
From: West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan
Subject: FW: West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan [#241]

Section 1: Gerry Beard

**Your
personal
and contact
details**

1.1 Name *

1.2 Are you? a community or other organisation

*

1.4 Name of Shieldaig Community Council
Organisation
(if
applicable)

Select a Tell us your vision for the area
topic to
comment on

4.1 How do you want the West Highland and Islands area to change over the next 10–20 years?

Local Development Plan

Pre-ambles

The comments below are an initial response from the Shieldaig Community Council (SCC) to a request by the Highland Council for 'Sites and Ideas' in order to help them draw up a Local Development Plan (5 year plan but thinking ahead for the next 20 years).

The Highland Council have also leafleted all individual households and businesses in the area and invited people to respond directly to them with ideas and priorities for the area.

The deadline for submission of ideas to the Highland Council is the 27th March. It is understood that this will not preclude future representations after this date from either the SCC or from individuals.

Introduction

The SCC exists to represent and serve the interests of the village of Shieldaig and the surrounding areas including the settlements along the Applecross Coast Road, the Balgy, the Aird and Shieldaig Glen (Glasnock).

The SCC welcomes the opportunity to give an overview of the nature of the community and its possible development in the future. It pro-actively supports and encourages new growth, in terms of housing and business (with the priority being on local needs) whilst at the same time recognising the need to be sensitive to the local environment and

maintaining the attraction of Shieldaig as a popular tourist destination.

The SCC also recognises the changes happening on a national and political level and appreciates that, in the face of public service cut-backs, local communities will have to take on more responsibility for local services and facilities, and that moving towards a more resilient and sustainable community can only be beneficial for the future well being of the area.

Housing

Shieldaig is a vibrant and expanding village with a healthy mix of old established families and those who have moved in more recently. There are also a fairly large number of holiday cottages and 'lets' which have made it more difficult for local people to access the housing market. It is, relative to many other west coast villages, a fairly young community with a flourishing local primary school. Recent housing development has taken place at Ballahuis and on the croft land behind the village. The SCC encourages further small scale development to meet local demand and considers the affordability and closeness to amenities as important factors.

Employment/Business

Tourism related business is probably the largest employer in the community and this appears to be expanding. Commercial fishing for prawns and crabs is also an important business and employer and the SCC would welcome initiatives to make this more sustainable in the future. Fish farming is a substantial and valued employer although with increasing mechanisation, and the perception that the loch is already over-farmed (with repercussions for the native eco-system of the loch) this is likely to be less so in the future. There are also a large number of self employed people in the village servicing local needs as well as the tourist trade.

The SCC encourages new business in the area especially if this creates full-time (as well as seasonal) jobs for local residents. It is thought that high speed broadband would facilitate people making a living in the area and would like to be connected to the cable network which has recently passed by the village. It is worth considering the possibility or more locally sourced food in the future and potential land for this.

Energy

The SCC considers it important that energy efficiency be incorporated into any new developments, and any initiatives to improve the efficiency in existing properties would be welcomed. It is felt that there is scope for more hydro, tidal and biomass generation in the area . A project for the sustainable management of local woodlands is already under way in the village with wood fuel as a potential output.

Transport

Shieldaig is fairly well served in the way public transport with local minibus service to Locharron and Strathcarron (railway station) and Inverness. Shieldaig is also part of a successful community car scheme (covering Wester-Ross as a whole). It is felt important that the local transport provision is integrated, especially in relation to the train service from Strathcarron. The roads in the area are felt to be sufficient as long as they are well maintained.

Summary

The SSC would be happy to see a sensitive and balanced approach of organic development in response to local needs

whilst at the same time respecting the environment. The SCC will continue to listen to listen to the views of the community and communicate these on to the Highland Council.