes in the housing market. Within these three settlements we have also kept existing industrial allocations.

7.4 We have made allocations in Aultbea and Poolewe because of the scale of possible housing sites and the need to provide for their development in a planned way.

7.5 We recognise affordable housing as a particular need. As a result, we have allocated land to meet this need in certain settlements. We have identified sites in Ullapool, Aultbea, Poolewe, Torridon and Lochcarron through the Local Housing Development Fora and on the basis that there is enough land for general housing and a proven local need.

7.6 We have allocated other land where there is a particular opportunity to redevelop a site in a planned and co-ordinated way (possibly for a combination of housing and commercial or other use) or where land is reserved for a particular community use.

7.7 While we expect most of the land allocated in the local plan to be developed during the life of the plan (to 2012), where this may not be possible because of issues relating to water and sewage facilities, we have still included it to make a case to Scottish Water for new or upgraded facilities in its 2006-2014 capital plan. These are highlighted in the plan, along with any other development factors.

#### Unallocated land

7.8 Most of the land within the settlement development areas is not allocated for any specific purpose. Much of it has already been developed. Within the settlement development areas, all types of development that are compatible with existing uses may be appropriate.

#### Affordable housing

7.9 Our Local Housing Strategy and the Rural Partnership for Change Highland Pilot identify a need for more than 150 new affordable houses in Wester Ross. To help meet that need, the local plan aims to make sure that new housing development makes a contribution towards the supply of affordable housing. This applies to development on both allocated and unallocated sites.

#### Countryside

7.10 We recognise that there will continue to be demand for development outwith the settlement development areas. We must balance recognising the countryside as an economic resource with development potential against the possible effect of any development on the natural and cultural heritage of the area. In certain situations, this may include the area surrounding key features such as listed buildings or war memorials. This does not prevent development. Instead the strategy identifies three categories of countryside based on the type and importance of natural and cultural heritage they contain (see box 1 in section 9 of the plan).

7.11 Local and regionally important features are mostly identified by us, and contribute to the identity of Wester Ross. Nationally important natural and cultural heritage

features are identified by national organisations or by us under national legislation in line with National Planning Policy Guidelines 5, 13 and 14. Internationally important natural and cultural heritage features are identified under government directives and conventions. How sensitive these features are to development depends on their level of importance and on the nature and scale of development and the likely effect on the feature in question. Only the most important feature is shown on the Proposals Map, and lower levels may exist beneath these. All natural and cultural heritage features must be considered when formulating and assessing development proposals.

7.12 One of the major current development issues in the Wester Ross Local Plan countryside area is the potential development of a transmission line between Ullapool (Ardmair or Loch Broom) to Beauly to serve renewable energy developments in the Western Isles. We will oppose the erection of any overhead 400 kV Extra High Voltage Transmission Line between Ullapool (Ardmair or Loch Broom) and the Local Plan boundary at Dirrie Mor on the basis that such a route would be unacceptable in landscape and scenic terms.

### Fragile areas

7.13 The strategy recognises the different social and economic circumstances between communities within Wester Ross and highlights the need to meet the development needs of rural areas for homes, jobs and services. An important part of the strategy is identifying areas that are fragile due to a range of social and economic factors (you can get the paper which explains how we identify these areas from our Planning and Development Service). Identifying these areas is based only on a statistical analysis. As a result of the level at which data is available, there may be areas which have not been identified as fragile, but are still fragile in some way. These are generally in the south of the area around Applecross and Torridon (see the proposals map), but will change over time as circumstances change. This affects the balance between development and conservation. In fragile areas, particularly within countryside areas of local and regional importance we will support development proposals outwith the settlement development areas which show that they would support communities which are experiencing difficulties in maintaining population and services. In areas of national importance, we will support development proposals outwith the settlement development areas which show they would support communities which are having difficulties in maintaining population and services, as long as they can be shown not to harm that heritage. In those parts of Wester Ross which are not fragile, we have taken account of the need to increase the boundaries of settlement development areas to accommodate development.

## 8 Monitoring the plan

8.1 It is important that we monitor the plan to identify how far policy is being put into practice and is still relevant. This is particularly important in terms of the effect of water and sewage from new development in small communities with no public systems. We will produce regular monitoring reports, taking account of development rates, information from service providers and emerging plans and strategies. These reports will help to show how effective the plan is and will highlight any need for an early review.

## 9 General policies

9.1 We will assess all development proposals against the relevant national planning policies and structure plan policies, in particular the General Strategic Policies relating to design for sustainability, impact assessments, contributions from developers and the precautionary principle. The following policies also apply.

### Policy 1 Settlement Development Areas

We will support proposals within Settlement Development Areas (as shown on the proposals map) as long as they meet the Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for Sustainability, as shown on page 16 of this Plan.

We will also judge proposals in terms of how compatible they are with the existing pattern of development, how they conform with existing and approved adjacent land uses, and the effect on any natural and cultural heritage feature within these areas (see Box 1 and Background Maps) and trees.

Developments which are judged to be significantly detrimental in terms of the above criteria shall not accord with the Local Plan.

### Policy 2 Countryside

When making decisions on development proposals outwith Settlement Development Areas, we will take account of the level of importance of, and the effect on, the natural and cultural heritage (see Box 1 and Background Maps) and compatibility with Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for Sustainability\*.

1. In areas of **local/regional importance** with

- **no local designation** we will support proposals as long as they meet the Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for Sustainability, particularly where it can be shown that they will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.
- **local or regionally important features** we will allow developments if we believe that they will not have an unreasonable impact on the amenity and heritage resource, particularly where it can be shown that they will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.

2. In areas of **national importance** we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the amenity and heritage resource. For national designations, where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.

3. In areas of **international importance** we will allow developments if they will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. Proposals that would adversely affect the relevant interest for which the site is designated will only be allowed if there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive) would be affected prior consultation with the European Commission is required, unless the development is necessary for public health and safety reasons.

### Box 1 Hierarchy of natural and cultural heritage features

<b>Local/regional importance</b>	Areas of Great Landscape Value Category B and C listed buildings Sites and Monuments Record archaeological sites War memorials Settlement setting Inventoried semi-natural woodland Amenity trees Views over open water Remote landscapes of value for recreation Locally important croft land Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest Geological Conservation Review sites Isolated coast Archaeological Heritage Areas
<b>National importance</b>	Scheduled Ancient Monuments Category A listed buildings National Nature Reserves Sites of Special Scientific Interest Inventoried Gardens and Designed Landscapes National Scenic Areas Inventoried Ancient and Long-Established Woodland Tree Preservation Orders Conservation Areas
<b>International importance</b>	Special Protection Areas (including proposed) Special Areas of Conservation (including candidate) Ramsar sites

### Policy 3 Affordable housing

In accordance with the Development Plan Policy Guideline Affordable Housing, on allocated sites with an indicative overall capacity of four or more houses, The Council will expect to negotiate a Section 75 agreement with the landowner/s and other interested parties, or use other mechanisms, which provide for a contribution towards affordable housing (as defined in the Guideline). Negotiations will be subject to market and site conditions and the contribution may be in the form of land, housing units or a financial contribution and will be on the following proportions:

Gairloch	30%
Lochcarron	30%
Ullapool	30%
All other settlements (where there is a demonstrable need)	25%

On these allocated sites, to prevent the subdivision of larger plots, where an application is made for less than four houses, developers will be expected to provide a financial contribution in proportion to the number of units proposed and a Section 75 agreement (or other mechanisms) will be required to ensure that any further development on the site will include an appropriate proportion of affordable housing.

This will also apply to proposals for development on unallocated sites which would be expected to accommodate four or more houses at density levels consistent with the existing settlement pattern.

## Policy 4 Other development considerations

**1. Design for sustainability** – We will judge development proposals against a ‘Design for Sustainability’ statement which developers will need to put forward with their planning applications, in line with the Development Plan Policy Guideline Design for Sustainability.

**2. Waste management** – We will assess proposals for waste management facilities under the conditions set out in the Highland Structure Plan and in line with the Highland Area Waste Plan.

**3. Surface water drainage** – Development proposals must meet the guidance set out in the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Design Manual for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**4. Flood risk** – Development proposals in areas susceptible to flooding will need a flood risk assessment (which the developer must pay for). We will assess them in terms of their suitability in line with the categories set out in the Development Plan Policy Guideline Flood Risk.

**5. Physical constraints** – Development proposals must consider whether they would be located within areas of constraint (as set out in Box 2 and, where possible, shown on the background maps). Within these areas, developers must show that their proposal is compatible with the constraint or that action is taken to reduce negative effects.

**6. Article 4 Directions** (see Glossary) – In areas affected by Article 4 Directions permitted development rights, as specified, are suspended. Developers should refer to the background maps to identify where Article 4 Directions apply.

**7. Article 10 features of the Habitats Directive** (see Glossary) – We will assess development proposals for any adverse effects on natural heritage features that form part of wildlife corridors, including woodlands, lochs, watercourse margins and wetlands.

**8. Development factors** – Developers must take account of the details set out in the Proposals Maps. We will give particular consideration to the total effect of private water and sewage systems.

**9. European Protected Species** – We will assess development proposals for any disturbance to a European Protected Species, as listed in Box 3, or damage to a breeding site/resting place. Any development in such an area requires a separate licence from Scottish Ministers (or the local authority under a recent consultation) to enable works to proceed.

**10. Scheduled Species** – The presence of species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, will be considered as a material consideration in any proposals for development.

Developments which are judged to be significantly detrimental in terms of the above criteria and for which no satisfactory mitigating action can be taken shall not accord with the Local Plan.

**Box 2 Physical constraints (the ones marked with an asterisk (\*) do not currently apply in the Wester Ross Area)**

Radon gas areas\*  
Poorly drained areas  
Within 1,000m of large wind generators\*  
ESI Standards 43-8: "Overhead Line Clearances" (distance from power lines)\*  
Areas of excessive slope (with a gradient of over 1 in 7)  
Existing or former waste management sites  
Land with possible contamination issues<sup>1</sup>  
Areas that could erode or subside  
Safeguard areas around sewage treatment works  
Within 400m of an active quarry  
Next to waters that the EU Shellfish Directive apply to  
Next to waters that the EU Shellfish Hygiene Directive apply to  
Next to waters that the EU Bathing Waters Directive apply to\*

**Box 3 European Protected Species (the ones marked with an asterisk (\*) are not known currently to occur in Wester Ross or offshore)**

<b>Animals</b>	<b>Plants</b>
Bats (all species)	Killarney fern*
Wild Cat	Slender naiad*
Otter	Yellow marsh saxifrage*
Dolphins, porpoises and whales	Floating-leaved water plantain*
Loggerhead turtle	
Green turtle	
Kemp's Ridley turtle	
Hawksbill turtle	
Leatherback turtle	
Natterjack toad*	
Great crested newt*	
Sturgeon*	

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<sup>1</sup> Site specific information, so far as it is currently available, can be obtained upon request.

Structure Plan Policy G2 (this policy has been approved by Scottish Ministers and is not, therefore, subject to consultation).

### **Policy G2 Design for sustainability**

Proposed developments will be assessed on the extent to which they:

- are compatible with service provision (water and sewerage, drainage, roads, schools, electricity);
- are accessible by public transport, cycling and walking as well as car;
- maximise energy efficiency in terms of location, layout and design, including the utilisation of renewable sources of energy;
- are affected by significant risk from natural hazards, including flooding, coastal erosion, land instability and radon gas, unless adequate protective measures are incorporated, or the development is of a temporary nature;
- are affected by safeguard zones where there is a significant risk of disturbance and hazard from industrial installations, including noise, dust, smells, electro-magnetism, radioactivity and subsidence;
- make use of brownfield sites, existing buildings and recycled materials;
- impact on individual and community residential amenity;
- impact on non-renewable resources such as mineral deposits of potential commercial value, prime quality or locally important agricultural land, or approved routes for road and rail links;
- impact on the following resources, including pollution and discharges, particularly within designated areas:

habitats	freshwater systems
species	marine systems
landscape	cultural heritage
scenery	air quality;
- demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design in keeping with local character and historic and natural environment and in making use of appropriate materials;
- promote varied, lively and well-used environments which will enhance community safety and security and reduce any fear of crime;
- accommodate the needs of all sectors of the community, including people with disabilities or other special needs and disadvantaged groups; and
- contribute to the economic and social development of the community.

Developments which are judged to be significantly detrimental in terms of the above criteria shall not accord with the Structure Plan.

## Consultations

Where development is located within a defined consultation area (as set out in Box 4 and, where possible, shown in the Background Maps) the developer and/or the planning authority must, where appropriate, consult the relevant infrastructure provider or regulatory agency when an application is being put forward.

There are a number of other features which cannot currently be mapped, many of which are protected under European Directives or national environmental legislation, such as European Protected Species, priority habitats outwith cSACs under the Habitats Directive, Scheduled species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, and water areas under the Water Framework Directive. As a result, it is important that developers refer to the background maps and contact the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage to discuss proposals at an early date.

### Box 4 Consultation areas (the ones marked with an asterisk (\*) do not currently apply in the Wester Ross area)

Consultation area	Consultee
Safeguard distance away from hazardous sites*	Health and Safety Executive
Defence installations	Ministry of Defence
Civil Aviation Authority safeguards*	Civil Aviation Authority
Gas compounds*	Health and Safety Executive
Explosive licences and storages	Health and Safety Executive
Water catchment areas	Scottish Water
Within 150m of trunk or A road corridors	Trunk Roads Authority/Roads Authority
Railway lines	Network Rail
Canals*	British Waterways
Trunk water mains	Scottish Water
Oil and gas pipelines*	Health and Safety Executive
Flood consultation areas	Scottish Environment Protection Agency