

From: West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan
Subject: FW: West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan [#287]

Section 1: Pol MacDonald

**Your
personal and
contact
details**

1.1 Name *

1.2 Are you? an agent

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**1.3 Name of Client (if
applicable)** Inverlochy Castle Estate Limited

**1.4 Name of Organisation
(if
applicable)** Optimised Environments Limited (OPEN)

**Select a topic to
comment on** Suggest sites for development

Development Site 1 Inverlochy Castle Estate, Torlundy, Fort William, PH33 6SN. A full description of the site it contained within the attached document 'Inverlochy Castle Estate – response to call for sites and ideas'. Location

2.1 Address Plans pg 6&7.

**/ Description
of Site**

**2.2 Landowner's
Name (if
known)** Inverlochy Castle Estate Limited

**2.3 Location
Plan (please
attach)**



[150326_inverlochy_final_lowres.pdf](#) 4.94 MB • PDF

2.4 Suggested Use/s	Inverloch Castle Estate requests the inclusion of the site within the emerging LDP for a mixed use development, comprising of residential, commercial, retail, tourism and recreational uses. See attached document 'Inverloch Castle Estate – response.
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2.5 Site Area 117ha
(ha) (if known)

2.6 How soon can the site be developed?	Within 5 years
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2.7 Select any issues you are aware of that may affect development on the site	Road access
	Footpath access
	Slope
	Flooding
	Poor (boggy) ground
	Good farm or croft land
	Built heritage
	Protected landscape
	Trees

2.8 How will you or the developer of the site resolve any issues selected in question 2.7?

The Estate has been in the ownership of the Chai family for 20 years. In conjunction with the hotel, Inverloch Castle Farm represents an historic land use on the Estate, and is currently still in operation. The land custodianship of the Estate ensures there is an excellent knowledge of the landscape conditions, from ground conditions, drainage, flooding, access, utility provision and tree and habitat coverage. It is acknowledged that as the project progresses this will be further investigated at a more technical level in order to provide an additional level of detail and certainty to proposals. However within the current design team there is an appropriate level of expertise to assess, at this time, the issues that may normally affect development on the site. At this point it is not foreseen that any of these potential technical aspects will inhibit the type of development proposed, and that the development of a sensitive and responsive masterplan will deliver an innovative response to the overall site. It is a firm opinion that the 117ha offers the capacity for the level of development that is being proposed to be integrated successfully while retaining and enhancing the inherent character of the area.

Road Access: The site is accessed from the A82, currently the responsibility of Transport Scotland. Through previous submissions and discussion in relation to the last Local Plan, there was positive dialogue with Transport Scotland on access arrangements at that time, and in turn the possibilities of improving the safety of this road. If local adjustments

are required the majority of the A82 is bordered by land owned by Inverlochy Castle Estate and thereby there is potential scope for improvement without the complications of other landowners.

Footpath Access: There is currently a core path cutting through the western edge of the site on the banks of the River Lochy. This will be maintained and new paths and trails will tie in to it running in to the wider Estate.

Slope: The site is broadly rolling in character with areas of steeper slopes adjacent to watercourses. The basis will be to avoid steeper areas for developing in favour of those that require fewer earthworks.

Trees: The site has good tree coverage, which is an inherent asset to the character, including areas of ancient woodland. It is entirely the aim of any proposals to work with this and enhance through positive conservation and additional planting.

Poor (boggy) ground: It is well known to the people who work the Inverlochy Castle Estate where there are areas of lower, poor (boggy) ground. These areas are not extensive and will either be avoided or as part of the investment (where there are not overriding environmental issues) be improved to extend farming or other uses.

Built heritage: There are 4 listed buildings within the Estate. These are well documented and are:

Inverlochy Castle (B), Stables (B), Walled Garden (B), Lodge and Gatepiers (C).

The Castle is in use as a 5–star hotel. It is intended that the Stables and Walled Garden be restored, and brought in to use as part of the 5–star hotel offer.

There is also a section of General Wade’s Military road running through the site and currently used as a farm track and secondary access to the Castle Hotel. This will be maintained.

The designated boundary to Inverlochy Battlefield borders the south west of the Estate. A review of any archaeological interest will be carried out at the appropriate time.

Protected Landscape: There are a large variety of landscape designations around the Fort William area, reaffirming the sensitivity, beauty and inherent attraction of the region. These include statutory designations such as National Scenic Areas and SSSI’s as well as non–statutory designations including Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Areas of Great Landscape Value. There are also areas protected under European Legislation by way of Directives including Special Areas of Conservations and Special Protection Areas. It is evident that much of the landscape around Fort William is protected by landscape and/or environmental policies.

However none of the land within the Inverlochy Castle Estate is protected as a national or regional level for its landscape quality or environmental sensitivity. Parts of it are, however, subject to a number of other designations such as:

Areas of ancient woodland and nature conservation; and

Protection of the landscape setting of Inverlochy Castle (Hotel).

It is recognised that the landscape and nature conservation designations that are applicable to the Estate are an inherent part of the character and appeal of the place and as such will be sensitively incorporated and conserved within and proposed development.

Farmland: Inverlochy Castle Farm currently exists and operates on the site. It is fully intended that this use continue to be accommodated within the overall Estate.

Flooding: The Estate is bordered by two rivers and there are a number of watercourses and drainage ditches running through the site. At this time SEPA flood maps have been assessed, but it is acknowledged that a future Flood Risk Assessment will need to be carried out. Initial development ideas have been done in conjunction with on site local knowledge, and also assessment of the topography both on the site and adjacent to it. There has been significant recent development approved and completed on the opposite side of the River Lochy (Camaghel and Blar Mhor) that lies at a lower level than most of the Estate. Obvious lower lying areas adjacent to rivers and watercourses have been avoided.

4.1 How do you want the West Highland and Islands area to change over the next 10–20 years? The attached document, ‘Inverlochy Castle Estate – response to call for sites and ideas’, has been prepared in tandem with sound research in to the economic and market led opportunities for not just Inverlochy Castle Estate but from a regional and national perspective. Please refer to Section 2 – Vision + Opportunity within the document. This includes study and commentary on Lochaber’s future visitor economy, development opportunity and feasibility.

7.1 Tell us whether the Hinterland area should stay the same or how it should be expanded / contracted. Please provide reasons for We recognise and appreciate the reasoning behind the Hinterland as it has an important part to play in giving due consideration to potential changes in the immediate context of Fort William. Inverlochy Castle Estate lies within the Hinterland and we believe the response outlined in the attached document, ‘Inverlochy Castle Estate – response to call for sites and ideas’, illustrates a sensitive approach to assessing the capacity of the overall Estate to take and acceptable amount of development, that is in keeping with the principles of the Hinterland.

your choice.