The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Highland-wide Local Development Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment

Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Thar-Ghàidhealtachd Measadh Buaidh air Àrainneachd

September 2015

Environmental Report

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Non-Technical Summary

Purpose and Scope of this Document

As part of the preparation of the Main Issues Report (MIR), the first formal stage in the preparation of the replacement Highland-wide Local Development Plan, the Highland Council is required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This provides a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of a plan, programme or strategy and aims to:

- Integrate environmental factors into plan preparation and decision-making
- Improve plan and enhance environmental protection
- Increase public participation in decision making
- Facilitate openness and transparency of decision-making

This Environmental Report is an important stage in the process which influences the contents of the MIR and the future direction of the replacement Plan.

Purpose and Objectives of the Plan

The purpose of the Development Plan is to set a clear vision and spatial strategy of how the City, towns, villages and countryside should develop. They are also the main documents against which planning applications will be assessed. The replacement Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP2) will provide an updated vision and spatial strategy along with a suite of planning policies to guide development in Highland over the next 20 years. The new Plan will be policy focused with the existing HwLDP site specific policies and spatial content being considered and where appropriate taken forward through the three Area Local Development Plans.

The HwLDP2 MIR sets out a vision which is based on four key outcomes which reflect the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement 3, Local Transport Strategy and the Highland Council's Programme. It also identifies key development and land use issues facing the area, sets out the Council's preferred options, and reasonable alternatives for guiding future development. The MIR is not however a 'draft Plan' and does not contain all of the exact content of the replacement Plan's vision, strategy and policies. This level of detail is still evolving and will be influenced by feedback received on the MIR and this accompanying Environmental Report.

State of the Environment Summary

The tables below show a summary of statistics relating to each of the key SEA topics:

SEA Topic	Summary of Statistics
1 - Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Highland contains some of Scotland's most important natural environments which are protected under international and national designations: SSSI (348), SAC (89), SPA (44), NNR (18), MPA (8), Ramsar (11). The Plan area also contains 5,037 ancient and semi-natural woodland sites and 128 Tree Preservation Orders.
2 - Population & Human Health	Population of the Plan area in 2011 was 232,100 with a population density of 8.7 people per sq km which is substantially below the Scottish Average of 67.4. Highland has experienced steady growth over the last 30 years with an 11.1% increase in population since 2001. Population projections also present challenges with Highland's demographic indicating that there will be a significant increase in people aged between 65 to 75+.
3 - Soil & Peat	Peat is very common across the Plan area and is important for carbon storage properties as well as supporting distinctive wildlife. Two of the Scotland's three UNESCO European Geoparks also lie within the Plan area. There are also 77 other geological SSSIs and 403 un-notified Geological Conservation Review sites (GCRs). In terms of land capability for agriculture, prime agricultural land represents just 1% of the Plan area, all located within the Inner Moray Firth area. Most soils are at the lower end the land capability range.
4 - Water	The quality of the freshwater environment in Highland is recognised internationally for its importance as a spawning ground for wild salmon and use by the whisky industry. The many

SEA Topic	Summary of Statistics
	lochs and rivers that characterise the area are important for local economies and provide the scenic backdrop that encourages so many tourists to the area.
5 - Air	Overall air quality in Scotland is generally good, however, further improvements are needed to reduce the adverse effects caused by air pollution in some urban and rural areas. Highland's first Air Quality Management Area has been identified in Inverness city centre and the emerging Air Quality Management Plan will detail further assessment and steps towards improved air quality.
6 - Climatic Factors	In Highland one of the main contributors to climate change is transportation due to the emissions of carbon dioxide. The plan will aim to promote sustainable environments which are more carbon clever and contribute to meeting the Scottish Government targets for renewable energy sources (40% by 2020).
7 - Material Assets	For the purposes of the Environmental Report, waste, access and transport will be considered to be material assets. There is a requirement for additional waste facilities across the Plan area and access and transport improvements remain challenging due to the expansive scale of the network totalling a combined distance of over 13,500km.
8 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage	Highland is rich in historic and cultural assets with 2,867 Listed Buildings, 1,201 Scheduled Monuments, 46 Gardens and Designed Landscapes, 29 Conservation Areas, 8 Historic Battlefields and an extensive range of Historic Environment Record sites across the Highland area.
9 - Landscape	Scotland has a wide diversity of landscapes that have different capacities to accommodate development without significantly changing their character. Some of Scotland's finest landscapes can be found within Highland. It contains over a quarter of Scotland's National Scenic Areas and almost 40% of Scotland's Wild Land Areas. Over a third of the Plan's coastline is also regarded as unspoilt coast.

Expected Environmental Implications without the Plan

The HwLDP2 will provide a planning framework to guide decisions on where development should and should not go for the next 20 years, with the Plan being reviewed every 5 years. The current HwLDP is now 3 years old, and many of the polices require to be updated to reflect changes in Scottish Planning Policy and challenges faced at the Highland-wide level. There is a need to review the planning framework for the area to ensure development does not have detrimental and unsustainable impacts on the environment and will not help to address existing environmental problems.

Assessment Approach and Key Findings

SEA objectives relating to the key topics were identified and are shown below:

SEA Topic	SEA Objectives
1 - Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	To conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity and accord to the protection of valued nature conservation habitats and species.
2 - Population & Human Health	To improve the living environment for all communities and promote improved health of the human population.
3 - Soil & Peat	Safeguard the soil quality, geo-diversity and improve contaminated land.
4 - Water	Avoid, manage and reduce flood risk and protect the water environment.
5 - Air	Maintain and, where possible, improve air quality.
6 - Climatic Factors	Reduce greenhouse gases and contribute to the adaptation of the area to climate change.

SEA Topic	SEA Objectives
7 - Material Assets	Manage, maintain and promote sustainable use of material assets.
8 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage	Protect and where appropriate enhance the historic environment.
9 - Landscape	Protect and enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape.

The vision, strategy and policies set out in the HwLDP MIR have been assessed against these objectives. Baseline information on each of the SEA topics, shown in Appendix D, has helped to inform the preparation of the MIR and the assessment process.

An assessment matrix was prepared for the assessment of both the preferred approach and alternatives for the replacement vision, strategy and policies. As part of the assessment of environmental impacts relevant mitigation measures and monitoring requirements were also identified. Our approach to mitigation is based on the hierarchy of avoid, reduce, remedy and compensate. Where appropriate enhancements to environmental features were explored. The full assessment matrices are shown in Appendix E.

From the assessments we have identified issues which may have a significantly positive and a significantly negative impact on the environment. This has also helped to inform the provision of specific mitigation measures which either help to minimise the negative impacts or maximise the positive impacts.

Overall, the process has reaffirmed that the preferred approaches set out in the MIR environmentally outweigh the suggested alternatives, providing suitable mitigation and monitoring is built into the development of the emerging vision, strategy and policies for the replacement Plan.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Plan

A framework for monitoring the environmental outcomes of the Plan is set out in the Monitoring section of this report. To ensure that it is effective the framework is based on the main SEA topics and sets out the objective sought, the monitoring indicator, the responsible organisation, timescales and remedial action required.

Next Steps

The MIR and this Environmental Report will be subject to a 12 week period of consultation to commence on 25 September 2015 to 18 December 2015. The responses received to the consultation will be reviewed and evaluated and the results will inform the preparation of the HwLDP2 Proposed Plan and the Revised Environmental Report.

Contents

1 Introduction

Purpose and Scope of this Environmental Report

1.1 The Highland Council (THC) is preparing a replacement Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP2) which will supersede the existing HwLDP, adopted April 2012, and consider the need to update and retain associated statutory Supplementary Guidance (SG). As part of the preparation of the HwLDP2, the Highland Council is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of a plan, programme or strategy.

1.2 SEA aims to:

- integrate environmental factors into plan preparation and decision-making;
- Improve plan and enhance environmental protection;
- increase public participation in decision making; and
- facilitate openness and transparency of decision-making.

1.3 SEA is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The key SEA stages are:

Screening	To determine if the HwLDP2 is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether an SEA is required. No Screening has been undertaken as SEA is mandatory for all Development Plans, falling under Section 5(3) of the Act.
Scoping	To determine the scope and level of detail of this Environmental Report, and the consultation period for the report. An SEA Scoping Report was submitted to the Consultation Authorities in May 2015 (refer to Glossary provided at Appendix A). Consultation responses were received in June 2015 and Appendix B summarises the comments received and how these have informed this Environmental Report.
Environmental Report	Publishing and consulting upon this Environmental Report which explains the environmental effects of the HwLDP2.
Adoption	Providing information on: the adopted HwLDP2; how consultation comments have been taken into account; and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan.
Monitoring	Monitoring significant environmental effects in such a manner so as to also enable the Responsible Authority to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and undertake appropriate remedial action.

1.4 The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Provide information on the HwLDP2;
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Plan and its reasonable alternatives; and
- Provide an early and effective opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the public to offer views on any aspect of this Environmental Report.

1 Introduction

Key Facts about the HwLDP2

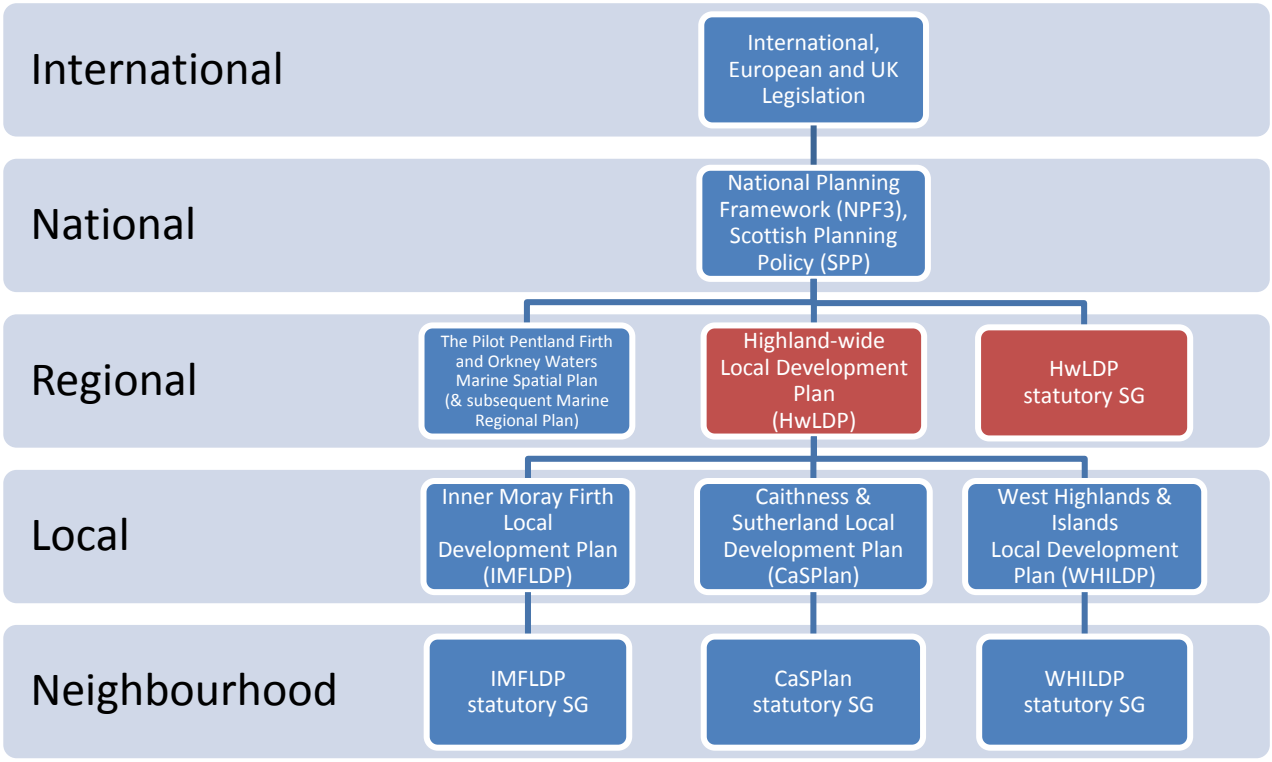
- *Name of Responsible Authority:* The Highland Council (THC).
- *Title of draft plan, programme or strategy (PPS):* Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP2).
- *Requirement for the PPS*: Legislative requirement under Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006.
- *Subject of the PPS*: Land use planning.
- *Period covered by the PPS*: 2017-2037.
- *Frequency of updates*: Within a five year cycle.
- *Area covered*: Highland-wide area 24,493 sq kms (above the high water mark) of which, 945sq kms (3.9%) is open water. Refer to Map 1.1
- *Purpose and/or objectives of PPS*: To guide development of the Highlands over the next 20 years. The HwLDP2 will inform the production of the Area Local Development Plans (LDPs) and will be used as the primary tool for making decisions on applications for planning permission. It will also contribute to sustainable development and tackling climate change. The Plan will be vision, strategy and policy based only, with site specific land allocations being delivered through Area LDPs.
- *Contact:* Development Plans Team, Development & Infrastructure, The Highland Council.

Map 1.1 HwLDP Boundary

Relationship with Other Plans, Programmes and Strategies

1.5 The HwLDP sits within a wider planning framework which consists of a hierarchy of plans, programmes and strategies. Figure 1.1 outlines this relationship.

Figure 1.1 Local Development Plan Framework



1.6 The relevant PPS and associated **environmental objectives** to be considered in the assessment and preparation of the HwLDP2 are shown in Appendix C - Relevant Legislation, PPS and Environmental Objectives. PPS above the national level have not been considered in detail primarily because it is assumed the environmental protection framework provided by European legislation has been integrated into national and regional plans, policies and guidance. The key **environmental objectives** to be considered in the assessment and preparation of the HwLDP2 include:

- **Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna:** THC has a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.
- **Population & Human Health:** Encouraging new inward migration alongside the retention of a younger population through supporting employment opportunities and the provision of sufficient facilities and services.
- **Flooding:** The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 provides a statutory framework for delivering a sustainable and risk-based approach to managing flooding. THC has a responsibility under the Act to exercise its functions with a view to managing and reducing flood risk and promotion of sustainable flood risk management.
- **Climatic Factors:** The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets out a framework for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and a transition to a low carbon economy. The Act introduces a new duty to all public sector bodies to exercise their functions in a way that is best calculated to contribute towards GHG targets of 80% reduction by 2050 with an interim target of 42% by 2020.
- **Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage:** National and regional policy sets out principles which must be followed in order to protect and enhance, where appropriate, the area's rich cultural and historic environment. This should promote understanding of local history, crofting and further enhance the areas unique local character and distinctiveness.
- **Landscape:** THC has a duty to promote the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, following guidelines from the European Landscape Convention and all relevant landscape designations. THC hold responsibility in managing and carefully allocating appropriate land use designations for particular sites.
- **Others:** Protection of soil quality, carbon rich peat, geodiversity, air and water quality.

1.7 The relevant PPS and associated environmental objectives to be considered in the Environmental Report are shown below. PPS above the national level have typically not been outlined in detail primarily because the environmental protection framework provided by European legislation has been integrated into national and regional plans, policies and guidance.

1.8 Need to insert table here which outlines all the relevant plans, programmes etc

Structure and Content of this Environmental Report

1.9 The remainder of this Environmental Report is structured as follows:

Section 2 - State of the Environment	Examines the current baseline environmental conditions under each environmental objective and aids the full understanding the issues, problems and trends of relevance to the Plan.
Section 3 - Assessment Methodology	Sets out the parameters for undertaking the assessment, as set out within the SEA Scoping Report with minor refinement to reflect the consultation responses set out at Appendix B.
Section 4 - Vision/Spatial Strategy Assessment	Provides analysis and evaluation of the preferred and alternative overarching vision and strategies for the HwLDP2. As the HwLDP2 is not intended to contain site specific allocations, which are to be covered by the other area LDPs, the assessment does not extend to this level of detail.
Section 4 - Policy Assessment	Provides analysis and evaluation of the preferred and alternative vision, spatial strategy and policy directions for HwLDP2. The SEA process requires that the Environmental Report identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing reasonable alternatives to the Plan being assessed. The MIR, as it is required to do, presents at least one reasonable alternative to each of the options presented. This Environmental Report seeks to be clear where policies are 'constrained' by the existing national policy framework and focus only on genuine alternatives. It assesses all MIR options presented, with the results of the assessment helping to inform the Council's preferred option.
Section 5 - Monitoring	Sets out responsibilities for monitoring potential significant environmental effects resulting from the implementation of the HwLDP2.
Section 6 - Next Steps	Sets out the nest stages in the preparation of the HwLDP2.

2 State of the Environment

2.1 Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of "the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme", and "the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected". A core purpose of the SEA process is identifying the current baseline environmental conditions together with fully understanding the issues, problems and trends of relevance to the PPS. Appendix D identifies the relevant datasets used to form the baseline for this assessment. The environmental characteristics and known environmental issues within the Plan area are set out within this section, presented under each SEA Objective, agreed through SEA Scoping.

2.2 The purpose of this section is to provide enough environmental baseline data to:

- Support the identification of environmental problems;
- Support the process of assessing the environmental effects; and
- Provide a baseline against which future monitoring data can be compared.

2.3 Table 1 sets out the agreed SEA Objectives together with associated criteria which form the basis against which the environmental effects of the HwLDP2 have been assessed.

Table 1 - SEA Objectives and Considerations

Environmental Parameter	SEA Objective	SEA Consideration
1 - Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	To conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity and accord to the protection of valued nature conservation habitats and species.	• Designated (international, national or local) nature conservation sites • Marine Protected Areas, Priority Marine Features and designated seal haul-out sites • Protected, 'priority', and/or 'flagship' species • Trees, woodland and priority habitats • Connectivity of habitats (including green networks)
2 - Population & Human Health	To improve the living environment for all communities and promote improved health of the human population.	• Access to open space • Active travel • Provision of additional services for an increasing elderly population • Residential amenity, including noise
3 - Soil & Peat	Safeguard the soil quality, geo-diversity and improve contaminated land.	• Good agricultural and crofting land • Diversity of geology, natural landforms and processes • Carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peat land habitats • Potentially contaminated land
4 - Water	Avoid, manage and reduce flood risk and protect the water environment.	• Water quality • Areas within flood risk areas or flood plains. "potentially vulnerable areas" • Waste water treatment, SuDS • River Basin Management • The inshore marine environment
5 - Air	Maintain and, where possible, improve air quality.	• Travel patterns and freight movements • Construction management plans and site operational dust / odour control • Waste management

Environmental Parameter	SEA Objective	SEA Consideration
6 - Climatic Factors	Reduce greenhouse gases and contribute to the adaptation of the area to climate change.	• Carbon emissions, sinks and stores (including carbon rich soils, forestry and woodland) • Contribute to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change • Heat mapping
7 - Material Assets	Manage, maintain and promote sustainable use of material assets.	• Environmental resources including materials • Connectivity of open space, movement and access, including green network
8 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage	Protect and where appropriate enhance the historic environment.	• Listed buildings • Scheduled monuments • Conservation areas • Inventory of Historic Battlefields • Gardens and Designed Landscapes • Historic Environment Records
9 - Landscape	Protect and enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape.	• National Scenic Areas • Wild Land Areas • Special Landscape Areas • Unspoilt Coast (based on 'Isolated Coast' defined within the Highland Coastal Strategy) • Landscape Character Assessments • Landscape Capacity Studies

1 - Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna

2.4 Natural heritage designations cover a range of habitats in Highland. Table 2 provides a break-down of the designations which lie within and/or intersect with the HwLDP area.

Table 2 - Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Designation	Number of Sites	Area Covered (Ha)
Ramsar Sites	11	152,300
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	89	552,954
Special Protection Area (SPA)	44	384,000
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	348	514,370
National Nature Reserve	18	50,800
Local Nature Conservation Sites	1	17
Scottish Wildlife Trust Sites	1	2,990
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland	5,037	56,300
Native Woodland and Nearly Native Woodland	22,782	103,608

Designation	Number of Sites	Area Covered (Ha)
Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites	1,596	14,944
Tree Preservation Orders	128	575
Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas	8	1,266,075
Seal Haul-out Areas	35	22,182

Note: This information is Highland-wide and many designations may overlap. Figures quoted for SAC's and SSSIs include sites which intersect the Highland-wide boundary, however, these may extend into neighbouring planning authority areas and therefore the areas quoted extend beyond Highland. The nature conservation marine protected areas intersect Highland's coastline and cover a much wider area, much of which is outwith our terrestrial and marine planning jurisdiction.

2.5 Highland supports 15 of the 65 (c.25%) priority habitats of conservation importance in Scotland with over half of their Scottish distribution area in Highland. Highland also supports 864 of 1149 (75%) of the priority species of conservation importance in the UK.

2.6 Highland's marine and coastal environment forms a rich, biodiverse boundary with our terrestrial planning considerations. The Council shall therefore ensure that the designated sites and protected species within these environments are appropriately safeguarded to protect our rich natural heritage, in line with our requirement to ensure integrated marine and land planning.

2.7 The following habitats occur in Highland and are priority habitats in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan:

- Ancient and/or species rich hedgerows
- Blanket bog
- Blue mussel beds
- Calaminarian grasslands
- Carbonate mounds
- Cereal field margins
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Coastal saltmarsh
- Coastal sand dunes
- Coastal vegetated shingle
- Deep sea sponge communities
- Estuarine rocky habitats
- Eutrophic standing waters
- Fens
- File shell beds
- Fragile sponge & anthozoan communities of subtidal rocky habitats
- Inland rock outcrops and scree habitats
- Intertidal boulder communities
- Limestone pavements
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- Lowland wood pasture and parkland
- Machair

2.8 The protected species known to be found in Highland are listed in Appendix 2 of the Statutorily Protected Species Supplementary Guidance. Many sections of the coastline are important for breeding seabirds.

2.9 Wild Deer are an important element of Scotland's biodiversity and ecology, an economic asset and valued as an iconic species. They are present across large parts of Highland.

2.10 Green networks help to create a sense of place by providing spaces to socialise, take part in sport, recreation and play, while also making a significant contribution to the biodiversity of the area. Green networks should be a facilitating feature which enables the delivery of high quality development which integrates with green networks and aids the protection and enhancement of the network. The inclusion of Policy 60 within the Green Infrastructure section of the replacement Plan will help in enhancing habitat corridors through the creation of new sites and protection of all designated and non-designated sites. The application of these policies to all scales of development proposals also has significant benefits. This approach will contribute significantly toward achieving LBAP targets both regionally and locally in protecting and enhancing habitats. HwLDP2 will not map green networks, however the Area LDPs will include green network mapping.

2 - Population & Human Health

2.11 The population of the plan area in 2011 was 232,100 with a population density of 8.7 people per sq km which is substantially lower than the Scottish average of 67.4. Highland has witnessed steady growth over the last 30 years, with an 11.1% increase in population since 2001. The area presents a rather skewed population demographic, with the loss of younger people as they move away for higher and further education, combined with a population older than the Scottish average. The overall population is widely dispersed, with many living in remote scattered communities. This presents important challenges in the requirement and reinforcement of additional services and facilities; such as the provision of affordable housing, education and business sectors, in order to promote quality living environments for a more diverse population.

2.12 Table 3 provides the Council's latest in-house population projections, HNDA scenario for 2015 to 2035. This indicate that at 2015 the population of the plan areas is 235,607, increasing to 267,939 by 2035. Within this 20 year horizon, this reflects an overall increase of c.32,500 people equating to 13.7% at c.0.7% per annum.

Table 3 - Latest In-House Highland Population Projections

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
All Persons	**235,607**	**243,927**	**252,552**	**260,717**	**267,939**
0 to 15	39,966	40,555	41,009	42,420	43,958
16 to 29	35,205	35,588	36,135	35,752	36,298
30 to 49	58,726	57,069	58,725	62,186	63,075
50 to 64	52,120	54,178	52,853	48,586	46,639
65 to 74	28,001	30,757	31,729	34,501	35,633
75+	21,589	25,780	32,101	37,271	42,336

2.13 The projections also present changes with Highland's demographic, indicating that there will be a stable number of people of working age between 16 to 64, and an increase of c.28,500 people aged between 65 to 75+, representing 88% of the overall growth. Age bands from 0 to 49 will all experience varying degrees of growth in population over the period. A significant decrease in the 50 to 64 age group will be experienced as the post baby-boom generation comes through. The Highland's workforce will require to support an increasingly ageing population. These projections are also based on Highland as a whole, with certain areas facing a population decline whilst others, particularly around Inverness, predicted to experience an ongoing population increase.

2.14 Health statistics from the 2011 Census show that the Plan area as a slightly healthier profile to Scotland. Life expectancy at birth in Highland: male 77.7 years, female 82.2 years (Scotland 76.9 and 81.0 respectively). Other key findings include:

- on perception of general health, 83.9% of the plan's population stated their that their health was 'very good' or 'good' (Scotland 82.2%); and
- some 18.7% of the plan's population reported a limiting long-term illness or health problem that affected their day-to-day activities (Scotland 19.6%).

2.15 Attitudes to greenspace in Scotland - a review of key trends between 2004 and 2013, SNH August 2014, reports that people who visit their local greenspace are more likely to rate their health as good. Scottish Household Survey 2012 results indicate that 85% of the population of Highland undertake visits to the outdoors and 56% undertake one or more visits per week. This is 5% and 14% respectively higher than the national average. The survey also indicated that access to usable greenspace within Highland was 12% better than the national average with 83% or respondents stating a walking time of 6 minutes or less to the nearest usable greenspace. The daily use of this greenspace in Highland is also 16% above the national average and 80% of responses indicated that they were satisfied with local greenspaces (7% above the average). The findings suggest that Highland's use of quality greenspaces contributes towards quality of life and potentially longer life expectancy.

3 - Soil & Peat

2.16 Given the scale of the plan area and the diversity of its landscape and uses there are a wide range of soil types. Most Highland soils are very shallow, often due to shallow parent minerals. In some areas of Highland, soil erosion is a significant issue. Peat is very common throughout Highland and Caithness and Sutherland contains one of the largest and most intact areas of blanket bog in the world, supporting a distinctive wildlife community. Peat is important in terms of its carbon storage properties and the habitats (many of which are water dependent) which it provides. The removal and disturbance of peat can mean the stored carbon is released and may contribute to climate change. Two of the Scotland's three UNESCO European Geoparks also lie within the Plan area. These are the Lochaber Geopark and the North West Highlands Geopark. There are also 77 other geological SSSIs and 403 un-notified Geological Conservation Review sites (GCRs).

2.17 In terms of land capability for agriculture, prime agricultural land within the plan area is restricted to just 26,414Ha (1% of HwLDP) all within the Inner Moray Firth area. Much land is at the lower end of the land capability range, mostly ranging between Class 6 and 7. Within these areas severe climates contribute to inhibiting agricultural capability, meaning potential land uses are generally limited to improved grass land and rough grazing, although with mechanical intervention it can be possible to allow seeding, rotovation or ploughing. The need to deliver development land and associated infrastructure may have an impact on soils that have an important role in water quality, flood production and biodiversity. Pressure on prime soils is most apparent within the Inner Moray Firth area due to the expansion of Inverness, it's neighbouring settlements and associated infrastructure.

4 - Water

2.18 The quality of the freshwater environment in Highland is recognised internationally for its importance as a spawning ground for wild salmon and use by the whisky industry. The many lochs and rivers that characterise the area are important for local economies and provide the scenic backdrop that encourages so many tourists to the area. The increased population within the Inner Moray Firth area and redevelopment of ports and harbours to support the on and offshore renewables industry, as well as additional hydro schemes are placing additional pressure on the water environment and flooding, drainage and erosion resulting from a combination of infrastructure and climate change, requires to be addressed within HwLDP2. The River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) Area Management Plans provide valuable baseline information on the quality of water in Highland.

5 - Air

2.19 Overall air quality in Scotland is generally good, however, further improvements are needed to reduce the adverse effects caused by air pollution in some urban and rural areas. Highland's first Air Quality Management Area has been identified in Inverness city centre and the emerging Air Quality Management Plan will detail further assessment and steps towards improved air quality. The plan will cater for the future of Highlands waste stream. This may include the provision of Energy from Waste facilities with excess heat and electricity being utilised by nearby users. Transportation policies contained within the plan will also require to address an increase in private car trips to work, with a focus on developing improved sustainable and active travel, especially within urban areas which are better placed to deliver modal shift. By targeting urban areas, this strategy looks to improve air quality in the locations where most people live.

6 - Climatic Factors

2.20 In Highland one of the main contributors to climate change is transportation due to the emissions of carbon dioxide. High levels of CO2 and other "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere are thought to accelerate the Earth's climate change. Climate change is predicted to have a variety of environmental consequences including increased

frequency and severity of storm events, as well as rises in sea level, which may have an affect on the coastal communities throughout the plan area. Changes in rainfall patterns could lead to increased erosion and pollution associated with surface run-off.

2.21 The plan will aim to promote sustainable environments which are more carbon clever by contributing to meeting the Scottish Government targets for renewable energy sources (40% by 2020) through promotion of renewable energy provision through hydroelectric generators, wind, newer small-scale hydro schemes and thermal renewable sources. The area's climate lends itself to these provisions however; there will be full consideration of all potentials for negative effects on all landscape designations and biodiversity. The plan will seek to promote energy efficiency at micro scale for day-to-day activities within the plan area, through provision of greener transport and active travel by seeking to implement more sustainable and diverse connections through walking, cycling and ferry routes. Renewable Heat has the potential to make a substantial contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions in Highland, and will be crucial in achieving the goals of the Carbon CLEVER initiative.

7 - Material Assets

2.22 For the purposes of the Environmental Report, waste, access, open space and transport will be considered to be material assets. In terms of waste it is considered that the materials and management of waste as a result of development is a key consideration given the potential location and scale of development.

2.23 The extant HwLDP sets out our commitment to the Government's Zero Waste Plan, Scottish Planning Policy and the Council's Municipal Waste Strategy which is currently undergoing review. No localised Energy from Waste treatment facilities have been permitted since the publication of the Council's extant Municipal Waste Strategy in 2009 and additional operational waste management infrastructure capacity is required to meet Zero Waste Plan targets. SEPA's Regional Capacity Table - 2011 Data estimated that there was a requirement for:

- 185,000 tonnes of additional capacity;
- 135,000 tonnes of additional capacity to manage source segregated recyclable;
- 50,000 tonnes of additional capacity to manage unsorted waste; and
- 2,500,000 tonnes of additional capacity to meet the rolling 10 year landfill capacity.

2.24 In terms of access to the outdoors the Council's Local Transport Strategy 2010/11 – 2013/14 provides the key information on this valuable material asset including the level of access and infrastructure as set out in Table 4. The Local Transport Strategy is proposed to be revised in parallel with the HwLDP2.

Table 4 - Access Material Assets

Access Resource	Distance (km)	%
National Cycle Networks	532	3.9
Core Paths	2,572	19.0
Rights of Way	3,668	27.2
Roads	6,730	49.8
Total	**13,502**	**100**

Note: This information is Highland-wide - Roads distance is based on the Local Transport Strategy Figures

2.25 The Highland area has a diverse transportation network encompassing one of the longest road networks in Scotland. Generally the transport infrastructure across Highland comprises of:

- 6,730km locally adopted road;
- 1400 bridges (span greater than 3 metres) and 700 structural culverts (up to 3 metres);
- 951km trunk roads;
- 108 harbours, slipways and piers; and
- 2 airports.

8 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage

2.26 Although much of Highland is rural in nature, the varied and distinctive character of the towns and villages are key components of this identity. The regions cultural heritage and Gaelic tradition, and historical influences on the pattern of development are also important elements. The built heritage is made up of a number of components including archaeological sites, submerged landscapes, listed buildings, historic gardens and designed landscapes and conservation areas. The Council will seek to preserve and promote its built heritage as a valuable tourist, recreational and educational resource wherever possible. A break down of cultural and built heritage features in the Plan area are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 - Historic Environment Assets

Designation	Number of Sites	Area Covered (Ha)
Listed Buildings	A - 175 B - 1,121 C - 1,121 Total - 2,867	A - 44 B - 356 C - 237 Total - 637
Scheduled Monument	1,201	2,140
Conservation Areas	29	791
Inventory of Historic Battlefields	8	3,600
Gardens and Designed Landscapes	46	5,670
Historic Environment Record Sites (excluding find sites)	44,309	20,050

9 - Landscape

2.27 Scotland has a rich diversity of landscapes. These landscapes have different capacities to accommodate development without significantly changing their character. Some of Scotland's finest landscapes can be found within Highland; It contains over a quarter of Scotland's National Scenic Areas and almost 40% of Scotland's Wild Land Areas . The West Highlands and Islands is dominated by rugged mountains, remote glens and long steep straths bordered by a coastline of sea lochs. The Inner Moray Firth area is home to a number of mountains and narrow firths, creating a sense of security for the more populated areas of Highland. The east coast contains several sandy beaches and and broad flat coastal edges with prime agricultural farmland. The northern Caithness and Sutherland areas of the Plan contain an expansive coastline with dramatic cliffs, beaches and sea lochs. The topography throughout the north is highly important to the area, with a strong sense of space and openness creating the "big sky country". In particular the flat landscape in Caithness is susceptible to large scale developments being highly visible.

2.28 The landscape qualities of Highland are a unique resource for both residents and visitors. Any development therefore has the potential to significantly affect these landscapes which presents a challenge in the need to achieve the right balance between development interests and maintaining the viability of remote settlements by safeguarding the areas associations as a natural and untouched resource. In considering this landscape capacity balance, due regard also requires to be take of the 25 Wild Land Areas contained within the plan area as well as the numerous other landscape designations set out in Table 6.

Table 6 - Landscape Designations

Designation	Number of Sites	Area Covered (Ha)	Proportion of HwLDP Area
National Scenic Area	15	492,850	20.1%
Wild Land Area	25	1,001,426	40.9%
Special Landscape Area	27	510,510	20.8%
Unspoilt Coast (based on 'Isolated Coast' defined within the Highland Coastal Strategy)	209	940 kms (34% of HwLDP's coastline)	34% of HwLDP's coastline
Inter-Relationship Between Topics - Remaining Area of Highland not covered by landscape designations	N/A	1,281,600	52%

Gaps/Unreliability of Baseline Data

2.29 Much data and information was available through the Consultation Authorities, the Scottish Government and there was a wealth of information in offer to the Council to inform the baseline data for this Environmental Report. However there are some factors which can limit the validity of this data:

- Some parts of the plan area have been studied more widely than others. Therefore, the quality and accuracy of information for some areas will be greater than for others; and
- The data relevant to this Report is held in different forms. If information is held in databases and Geographic Information Systems it can be more easily queried than information which is only in printed form in reports, books or websites.

Environmental Problems

2.30 Schedule 3 paragraph 4 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of existing environmental problems, in particular those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance. The purpose of this section is to explain how existing environmental problems, which are not unique to Highland, will affect or will be affected by the HwLDP2 and whether it is likely to aggravate, reduce or otherwise affect existing environmental problems.

2.31 The key facts and the baseline information collated for this Environmental Report has helped us to identify some environmental problems which are applicable to Highland. Environmental problems that affect the area are identified in Table 7. Some of the negative trends highlighted in this table are likely to continue if HwLDP2 is not brought forward. The environmental problems have been identified using the baseline data and information provided in Appendix D.

Table 7 - Environmental Problems

SEA Issue	Existing Environmental Problems	Potential HwLDP2 Impacts
1 Biodiversity, flora, fauna	Stress on biodiversity and loss/fragmentation of habitat. Conflicts between designated areas and economic development. Vulnerability of rare and endangered flora and fauna to changes in climate. Loss of native, ancient, long established and semi-natural woodland cover. Loss of habitats and roosts for protected species. Potential for cumulative impacts on protected species. Potential indirect effects of development on designated sites.	The local development plan needs to ensure a balance between the demand for development while protecting the quality and character of the environment. The LDP will seek to ensure that both protected and priority species and habitats are considered through inclusion of a policy on the issue. Through a policy on green infrastructure combined with a policy on the natural environment which covers biodiversity, it is hoped that the risk of fragmentation and loss of connectivity of habitats for species will be avoided.
2 Population and human health	Potential for development and an increasing population in some areas, to put increased pressure on the natural environment in terms of water and waste water capacity, energy supply and transport links. Limited opportunity for active travel in more remote parts of Highland. An ageing population is likely to result in housing needs of the population diversifying. It may also put different pressures on services in more rural areas.	The local development plan will facilitate the creation of more active travel opportunities via policies on travel and green infrastructure. It will also recognise the importance of recreation and will have a policy in place for open space and recreation. Development of a policy will seek to address the changing accommodation needs of the population.
3 Soil and peat	Erosion and loss of good quality soils (including those identified as prime agricultural or carbon rich). Potential contamination from waste storage. Generation of waste soils. Potential loss or disturbance to peat and carbon rich soils.	The local development plan will address these by having a policy which states that disturbance to peat and carbon rich soils should be avoided and new areas of commercial peat extraction not allowed. The LDP will also seek to minimise unnecessary damage such as erosion and compaction of soils. Good quality agricultural land will be protected in line with SPP.
4 Water	Flooding, drainage and erosion resulting from infrastructure and changing climate. The need to sustain water supply and sewage treatment. Tidal, pluvial and fluvial flood risk due to new and existing development. Reduced quality of watercourses and the coastal environment.	The local development plan will promote the sustainable use of resources, including water. It will seek to put in place a policy framework which takes into account any potential detrimental impact on watercourses or the coastal environment.
5 Air	Negative impact of development on air quality, intensified through increased congestion in larger settlements.	The local development plan should address this by encouraging green travel. It will identify any areas of poor air quality and provide mitigation measures.
6 Climatic factors	Lack of sustainable design and limited active travel resulting in increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Impact of sea level rising. Movement of species in the face of climate change.	The local development plan should address the reduction in greenhouse gas reductions through renewable energy policy, active travel and promoting sustainable design.

SEA Issue	Existing Environmental Problems	Potential HwLDP2 Impacts
7 Material Assets	Increase travel/energy needs. The challenge of managing access to the natural environment.	The local development plan should ensure the protection of paths and safeguarding of access rights.
8 Historic environment and cultural heritage	Stress on the historical environment resulting from development.	The local development plan should protect the historic environment.
9 Landscape	Increased onshore and future offshore wind farm developments impacting on landscape character and appearance of the countryside. Development of inappropriate new housing and infrastructure in sensitive landscape areas. Poor siting and design eroding the quality of both townscapes and landscapes. Negative impact of development on traditional crofting settlement character. Loss of local landscape character. Deterioration of wild land areas and wildness qualities.	The local development plan should encourage responsible development of all landscapes. Development should be sited and designed to fit with the landscape character, whilst local distinctiveness and identity are retained and /or enhanced as detailed within the relevant Landscape Character Assessments. In crofting areas, developments should respect the character of the crofting settlement, particularly with regard to siting, scale and design.

Potential Environmental Implications Without the Plan

2.32 The HwLDP2 will provide a planning framework to guide decisions on where development should and should not go for the next 20 years, with the plan being reviewed every 5 years. The extant HwLDP is now 3 years old, and many of the polices require to be updated to reflect changes in Scottish Planning Policy and challenges faced at the Highland-wide level. As a result, it is likely that without a renewed planning framework for the area, development may have detrimental and unsustainable impacts on the environment and will not help to address existing environmental problems.

3 Assessment Methodology

3.1 The baseline environmental information presented in Section 2 is applied to consider whether the HwLDP2 and its alternatives are likely to result in significant environmental effects (positive and negative).

3.2 As part of the production of a Local Development Plan, a MIR must be produced detailing the different matters which will be covered by the Plan and reasonable alternatives. The MIR presents a revised strategy and vision for Highland, as well as set out general principles for the retention of certain policies, deletion of others, for amending policies and introducing new policies. As a statutory requirement, for the strategy and vision and each policy option within the MIR the Council has assigned a preferred and non-preferred alternative status based on a variety of factors including its impact on the environment. These alternatives have been derived from a variety of research and analysis, including the preparation of a Monitoring Statement.

3.3 The vision, strategy and policy assessment matrices used to assess the preferred and alternative approaches in the MIR are contained in Appendix E.

3.4 The expected timescale and duration of any impact has also been considered, including whether the impact would be over the short (0 to 5 years), medium (5 to 10 years) or long term (10+ years). A concise assessment of potential cumulative and in combination effects has also be carried out, taking account of results shown in the matrix and reported alongside.

3.5 The results of the detailed assessment of the options (strategy / vision and policies) are set out at Sections 4 and 5 with the completed policy assessment detailed matrices included at Appendix E. Following the SEA Screening of the statutory SG, scope remains for this SG to be assessed concurrently and reported in an identical manner.

3.6 When undertaking the assessment of predicted potential environmental effects, and this has identified a **negative** scoring outcome, the particular strategy and vision or policy wording has undergone further scrutiny and drafting. This iterative process allows for the incorporation of mitigation measures with a view to minimising / controlling the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts to occur. Each assessment matrix describes what mitigation measures have been undertaken such as:

- altering the policy causing the negative effect;
- inclusion of new alternative policy provision within the plan; and/or
- removal of the policy.

3.7 For any residual negative effects identified which cannot be avoided through changes to the Plan itself, other measures are identified to mitigate the potential effects such as identifying issues to be addressed at a more detailed level either within emerging statutory SG to be prepared during the currency of the Plan, or through site allocations to be identified within Area LDPs.

3.8 Where potential **positive** environmental effects are identified, measures to secure and enhance these have been identified where possible, including any opportunities for positive synergies between policies.

3.9 The finalised assessment scoring has been carried out assuming that mitigation is already incorporated into the suggested strategy / policy wording.

Habitat Regulations Appraisal

3.10 The Council will carry out screening for the HwLDP2 to undergo Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA). Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive requires that any plan which is not directly connected with the management of a European site, but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site shall be subject to an 'appropriate assessment' of its implications in view of the site's conservation objectives. SNH have produced guidance on HRA of Plans (2015) which outlines a thirteen stage appraisal process to be followed. This guidance will be utilised when screening for HRA and will be reported separately from this SEA Environmental Report.

4 Vision, Spatial Strategy and Policy Assessment

4.1 The approaches and alternatives contained within the HwLDP2 have been assessed using the framework and methodology described earlier at Section 3 of this Environmental Report. A summary of the assessment using the framework of findings are shown below. The summary focuses on presenting the main potential in combination long term significant impacts the replacement Plan could have on each SEA Objective. Significant negative impacts (--) are in red text and significant positive impacts (++) are in black text. The commentary set out under each of the summary tables explains the cumulative impacts of all of the preferred approaches being followed or the non-preferred approaches being followed. To gain a comprehensive understanding of each main issue and it's full range of potential environmental effects, please refer to Appendix E.

4.2 During the drafting of the vision, strategy and policy approach options, assessments were carried out against SEA Objectives, to help identify where potential improvements could be made. This iterative process has helped finalise the wording of the MIR to maximise potential positive impacts on the environment. Where assessments have identified the requirement for monitoring, this is set out at Section 5. Where assessments have identified the requirement for other mitigation measures, these are summarised towards the end of this section.

The Preferred Approach

4.3 The environmental scoring for adopting all of the preferred approaches for all of the main issues set out within the MIR are summarised in Table 8. Further explanation of the significant impacts are also described under each SEA Objective.

Table 8 - Cumulative Impacts of The Preferred Approaches: Option 1 (Significant Impacts)

SEA Objective	Main Issues / Policy (p)
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	2a / 3c / 4b / 6p51&52 / 6p55
2 Population and Human Health	2c / 2d / 3a / 3b / 3c / 4a / 4c / 6p33 / 6p37 / 6p39 / 6p45&46 / 6p49 / 6p51&52 / 6p69
3 Soil and Peat	6p55 / 6p62
4 Water	6p49 / 6p51&52
5 Air	2c / 3a / 3b / 4a / 6p51&52 / 6p73
6 Climatic Factors	1a / 1b / 2c / 3a / 3b / 3c / 4a / 4c / 4d / 6p51&52 / 6p45&46 / 6p69
7 Material Assets	1a / 1b / 2a / 3a / 3b / 4c / 4d
8 Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage	2b / 4b
9 Landscape	2a /4b / 6p49 / 6p61

Commentary: None of the preferred approaches set out within the MIR are anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts on any of the SEA Objectives. The assessment has revealed that there is anticipated to be a combined total of 51 significant impacts, 17 of which relate to other minor amendments set out in issue 6. The highest scoring SEA Outcome with 14 significantly positive impacts is SEA Objective 2 (population and human health), followed by SEA Objective 6 (climatic factors) with 12 significant positive impacts. Other areas that scored particularly well include SEA Objective 7 (material assets), 5 (air) and 1 (biodiversity).

1 - Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

4.4 Improvements to the Development Hierarchy (issue 2a) will guide the right development to the right locations which will contribute toward the protection of biodiversity through minimising the impact of dispersed development.

4.5 The green infrastructure policies (issue 3c) specifically make provision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, habitats and species. The inclusion of Policy 60 within the Green Infrastructure section of the replacement Plan will help in enhancing habitat corridors through the creation of new sites and protection of all designated and non-designated sites. The application of these policies to all scales of development proposals also has significant benefits. This approach will contribute significantly toward achieving LBAP targets both regionally and locally in protecting and enhancing habitats.

4.6 By separating the natural and historic environment policy (issue 4b) to provide for the natural and historic environments explicitly, and integrating biodiversity-related policies helps in highlighting the requirement for contributions towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. This will contribute to achieving LBAP targets. Together with the policies on green infrastructure it will help ensure that habitat networks and corridors are maintained and enhanced.

4.7 The revised policies on trees and woodland (issue 6, Policies 51 &52) have potential to directly contribute to conserving and enhancing biodiversity through maintaining and increasing tree/ hedge planting in developments and safeguarding important woodland resources, whilst contributing to protection and enhancement of biodiversity. This replacement policy will make a significant positive contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of habitat networks and corridors.

4.8 Peat and soils policy (issue 6, Policy 55) makes provision for avoiding disturbance to peat and carbon rich soils which will help with protection of biodiversity for these particular areas.

2 - Population and Human Health

4.9 The Growing Settlements Policy (issue 2c) will support development that helps consolidate and support small rural settlements which experience low levels of development pressure. Proposals for development will be supported where they meet placemaking priorities set out in each Area Local Development Plan and are compatible with a range of criteria related to utilising and supporting existing facilities, infrastructure and services. Where facilities are present within a settlement, development will be encouraged to take place within active travel distance of these to provide opportunities for people to walk/cycle to facilities rather than a dispersed pattern of growth which would encourage private car use. The approach to sustainable travel (issue 3b) and particularly measures to increase active travel, would help deliver lasting health benefits which improve quality of life. The Growing Settlements policy also aims to avoid a net loss of amenity/recreational areas or locally important heritage features. By maintaining open space this provides opportunities for people to improve/maintain their health.

4.10 Design Requirements Policy (issue 3a) promotes active lifestyles and seeks to limit car dependency by setting criteria for assessing design quality in placemaking that support and encourage active travel. It is anticipated that it would have a slight impact in the short term and a significant positive impact in the medium to long term as greenspace matures, active travel routes are better connected, and public transport provision improves. The revised policies on trees and woodland (issue 6, Policies 51 & 52) will also significantly improve the living environment by ensuring that important woodland resources are safeguarded, and development only permitted where there is a demonstrable need. The revised woodland policies will provide direct benefits by enabling increased opportunity for improving connectivity of green networks and higher quality open space, with potential for improving human health. Similarly, the green infrastructure policies (issue 3c) aim to create connections for both people and wildlife, enhancing accessibility, well being and rural identity to achieve high quality places. Together the green infrastructure policies will encourage a better approach to land use management, through connectivity of open spaces to each other and to the wider green network. This will ensure better provision of quality spaces, which enable opportunities to access the wider countryside, enhancing active travel facilities, and defining sense of place.

4.11 The introduction of a three tier Housing in the Countryside Policy (issue 2d) with a more relaxed approach for housing in fragile areas is intended to supporting fragile communities through encouraging housing development and re-population of these areas to sustain existing service provision. Replacement communication infrastructure, siting and design policy (issue 6, Policies 45 & 46) will help ensure local communities are well connected. This is particularly important for supporting remote and fragile rural communities.

4.12 The Carbon Clever Energy related polices (issue 4a) will have a slight overall positive impact as it will support a reduction in fossil fuel use which in turn brings health benefits by reducing the amount of harmful particulates and residues of fossil fuels. Community Benefit schemes are also likely to lead to health and social benefits for local communities. Replacement electricity transmission infrastructure policy (issue 6, Policy 69) will help ensure security of energy supply for local communities, industry and businesses. The development of heat networks and a network of waste management sites (issue 4c) can provide significant benefits for human health through de-carbonising our energy needs.

4.13 A revised accommodation for an ageing population policy (issue 6, Policy 37) will widen it's scope to encourage the provision of suitably sited accommodation and facilities to meet the need for more specialist accommodation as identified within the Housing Need and Demand Assessment. This will provide better access and support for the populace requiring access to specialist accommodation. The provision of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across Highland (issue 6, Policy 33) will provide significant benefits to areas where housing shortage is detrimental to community and individual wellbeing. HMOs will also provide housing opportunities for the delivery of the University of the Highlands and Islands. The provision of suitable gypsies / travellers sites (issue 6, Policy 39) ensures the identification of an adequate supply of both transit and permanent sites which will be of significant benefit to human health, with planned sites being better connected to infrastructure and services.

4.14 Coastal Development policy (issue 6, Policy 49) will be replaced by a new Marine and Coastal Planning Policy which will help ensure integration of marine and land use planning which in turn will help people by ensuring key coastal amenities are protected.

3 - Soil and Peat

4.15 Replacement peat and soils policy (issue 6, Policy 55) will be specifically tailored to ensure that soil quality is safeguarded, that disturbance to peat and carbon rich soils is avoided and that release of greenhouse gas emissions is minimised. The updated geodiversity policy (issue 6, Policy 62) will also safeguard and promote earth science features and assets in Highland. This approach offers positive encouragement for all geodiversity interests to be furthered, emphasising the potential of scientific and educational opportunities.

4 - Water

4.16 Issue 5b is directly relevant to this SEA Objective and deals the water environment as well as flooding. The new polices to be set out within this section of the replacement Plan are predicted to result in medium to long term positive impacts. A cumulative approach for planning obligations (issue 5a) would support these policies through enabling proportionate contributions to be sought towards Council led flood risk proposals. Replacement trees and woodland policy (issue 6, Policies 51 &52) could also have potential significantly positive impacts on the water environment. By maintaining and enhancing trees/ hedges, the approach will contribute to natural drainage and help to minimise flood risk.

4.17 The existing Coastal Development policy (issue 6, Policy 49) will be replaced by a new Marine and Coastal Planning Policy. This aims to ensure the successful integration of marine and land use planning and will support measures that help manage flood risk and the protection of the water environment. In the long term this may result in significant water environment improvements.

5 - Air

4.18 Air Quality (issue 6, Policy 73) deals specifically with the management of potential pollution sources and the application of this updated policy will be significantly beneficial for air quality.

4.19 The Growing Settlements Policy (issue 2c) promotes sustaining good levels of air quality through reducing the need to travel by car to utilise local services. By supporting growing settlements in locations that sustain local service provision helps prevent longer journeys and more traffic congestion / poorer air quality in larger settlements and towns. A modal shift towards more sustainable means of travel (issue 3b) could lead to significant improvements to air quality. A cumulative approach and more equitable planning obligations (issue 5a) from all types and scales of development will help to deliver access / open space improvements and provision of additional facilities where required.

4.20 A Design Requirements Policy (issue 3a) will promote high standards of air quality in new development by setting design requirements that would minimise pollution by limiting car dependency, and mitigate pollution by expanding urban greenspace. It is anticipated that it would have a slight impact in the short term and a significant

positive impact in the medium to long term as greenspace matures and car use decreases. The Design Requirements policy will be supported by a replacement trees and woodland policy (issue 6, Policies 51 &52) that would bring direct benefits to air quality.

4.21 The Carbon Clever Energy related polices (issue 4a) will also have a significant positive impact on air quality. Through supporting renewable energy production this will help reduce reliance on fossil fuels and limit carbon emissions.

6 - Climatic Factors

4.22 The vision and spatial strategy (issues 1a & 1b) do not specifically mention climate change however the vision does reference Carbon Clever energy related policies (issue 4a) which is an important aspect of mitigating the rate at which climate change is occurring. Connected to this is the replacement electricity transmission infrastructure policy (issue 6, Policy 69) which supports improvements to the electricity grid infrastructure to facilitate renewable energy industry is a significantly positive step toward decarbonising our energy needs. Similarly, development of waste facilities and heat networks (issue 4c) will lead to a reduction in our reliance on fossil fuels.

4.23 The Design Requirements Policy (issue 3a) will help to limit greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use by setting design requirements that will seek to limit car dependency through appropriate neighbourhood design and layout. The policy would also promote resource efficient building design that exceeds standards set by Building Regulations for energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable materials, and water conservation. Although climate change adaptation is not specifically addressed, the promotion of greenspace and tree planting in urban areas should help to moderate temperature increases arising from climate change. Overall, this approach would have localised impacts that are anticipated to have a significantly positive effect in the medium to long term.

4.24 The Growing Settlements Policy (issue 2c) will support development that helps consolidate and support small rural settlements which experience low levels of development pressure. Proposals for development will be supported where they meet placemaking priorities set out in each Area Local Development Plan and are compatible with a range of criteria related to utilising and supporting existing facilities, infrastructure and services. Where facilities are present within a settlement, development will be encouraged to take place within active travel distance of these to provide opportunities for people to walk/cycle to facilities rather than a dispersed pattern of growth which would encourage private car use. The approach to sustainable travel (issue 3b) and particularly measures to increase active travel, would help deliver lasting health benefits which improve quality of life. A modal shift towards more sustainable means of travel (issue 3b) would result in significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than what would otherwise be the case without any intervention. Similarly, the green infrastructure policies (issue 3c) would have a direct positive impact through encouraging and providing better opportunities for walking and cycling, which increases the use of more sustainable transport methods. A cumulative approach and more equitable planning obligations (issue 5a) would help deliver active travel initiatives, reducing dependency on fossil fuels.

4.25 By helping to secure an effective supply of mineral reserves to serve local market area requirements (issue 4d) this should avoid aggregates being transported excessive distances, thereby reducing haulage related carbon emissions and associated costs.

4.26 By maintaining and increasing tree planting and safeguarding valuable woodland resources, replacement trees and woodland policy (issue 6, Policies 51 &52) will provide direct and significant benefits for climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration. This approach also has potential opportunities for climate change adaptation, for example by creating opportunities for natural flood risk management in new developments.

7 - Material Assets

4.27 The vision and spatial strategy (issues 1a & 1b) makes a clear commitment to sustaining existing material assets through ensuring development contributes proportionately towards resilient infrastructure and services. Such contributions, together with ongoing Council investment would over time result in significantly positive impact on material assets, including the transport network. The Development Hierarchy (issue 2a) concentrates populations and places of work could result in the potential for more viable heat networks and energy from waste facility opportunities in the medium to longer term. Concentration of population also maximises the benefits of maintaining other material assets. This, together with the approach for sustainable travel (issue 3b) would maximise the use of our material assets and expand these in line with the proposed Spatial Strategy Map.

4.28 Whilst Design Requirements Policy (issue 3a) would not specifically focus on sustainable use of resources or waste minimisation, this policy reinforces other Plan policies by ensuring development is assessed against a wide range of sustainable design criteria including the extent to which it minimises negative impact on non-renewable resources, demonstrates resource efficiency, and minimises waste in construction and operation. The approach to improving our waste strategy provision (issue 4c) within the replacement Plan will enhance this material asset. The preferred approach for minerals (issue 4d) should also result in less impacts on the local road network as materials will not be travelling excessive distances. Similarly, local supplies of aggregates will help sustain and develop material assets across Highland.

8 - Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage

4.29 The preferred approach to separate the natural and historic environment policy (issue 4b) into two distinct policies will make a significant positive contribution to protecting and enhancing the historic environment. The formation of a new historic environment policy will deliver clarity about how to safeguard and enhance Highland historic assets. The Town Centres First Policy (issue 2b) could also have a significantly positive impact on the re-use of historic buildings in town centres if this is done correctly and sympathetically.

9 - Landscape

4.30 The natural heritage policy (issue 4b) will make specific provisions to address this SEA objective. Through the appropriate consideration of features it will be possible to ensure that the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape are protected and enhanced. The central aim of retained landscape policy (issue 6, Policy 61) is also to enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape. The approach provides a strengthened policy framework to achieve this.

4.31 Revision of the Development Hierarchy (issue 2a) will guide the right development to the right locations which contributes toward the protection of the landscape through minimising urban sprawl. The existing Coastal Development policy (issue 6, Policy 49) will also be replaced by a new Marine and Coastal Planning Policy to help ensure a joined-up approached to the consideration of landscape and seascape issues in relation to coastal development.

The Non-Preferred Approach

4.32 The environmental scoring for following all of the non-preferred approaches (including varying non-preferred options) for all main issues set out within the MIR are summarised in Table 9. These exclude issue 6 of the MIR which deal with minor amendments to existing polices to be taken forward in the replacement Plan. Further explanation of the significant impacts are also described under each SEA Objective.

Table 9 - Cumulative Impacts of The Non-Preferred Approach (Significant Impacts)

SEA Objective	**Main Issues** (Option nos. are in bracket)
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	2d(3) / 4b(2)
2 Population and Human Health	2c(2) / 2c(3) / 3a(2) / 4a(2) / 4c(2) / 5a(2)
3 Soil and Peat	2d(3)
4 Water	
5 Air	2c(2) / 3a(2) / 4a(2)
6 Climatic Factors	1a(2) / 1b(2) / 2c(2) / 2c(3) / 3a(2) / 4a(2) / 4c(2) / 4d(2) / 5a(2)
7 Material Assets	2c(3) / 2d(3) / 3a(2) / 4c(2)
8 Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage	

9 Landscape	2d(3) / 4b(2) / 4d(2)

Commentary: The assessment has revealed that the non-preferred approaches are predicted to result in 8 significant adverse impacts. These are in relation to a range of SEA Objectives, with main issue 2d (Option 3), which relates to a more relaxed approach for housing in the wider countryside, raising several potential significant adverse effects. The non-preferred approaches collectively are anticipated to result in 20 positive environmental effects, 14 less than the preferred approach (excluding all minor amendments - issue 6). SEA Outcomes that score relatively well include 6 (climatic factors) and 2 (population and human health).

1 - Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

4.33 Issue 2d (non-preferred approach Option 3) proposes a more dispersed pattern of development which is likely to give rise to greater biodiversity losses.

4.34 The approach to continue with a combined natural and historic environment policy, issue 4b (Option 2) would continue to make a significant contribution towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. It will contribute to achieving LBAP targets. Together with the policies on green infrastructure, it will help ensure that habitat networks and corridors are maintained and enhanced.

2 - Population and Human Health

4.35 For Growing Settlements Policy (issue 2c non-preferred approach Option 2), the suggested approach of Area LDPs comming forward with individual area based Growing Settlements policies is anticipated to still support active travel and avoidance of amenity / recreational net losses. There are however greater potential for developer and community confusion if the approach to implementing the growing settlement policy differs on a plan by plan basis as well as through local placemaking priorities. This confusion could give rise to both negative and positive impacts for the population in the short term but should resolve in the longer term resulting in lasting environmental benefits.

4.36 For Growing Settlements Policy (issue 2c non-preferred approach Option 3), the suggested approach of reverting back to having SDAs for all settlements would provide developers and communities with a clearer understanding of which areas of land are allocated for development. Unfortunately this would also lead to much longer Development Plan preparation timescales resulting in outdated plans which are ineffective in responding to emerging development pressures. We believe that reverting back to this traditional, rigid approach would result in more development proposals not conforming to land use allocations, resulting in less certainty for developers and communities.

4.37 The design requirements set out under various proposed policies (issue 3a non-preferred approach Option 2) would promote active lifestyles and seeks to limit car dependency by setting criteria for assessing design quality in placemaking that support and encourage active travel. It is anticipated that it would have a slight impact in the short term and a significant positive impact in the medium to long term as greenspace matures, active travel routes are better connected, and public transport provision improves.

4.38 The proposal to carry forward and improve existing HwLDP polices for renewable development, or establish different polices for 'wind' and 'other' renewable developments, (issue 4a non-preferred approaches Options 2 and 3) will have an overall positive impact as it will support a reduction in fossil fuel use which in turn brings health benefits by reducing the amount of harmful particulates and residues of fossil fuels. Community Benefit schemes are also likely to lead to health and social benefits for local communities. The development of heat networks and a network of waste management sites under different policy provisions within the replacement Plan (issue 4c non-preferred approach Option 2) can also provide significant benefits for human health through de-carbonising our energy needs.

3 - Soil and Peat

4.39 Issue 2d (non-preferred approach Option 3) proposes a more dispersed pattern of development. Due to limited availability of previously used land and a lack of incentive to redevelop these sites, it is likely that the majority of new houses in the countryside would be built on greenfield land therefore giving rise to soil and peat losses.

4 - Water

4.40 No significant impacts on the water environment are predicted for any of the alternative approaches.

5 - Air

4.41 For Growing Settlements Policy (issue 2c non-preferred approach Option 2) which proposes Areas LDP to come forward within individual Growing Settlements policies, positive impacts on air quality are still predicted based on restricting growth to within active travel distances. The design requirements set out under various proposed policies (issue 3a non-preferred approach Option 2) would promote high standards of air quality in new development by setting design requirements that would minimise pollution by limiting car dependency, and mitigate pollution by expanding urban greenspace. It is anticipated that it would have a slight impact in the short term and a significant positive impact in the medium to long term as greenspace matures and car use decreases.

4.42 The Carbon Clever Energy related polices (issue 4a non-preferred approach Options 2 & 3) would have a significant positive impact on air quality as it would support renewable energy production thereby reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

6 - Climatic Factors

4.43 It is anticipated that taking forward the existing vision and spatial strategy (issues 1a & 1b non-preferred approaches Options 2) would have significantly positive effects in terms of Climate Factors. The vision makes specific reference to taking a lead in reducing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the air. This commitment intends to make a positive step towards reducing air quality impacts from development, travel and our energy needs.

4.44 For Growing Settlements Policy (issue 2c non-preferred approach Option 2), positive impacts are still assumed based onsupport development that helps consolidate and support small rural settlements and where appropriate restricting growth to within active travel distances of facilities. By having SDAs for all settlements (issue 2c non-preferred approach Option 3) there is no clear priority for areas which would benefit from growth to sustain and improve local services. This in turn could lead to poorer levels of service provision in rural areas as resources are being spread too widely, resulting in the centralisation of provision within the most populated areas. This would result in longer journeys for rural communities and greater carbon emissions.

4.45 The design requirements set out under various proposed policies (issue 3a non-preferred approach Option 2) would help to limit greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use by setting design requirements to limit car dependency through appropriate neighbourhood design and layout. The policies would also promote resource efficient building design that exceeds standards set by Building Regulations for energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable materials, and water conservation. Although climate change adaptation is not specifically addressed, the promotion of greenspace and tree planting in urban areas should help to moderate temperature increases arising from climate change. Overall, this approach would have localised impacts that are anticipated to have a significantly positive effect in the medium to long term.

4.46 The Carbon Clever Energy related polices (issue 4a non-preferred approaches Options 2 & 3) would directly help to mitigate climate change as renewable energy reduces reliance on fossil fuels. Development of waste facilities and heat networks under different policy provisions within the replacement Plan (issue 4c non-preferred approach Option 2) would still lead to a reduction in our reliance on fossil fuels. A more relaxed approach to minerals development (issue 4d non-preferred approach Option 2) would help secure an effective supply of mineral reserves to serve local market area requirements. This would avoid aggregates being transported excessive distances, thereby reducing haulage related carbon emissions and associated costs.

7 - Material Assets

4.47 By having SDAs for all settlements (issue 2c non-preferred approach Option 3) without clear priorities for growth, or outdated allocations that do not result in effective plan-led decision making may result in a more dispersed development pattern leading to increased traffic and carbon emissions.

4.48 Issue 2d non-preferred approach Option 3 proposes a more dispersed pattern of development. Dependant on the location of development in the wider countryside it may be difficult to ensure the waste hierarchy is taken into consideration as in some rural areas recycling collections may not be in place and it could be some distance from the nearest recycling point/centre.

4.49 Although the design requirements set out under various proposed policies (issue 3a non-preferred approach Option 2) would not specifically focus on sustainable use of resources or waste minimisation, the policies would still reinforce other Plan policies by ensuring development is assessed against a wide range of sustainable design criteria including the extent to which it minimises negative impact on non-renewable resources, demonstrates resource efficiency, and minimises waste in construction and operation.

4.50 Development of waste facilities and heat networks under different policy provisions within the replacement Plan (issue 4c Option 2) would still specifically enhance this material assets.

8 - Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage

4.51 No significant impacts are predicted on the historic environment and cultural heritage for any of the alternative approaches.

9 - Landscape

4.52 Issue 2d non-preferred approach Option 3 proposes a more dispersed pattern of development. Supporting the development of new single houses anywhere in the wider countryside is likely to have a negative landscape impact. This may particularly be the case in the many areas of Highland that are characterised by landscape designations including National Scenic Areas, Special Landscape Areas and Wild Land Areas. Design and siting polices as well as the SG help to mitigate this impact but over the long term, this could lead to significantly adverse landscape impacts.

4.53 The approach to continue with a combined natural and historic environment policy (issue 4b non-preferred approach Option 2) makes provisions to address this SEA objective. Through the appropriate consideration of features it will be possible to ensure that the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape are protected and enhanced.

4.54 Generally, a more relaxed approach for minerals development (issue 4d non-preferred approach Option 2) can result in adverse landscape impacts. Without a more robust policy approach the potential for adverse effects will remain and over time, significantly adverse impacts may emerge as sites are worked any unsatisfactorily restored.

Summary of Mitigation Measures

4.55 An important feature of the Strategic Environmental Assessment is to assess any environmental impacts from development and identify relevant mitigation. Schedule 3 paragraph 7 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires an explanation of "the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme." Our approach to mitigation is based on the following recognised hierarchy:

- Avoid - Avoid the potential impact
- Reduce - Decrease the spatial/temporal scale of the impact during design, consultation etc
- Remedy - Apply rehabilitation techniques after the impact has occurred to restore the environment or to a new equilibrium
- Compensate - Offset the residual impact and compensate as appropriate

4.56 In the first instance the MIR seeks to **avoid** significant adverse effects on the environment. This represents the cheapest and most effective form of impact mitigation. It has mainly been achieved through either not preferring a particular policy approach or alternative. Where this is has not been achieved, the provision of the MIR seeks to **reduce** the severity of impact, identify ways to **remedy** or restore the environment, as the last resort, **compensate** for the adverse effect so there is no net loss. An additional approach has been to identify potential mitigation which will **enhance** the environment and achieve a net positive gain. By undertaking the detailed assessments of each MIR preferred approach and alternative, we have been able to identify mitigation measures required for each policy areas.

4.57 The mitigation measures identified are set out in the detailed assessments contained in Appendix E. Examples of mitigation measures identified through this SEA include:

- Review of the HwDLP vision and spatial strategy on a 5 year rolling basis
- Review the policy approach of HwLDP2 based on earlier drafting prepared for IMFLDP and CaSPlan MIR for Town Centres First and Growing Settlements Policies
- Retain policy requirement for active travel distances to sustain local services

- Area LDPs to incorporate references to biodiversity interests in site specific allocations
- Policy wording to highlight need for protected species surveys
- Identification of Strategic Development Areas to be subject to SEA during preparation of Area LDPs
- Steer applicants towards more sustainable sites close to existing communities and active travel networks through pre-application discussions
- Design policies and SG to ensure appropriate sitting and design of new houses in the countryside
- Include policy wording which states that although the Council will support development which supports sustainable rural communities it must also protect and enhance the environmental quality of the area.
- Minimise disturbance and soil losses through retaining existing peat and soils policy and retain requirement for Site Waste Management Plans
- Proposed policy wording to make reference to relationship between improving tourist routes and accessibility and interpretation of the historic environment
- Area LDPs to reflect Green Networks and key areas of open space in mapping and placemaking priorities

4.58 The mitigation measures identified will be continued through the Plan process and within the Proposed Plan it is expected they will help to identify relevant policy wording requirements and inform the preparation of Area LDPs. As the Proposed Plan emerges, the necessary mitigation measures as well as how mitigation will be actioned may be subject to change. Any necessary updates will be considered during the preparation of the revised Environmental Report which will accompany the Proposed Plan.

Influence of SEA on the MIR

4.59 The SEA process has played a central role in informing the preferences and overall strategy for each policy area set out within the MIR. The assessment process has helped to identify the most environmentally sustainable options for the development of the replacement Plan and has highlighted where significant environmental benefits can be realised. The process has also identified where certain non-preferred alternative approaches may result in a more limited range of significantly positive effects and where significantly adverse environmental effects are predicted for certain SEA Objectives. Overall, the process has reaffirmed that the preferred approaches environmentally outweigh the suggested alternatives, providing suitable mitigation and monitoring is built into the development of the emerging vision, strategy and policies for the replacement Plan.

5 Monitoring

5.1 Section 19 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Responsible Authority to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the HwLDP2. This must be done in such a way as to also identify unforeseen adverse effects and to take appropriate remedial action.

5.2 It is considered good practice for monitoring based on a pre-defined purpose, helping to solve problems, and address key issues. Monitoring should include practical measures customised to the PPS, the findings of which should be transparent and readily accessible to the public. Monitoring is also seen as a learning cyclical process relating closely to the collation of environmental baseline information.

5.3 For monitoring to be effective it will need to be linked to both the SEA Objectives and the objectives of the Plan. The baseline data set out at Section 2 sets the scene for any monitoring to be undertaken.

5.4 The framework below sets out proposed monitoring arrangements which has been incorporated as mitigation which has informed the SEA scoring. All committed monitoring arrangements are in **bold**. Alongside, other potential monitoring arrangements of an advisory nature have been identified which have not influenced the SEA scoring and are to be used as a guide to inform any further monitoring work. Additional monitoring would only be considered in the event of particular concerns raised into the performance of the replacement Plan in respect of a particular SEA Objective.

Table 10 SEA Environmental Report Monitoring

Environmental Parameter	SEA Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Responsible for Data Collection	Publication of Monitoring	Remedial Action
1 - Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	To conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity and accord to the protection of valued nature conservation habitats and species.	**Monitor biodiversity actions.** **Monitor loss of woodland habitat through development and provision of compensatory planting to deliver habitat.**	THC	Triennial Biodiversity Duty Report/ Ongoing	Review application of policy area.
2 - Population & Human Health	To improve the living environment for all communities and promote improved health of the human population.	**Monitor housing completions in SDAs, Growing Settlements, hinterland areas, wider countryside and fragile areas to monitor application of the Development Hierarchy.**	THC	Annual Briefing Note	Review application of policy area.
3 - Soil & Peat	Safeguard the soil quality, geo-diversity and improve contaminated land.	Number of planning applications granted on prime agricultural land.	THC	As Required	Review application of policy area
		Number of planning applications granted on brownfield land in the last 12 months and		Annual	

5 Monitoring

Environmental Parameter	SEA Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Responsible for Data Collection	Publication of Monitoring	Remedial Action
		remedial action required.			
4 - Water	Avoid, manage and reduce flood risk and protect the water environment.	Monitor reduction in level of permissions in areas of flood risk.	THC	As Required	Seek mitigation measures to reduce flood risk.
		Monitoring of quality of rivers and bathing waters.	SEPA	Annual	
5 - Air	Maintain and, where possible, improve air quality.	**Monitoring of air quality within Air Quality Management Area(s).**	THC	Triennial Updating and Screening Assessment, alongside Air Quality Progress Reports for intervening years.	Draw up and implement an action plan to reduce pollution levels in the specified area.
6 - Climatic Factors	Reduce greenhouse gases and contribute to the adaptation of the area to climate change.	Monitor travel patterns and reductions in car usage.	THC	As Required	Review application of policy area.
7 - Material Assets	Manage, maintain and promote sustainable use of material assets.	**Monitor % of residual waste going to landfill.** **Mineral Supply Audit.**	THC	Ongoing	Review policies on waste strategy and minerals.
8 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage	Protect and where appropriate enhance the historic environment.	Number of historic buildings at risk.	Scottish Civic Trust	Ongoing	Review application of policy area.
9 - Landscape	Protect and enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape.	Monitor development of unspoilt coast (including Marine Planning Zones for Aquaculture).	THC	As Required	Review application of policy area.

6 Next Steps

6.1 In line with statutory requirements the Environmental Report will be submitted through the SEA Gateway. It will be made available for people to view on the Highland Council website and at the Development and Infrastructure Reception at Council HQ in Inverness. A notice will be published to this effect and comments will be able to be submitted in by email or by post during the consultation period.

Environmental Report

6.2 This Environmental Report has been published in parallel to the MIR which is subject to a 12 week period of consultation which will commence on 25 September 2015 and run until 18 December 2015. Comments on the Environmental Report from the consultation authorities and other interested parties require to be made within this consultation period.

Revised Environmental Report

6.3 A revised Environmental Report will be published alongside the Proposed Plan. It is currently anticipated there will be a six week consultation period for the consultation authorities and other interested parties to submit their opinions on the revised Environmental Report and Proposed Plan.

6.4 Preparation Timescale for HwLDP2 and the associated SEA is set out in the latest Development Plan Scheme.

Statutory Supplementary Guidance & SEA Screening

6.5 Extant HwLDP statutory SG that will fall upon replacement of HwLDP and to be considered for re-adoption under the new HwLDP include:

- Aquaculture, draft published for consultation, May 2015 (document pending future adoption);
- Developer Contributions, March 2013;
- Flood Risk & Drainage Impact, January 2013;
- Green Networks, January 2013;
- Historic Environment Strategy, January 2013;
- Houses in Multiple Occupation, March 2013;
- Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design, March 2013;
- Managing Waste in New Development, March 2013;
- Open Space in New Residential Development, January 2013;
- Physical Constraints, March 2013;
- Public Art Strategy, March 2013;
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species, March 2013;
- Sustainable Design Guide, January 2013; and
- Trees, Woodland and Development, January 2013.

6.6 Area specific statutory SG adopted under the extant HwLDP will also fall. These documents could be considered for re-adoption under the three area Local Development Plans (LDPs). Such area specific statutory SG includes:

- Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief, November 2013;
- Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief, February 2015;
- Inverness City Centre Development Brief, March 2013;
- Nigg Development Masterplan, March 2013; and
- Sandown Development Brief, March 2013.

6.7 The requirement for proposed re-adopted statutory SG to undergo SEA will be assessed during the preparation of the HwLDP2. It is intended that this SG will be subject to a coordinated SEA Screening process, likely to be undertaken following the publication of the HwLDP2 MIR / during the preparation of the Proposed Plan. This is considered the optimum time frame for determining which SG will be retained / merged / amended or omitted from the Development Plan and to establish whether or not any re-adopted SG would have potential to give rise to additional significant environmental effects above those already considered as part of the assessment undertaken for the HwLDP2 or those effects already identified during the SGs original preparation and adoption. As the guiding principles and preferred

options set out within the MIR, and the consultation responses received will influence the degree of HwLDP2 policy shift and associated SG redirection, this co-ordinated SEA Screening process cannot commence until the HwLDP2 has been sufficiently progressed beyond the point of considering alternatives.

6.8 The format of the HwLDP2 statutory SG SEA Screening request is intend to enable a Screening direction to be issued for each proposed SG, with any resultant assessments to either be incorporated within the HwLDP2 Environmental Report, to be published alongside the Proposed Plan, or to be prepared independently to enable a staggered roll out of SG during the currency of the Plan.

Appendix A - Glossary

Below is a list of abbreviations / terms used in this document and the MIR. Please note the explanations given are not intended as legal definitions of the planning terms used.

Abbreviation	**Description**
Area LDPs: - CaSPlan - IMFLDP - WHILDP	Area Local Development Plans: - Caithness and Southerland Local Development Plan - Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan - West Highland and Island Local Development Plan
CNPA	Cairngorm National Park Planning Authority
EDAs	Economic Development Areas
EfW	Energy From Waste
HLR	Housing Land Requirement
HMA	Housing Market Area
HwLDP / HwLDP2	Highland-wide Local Development Plan
LCA	Landscape Character Areas
LDP	Local Development Plans
LTS	Local Transport Strategy
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
HNDA	Housing Need and Demand Assessment
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupancy
MIR	Main Issues Report
NPF3	National Planning Framework 3
SDA	Settlement Development Area
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SOA3	Single Outcome Agreement 3
SPP	Scottish Planning Policy
SuDS	Sustainable urban Drainage Systems
SG	Supplementary Guidance

Appendix A - Glossary

Term	Description
Action Programme	A working document developed in consultation with key stakeholders and sets out, in very broad terms, how and by whom the key elements of the Local Development Plan's strategy will be implemented.
Affordable Housing	Broadly defined as housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. In some places the market can provide some or all of the affordable housing that is needed, but in other places it is necessary to make housing available at a cost below market value to meet an identified need with the support of subsidy.
Allocations	Land identified in a Local Development Plan as appropriate for a specific use or mix of uses.
Area Local Development Plans	There are three Area Local Development Plans being prepared for Highland (IMFLDP, CaSPlan and WHILDP) which will deliver land use allocations and more area specific policies and detailed land use strategies.
Article 10 Features	Wildlife habitat features which provide 'corridors' or 'stepping stones' between habitat areas and that help plants and wildlife to move from one area to another. Examples include rivers and their banks, areas of woodland and traditional field boundaries. Protecting and managing these areas through the land use planning system is promoted in Article 10 of the EC Habitats and Species Directive 1992.
Active Travel Plans	Plans which help establish a network for walking, cycling and access to public transport. These identify a core active travel network and prioritised actions in certain settlement locations which serve as a framework for future investment and new development. Active Travel Plans are currently in place for: Alness and Invergordon, Dingwall, Fort William, Inverness, Tain, Nairn, Thurso and Wick.
Brownfield Land	Land which has previously been developed. The term may cover vacant or derelict land, land occupied by redundant or unused buildings, and developed land in a settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.
Carbon CLEVER	An initiative aimed at achieving a carbon neutral Inverness and a low carbon Highlands by 2025, toward which the Council has committed resources from its capital budget.
Circular	Contains Scottish Government advice on the implementation of legislation or procedures.
Council's Capital Programme	The Highland Council's programme of capital expenditure on specific infrastructure projects and services to 2016/17.
Core Path Plans	The key paths in our area are called core paths, and give the public reasonable access throughout the area. The paths cater for all types of users, for example walkers, cyclists, horse riders, canoeists, people with disabilities.
Council's Programme	This is the Council's Programme of priorities for delivery over the period 2015-2017. The programme sets out 62 commitments across a range of themes.
Commercial Centres	Distinct from town centres in terms of range of uses and commercial centres with a more specific focus on retailing or on retailing and leisure uses. Commercial centres are to be identified within Area LDPs.
Croft House	A house on a unit of land subject to the Crofting Acts and recorded in the Crofting Commission's Register of Crofts.
Cumulative	Proposals will be assessed for cumulative impact which is changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with any other developments (not just similar developments) or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together. This includes proposals which have been permitted as well as those that have been submitted and are pending determination. It can relate to landscape and visual effects as well as a wider range of

Term	Description
	social, economic and environmental effects. These cumulative impacts may be positive as well as negative.
Development Brief	A detailed document for an area allocated for development in a Local Development Plan. The brief provides information to possible developers on issues such as the preferred siting, design and layout of buildings, and the need for associated infrastructure and services.
Development Plan	Sets out how we think land should be used over the next few years. By law the Council need to produce a Development Plan for its area.
Economic Development Areas	These refer to places, outwith the main settlements, which we believe will continue to be important economic centres within Highland with further development potential guided by Area LDPs.
Energy from Waste	Energy that is recovered by thermally treating waste.
European Protected Species	Species of animal and plant listed respectively in Schedule 2 and Schedule 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c)Regulations 1994 as amended.
Fragile Areas	Areas which are in decline or in danger of becoming so as a consequence of remoteness and socio-economic factors, such as population loss, erosion of services and facilities and lack of employment opportunities. In some areas the natural heritage is a dominant influence on appropriate land management.
Functional Trips	A term often also referred to as Utility Trips.
Growing Settlements / Other Settlements	These refer to settlements which we think would benefit from a set of guiding factors to direct development to the best locations rather than setting it out as a Settlement Development Area and site allocations. This should provide a greater level of flexibility in these settlements.
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	The Scottish Government's economic and community development agency for the Highlands and Islands.
Hinterland Areas	Areas of land around settlements that fall under pressure from commuter driven housing development.
Housing Market Areas	A geographical area which is relatively self-contained in terms of housing demand.
Housing Need and Demand Assessment	Provides the evidence base to inform the policy discussions and decisions in relation to the delivery of affordable housing and market housing. It employs the recommended approach to analysing housing need and demand over the next 20 years.
Inbye-Apportioned Croftland	Normally arable ground on which a crofter's house is usually built.
Local Transport Strategy	Sets the framework for transport in Highland and guides decision making on transport issues.
Key Agency	A national or regional organisation that has an important role in planning for the future of an area. Key Agencies are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.
Members	Highland Council elected councillors who are responsible for agreeing policies about provision of services and how money is spent.

Appendix A - Glossary

Term	Description
Modal Shift	The change in people's travelling habits towards use of more sustainable transport methods such as cycling, or public transport. An example would be when somebody stops travelling to and from work by car and starts using public transport.
Mode Hierarchy	Travel mode in the following order of priority: walking, cycling, public transport, and then cars.
Monitoring Statement	Monitors how the Highlands has changed since the HwLDP was adopted in April 2012.
National Planning Framework	Is the Scottish Government's strategy for Scotland's long term spatial development.
Planning Advice Note	Provides Scottish Government advice and information on technical planning matters.
Planning Obligations and other legal agreements	Planning obligations (previously known as developer contributions or planning agreements) are a mechanism used to secure physical works or financial payments to the Council, or another agency, to contribute towards additional infrastructure or improved services. These relate to improvements necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. Planning obligations are a form of contract. The most common type is an agreement under Section 75 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) act 1997, as amended, and are only necessary to secure the obligations and where successors in title need to be bound by the required obligation. For example, where phased contributions to infrastructure are required. In other instances, other legal agreements can be used where one-off financial payments are made in advance of planning permission being issued.
Renewables	Technologies that utilise renewable sources for energy generation.
Restoration	A process of returning land and/or buildings to a state comparable to that prior to development/degradation.
Scottish Planning Policy	The statement of Scottish Government policy on nationally important land use planning matters.
Sequential Approach	The sequential approach requires developers to search for a suitable site for their proposal following a sequential list of possible locations. For example, developers of large scale retail developments are required to look first of all at the City and town centre locations.
Settlement Development Areas	Reflects the built up area and allocated expansion areas for mapped settlements. These areas are preferred areas for most types of development.
Sustainable Development	Defined as *"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*.
Sustainable Design Statement	A statement encouraged to be submitted with development proposals which sets out how proposals: conserve and enhance the character of the area, use resources efficiently, minimise adverse environmental impacts and enhance viability of communities. Please see the Sustainable Design Guide SG for further details.
Single Outcome Agreement 3	An agreement between the Highland Council, community planning partners and the Scottish Government which sets out 16 commitments to identify areas of improvement and to deliver better outcomes for the people of the Highlands. This helps to align different public service providers better in their joint working and is the third Single Outcome Agreement for the Highlands covering the period 2013/14 to 2018/19.
Waste Facility	Facilities for the sorting, recycling, treatment and disposal of municipal and commercial waste.
Wider Countryside	All areas of land located outwith defined Hinterland areas and Fragile areas.

Term	Description
Wild Land	Those areas where wildness qualities are best expressed, defined by the Scottish Government as *"Uninhabited and often relatively inaccessible countryside where the influence of human activity on the character and quality of the environment has been minimal"*.

Appendix B - Scoping Report Consultation Responses

This appendix provides a summary of the SEA Scoping Report consultation responses and how these have been taken into account in preparing this Environmental Report.

Historic Scotland

Comment	Response
Scope of Assessment and Level of Detail The scoping report provides a clear description of the approach to the assessment and I am content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the SEA.	Noted.
Alternatives Important that assessment of reasonable alternatives should be to the same level of detail as the preferred option and can consider alternate approaches to vision, strategy and policy.	Noted.
Supplementary Guidance Important to set out which guidance is being assessed and which will be subject to a separate SEA process.	The MIR includes an Appendix SEA Environmental Report includes details of the Supplementary Guidance to be revoked and considered for re-adoption under HwLDP2. The requirement for the re-adopted statutory SG to undergo SEA will be assessed following the publication of the MIR – during the Proposed Plan stage.
SEA Objectives Consider altering reference to the historic environment objective to state "Protect and **where appropriate** enhance the historic environment."	Accepted – SEA Objective altered accordingly.
Appendix B – Environmental Baseline Data For those data sources identified as being held by Historic Scotland GIS downloads of these are available from http://data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmldb/f?p=2000:10:0. In terms of information on the Buildings at Risk register it should be noted that the register is now maintained by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland on behalf of Historic Scotland, not the Scottish Civic Trust as stated in the scoping report. Information on this can be found at http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/.	Noted.
Consultation Timescales Satisfied with the anticipated 12 week consultation period for the initial Environmental Report.	Noted - The MIR and Environmental Report is subject to a 12 week consultation process.

SEPA

Comment	Response
Scope of Assessment and Level of Detail We are generally supportive of what is proposed but have provided some limited feedback.	Noted.
General Advice Please refer to our Standing Advice for Responsible Authorities on Standing Advice for Responsible Authorities on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Consultations.	Noted.
Supplementary Guidance Should SEA be required for any Supplementary Guidance, provision should be made for this to be subject to SEA Scoping.	Noted.
Environmental Topics We agree that in this instance all environmental topics should be scoped into the assessment.	Agreed.
Alternatives We suggest that in this case a reasonable alternative will always be to not change that specific element of the plan.	Whilst the MIR does consider 'no change' to the original element of the HwLDP as realistic alternative, this is not the case for every main issue. This is because there are certain elements of the existing plan that require to be amended to reflect SPP, NPF3 and other legislative changes which means that 'no change' is not always an appropriate reasonable alternative way forward.
SEA Objectives and Assessment Methodology We are content with the SEA objectives proposed and the outlined assessment methodology. The iterative process proposed also looked good and we are content with the proposed assessment matrix. As is always the case, we encourage you to make full use of the Justifications and Assumptions section of the matrix so that the reason for your decision is clear.	
Consultation Timescales Satisfied with the anticipated 12 week consultation period for the initial Environmental Report and six week consultation period on the Revised Environmental Report.	Noted - The MIR and Environmental Report is subject to a 12 week consultation process.

SNH

Comment	Response
Scope of Assessment and Level of Detail Subject to the specific comments we are largely content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the Environmental Report.	Noted.
General Advice Reference to our guidance on Biodiversity and Geodiversity Considerations in Strategic Environmental Assessment and Landscape Considerations in Strategic Environmental Assessment helpful when carrying out the assessment (links below) should help ensure that all relevant natural heritage considerations are included in the assessment. http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1015717.pdf and http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B710441.Pdf	Noted.
Supplementary Guidance Agree proposed approach for assessing Supplementary Guidance.	Noted.
Coastal Considerations Please with inclusion of marine and coastal interests, however, consideration of this matter should be broadened out to consider designated sites and protected species as well as other habitats, erosion, and coastal processes. Consider relationship with the Pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan (and subsequent Marine Regional Plan) as a relevant plan, programme and strategy.	Designated sites and protected species and other sites are covered in the appropriate biodiversity policies. The policy will consider erosion and coastal processes. Noted – Relationship now made clear within Environmental Report Section 1.
Climate factors, carbon and water efficiency We note that various renewable energy technologies and "*day to day activities … greener transport and active travel*" will be covered. We also assume and expect that the HwLDP 2 will set out the approach to building standards with regards to carbon and water efficiency, and that the impacts of such measures will also be considered in the SEA.	The preferred approach set out in the MIR includes provision of a Design Requirements Policy which will cover all aspects of sustainable design.
Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Guidance on considering the Habitats Regulations can be found here http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1500925.pdf. This notes that planmaking bodies can consider opportunities to combine the earlier stages of SEA and HRA, where appropriate, even though the differing	Noted.

requirements mean that the two assessments cannot be fully integrated. One option is to conduct the earlier stages in parallel, such as environmental information gathering, prediction of plan effects, and some early consultation stages. If the HRA is undertaken in parallel with SEA, it is important that the findings of both appraisals are separately and clearly documented and that the record of the HRA uses the correct terminology, applying them appropriately. It will be important that impacts on mobile species from outwith the plan area that may be affected by development within the plan area are considered. In addition to consideration of the impacts on well know mobile species such as birds, other species may also require consideration. As an example, impacts on grey seals from the Isle of May SAC and the Berwickshire & North Northumberland SAC: Seals from these SACs are known to travel up the coast and have been recorded in Orkney. Coastal development could have a likely significant effect on seals through; modification to the structures and processes of the habitats that the seals and their prey rely on (including impacts on water quality); effects of increased shipping activity arising from harbour expansion or similar development causing disturbance to seals (and their prey) within and outwith the harbour area; and increased risk of propeller collision causing injury and mortality.	
Appendix B – Environmental Baseline Data • To avoid confusion,"Ramsar *sites"* should be referenced as opposed to "Natura *2000"* sites. • SSSIs and local nature reserves should be added to Section 1. • Wild land areas to be removed from Section 1. • Geological Conservation Review Sites (GCRs) should be added to Section 3.	Noted.
Proposed Assessment Matrix Our advice is that two of the headings in the proposed assessment matrix presented in Annex C of the scoping report are likely to cause confusion. "No *or minimal positive impact"* would be better defined as "Minimal *positive impact".* This because if there is "no…positive *impact",* then the impact would be neutral as there would be no effect. The same applies for "No *or minimal negative impact",* which would be better defined as "Minimal *negative impact".*	The assessment matrix has been adjusted accordingly.
Policy Assessment Matrix Suggestion of the incorporation of:	The definitions for the durations of impacts have been added to the assessment matrix, however, the suggested incorporation of "when mitigation should

Appendix B - Scoping Report Consultation Responses

• two columns for "when mitigation should be considered" and "who is responsible for undertaking the mitigation". • definitions for short/medium/long term impacts in the matrix.	be considered" and "who is responsible for undertaking the mitigation" will be in most cases be: upon the finalisation of particular policy wording within the proposed Plan, and the responsibility for this will remain with THC. Variations to this are where mitigation maybe through monitoring or through the preparation and updates of Development Plan Action Programmes, or Area LDPs but in all cases THC will remain responsible for undertaking the mitigation and the timescale column will indicate when the mitigation is due to take place.
Consultation Timescales Content with the anticipated timescales.	Noted - The MIR and Environmental Report is subject to a 12 week consultation process.

Appendix C - Relevant Legislation, PPS and Environmental Objectives

Outlined in Table 11 are some of the key plans, programmes and strategies which are relevant to the HwLDP2. Also included is a brief summary of how these relate to the Environmental Objectives.

Table 11 - Key Plans, Programmes and Strategies

Legislation, Plans, Programmes or Strategies	Summary of Environmental Objectives
1 - Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	
Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat) ⬇ EU Birds Directive & EU Habitats Directive ⬇ Habitat Regulations	The Habitats Regulations transpose the provisions of the EU Habitats and Birds Directives into Scottish Law and require that local development plans are subject to HRA of their implications for Natura sites. Habitats regulations also requires protection for European protected species.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 Protection of Badgers Act 1992	To further conservation of biodiversity consistent with the proper exercise of its functions and protect an enhance precious natural features and wildlife. To prevent the release and spread of non-native animal and plant species into areas where they can cause damage to native species and habitats and to economic interests.
Convention on Biological Diversity ⬇ UK Biodiversity Action Plan Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (Scotland's Biodiversity – It's in Your Hands) 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity (2013) ⬇ Highland Biodiversity Action Plan	Conserve species and habitats that are considered vulnerable or threatened on a local, regional or national basis, and in turn contribute to the conservation of our global biodiversity; promote awareness of local natural resources; promote community engagement in, and ownership of, the practical conservation of natural resources; and promote the sustainable and wise use of resources.
Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006 ⬇ Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy ⬇ Control of Woodland Removal Policy	Environmental objectives include reducing the impact of climate change; make access to and enjoyment of woodlands easier for all to improve health; protect the environmental quality of our natural resources; and help to maintain, restore and enhance Scotland's biodiversity.

Appendix C - Relevant Legislation, PPS and Environmental Objectives

Legislation, Plans, Programmes or Strategies	Summary of Environmental Objectives
2 - Population & Human Health	
Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 ⬇ Highland Council Core Paths Plan (2011)	Establishes the statutory rights of access to land and inland water for outdoor recreation. Prepared under the Act, the Core Paths Plan provides a system of path in Highland which, as a whole, gives the public reasonable access throughout the plan area.
3 - Soil & Peat	
Scottish Soil Framework (2009) Scotland's National Peat Plan (2014) ⬇ North West Highland Geopark Lochaber Geopark Other Geological SSSIs	To promote the sustainable management and protection of soils consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of Scotland, achieved through targeted activities including reducing soil erosion; greenhouse gas emissions from soil; and contamination. Manage, protect and restore peatlands to maintain their natural functions, biodiversity and benefits. North West Highlands Geopark and Lochaber Geopark are internationally important environments requiring appropriate recognition within HwLDP2 alongside other geological SSSIs within the Plan area.
4 - Water	
EU Water Framework Directive ⬇ Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS) Act ⬇ Scotland River Basin Management Plan (2009)	To prevent deterioration in the status of the water environment, including rivers, lochs, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwaters and protect, enhance and restore all surface water bodies to 'good' status.
EU Floods Directive ⬇ Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009	To reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity through improved assessment and the sustainable and coordinated management of flood risk. The Act imposes a new duty on local authorities to exercise their flood risk related functions with a view to reducing overall flood risk and establishes the requirement to prepare plans to manage flood risk which will provide a framework for coordinating actions across catchments to deal with all forms of flooding and its impacts.
EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)	Aims to achieve good environmental status of the EU's marine waters by 2020 and to protect the resource base

Legislation, Plans, Programmes or Strategies	Summary of Environmental Objectives
⬇ Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 ⬇ Draft National Marine Plan	upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend. The Marine (Scotland) Act transposes the Directive into Scots law and makes provision for a new statutory marine planning system to sustainably manage demands on the marine environment.
5 - Air	
EC Directive 96/62 ⬇ The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland ⬇ Emerging Air Quality Management Plan for Inverness City Centre	The Council has a statutory duty to manage local air quality within the Plan area with an overall objective to protect human health. Overall air quality in Scotland is generally good, however, further improvements are needed to reduce the adverse effects caused by air pollution in some urban and rural areas. Highland's first Air Quality Management Area has been identified in Inverness city centre and the emerging Air Quality Management Plan will detail further assessment and steps towards improved air quality.
6 - Climatic Factors	
Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 ⬇ Land Use Strategy: Getting the best from our land ⬇ Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change in Highland (2012)	The Act introduces a new duty on the Council (and all public bodies) to exercise their functions in a way that is best calculated to contribute towards the greenhouse gas reduction targets of reducing emissions by at least 80% by 2050. A national land-use strategy has been prepared under the Act. This identifies key principles for the sustainable use of land, including: encouraging land uses which deliver multiple benefits; land highly suitable for primary uses should be recognised in decision-making; and examining options for restoring derelict or vacant land should be a priority. The Council's own strategy sets out how it will mitigate against the causes of climate change and adapt to the likely impacts.
7 - Material Assets	
Zero Waste Plan ⬇ Highland Council's Emerging Residual Waste Strategy	To achieve a zero waste Scotland, where we make the most efficient use of resources by minimising Scotland's demand on primary resources, and maximising the reuse, recycling and recovery of resources instead of treating them as waste.

Appendix C - Relevant Legislation, PPS and Environmental Objectives

Legislation, Plans, Programmes or Strategies	Summary of Environmental Objectives
Highland Council Local Transport Strategy Highland Council Core Paths Plan (2011) Active Travel Masterplans Long Distance Routes (Including the National Cycle Network)	The Local Transport Strategy guides investment and decisions on transportation infrastructure and aims to promote more sustainable and active travel. The Core Paths Plan, Active Travel Masterplans and Long Distance Routes provide a network of paths in Highland which collectively provide communities and tourists with attractive, diverse and sustainable access connections throughout the plan area.
8 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage	
Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP)	The three key outcomes presented in the Policy are that the historic environment is cared for, protected and enhanced for the benefit of our own and future generations; greater economic benefits from the historic environment; and that the people of Scotland and visitors to our country value, understand and enjoy the historic environment.
Our Place in Time - The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland	Sets out the 10 year vision for Scotland's historic environment and how its cultural, social, environmental and economic value contributes to the nation and its people.
9 - Landscape	
European Landscape Convention European Landscape Convention 2004 ⬇ Scotland's Scenic Heritage (1978) The Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas (2010) Emerging National Scenic Area Management Strategies ⬇ Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011) Highland Coastal Strategy	To promote the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, including natural, managed, urban and semi-urban areas, and special, settled and degraded landscapes.
Wildness in Scotland's Countryside Policy Statement 02/03 Wildness Qualities Mapping Wild Land Areas (2014) Forthcoming Wild Land Area Description Reports	To protect the elemental qualities of some of Scotland's more remote mountain and coastal areas which many people derive psychological and spiritual benefits.
Other Relevant PPS	

Appendix C - Relevant Legislation, PPS and Environmental Objectives

Legislation, Plans, Programmes or Strategies	Summary of Environmental Objectives
National Planning Framework 3 (2014)	The National Planning Framework 3 aims to guide Scotland's development over the next 20 to 30 years and sets out strategic development priorities to support the Government's goal of sustainable economic growth. The Framework will play a key role in co-ordinating policies with a spatial dimension and will help move Scotland towards a low carbon economy.
Scottish Planning Policy (including Circulars and PANs)	SPP sets out the Scottish Government's planning policy on nationally important land-use planning matters. This places planning within the wider context of the Scottish Government's overarching aim to increase sustainable economic growth.
Area Local Development Plans (IMFLDP, CaSPlan and WHILDP)	The emerging area local development plans set out policies, site allocations and place specific supplementary guidance. Emerging policies within the IMFLDP and CASPlan are intended to be transposed to HwLDP2.
Programme for the Highland Council 2015 – 2017: Highland First	The Council sets out what it wishes to achieve and outlines its political commitments and priorities under three main themes: Community Led Highland; Well-Served Highland; A Fairer Highland. This will be complemented by area-specific actions (e.g. for Inverness City) and the programme will run along with the commitments set out in the previous programme "Working together for the Highlands". Protecting and enhancing the environment, a more efficient transportation network and improving sustainability are important considerations.
Single Outcome Agreement, Between the Highland Community Planning Partnership and the Scottish Government 2013/14 - 2018/19	Sets out 16 commitments to identify areas of improvement and to deliver better outcomes for the people of Highland.

Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

The information in this appendix shows baseline data for Highland against the SEA Objectives. It consists of a series of maps and links to sources used in the preparation of this SEA:

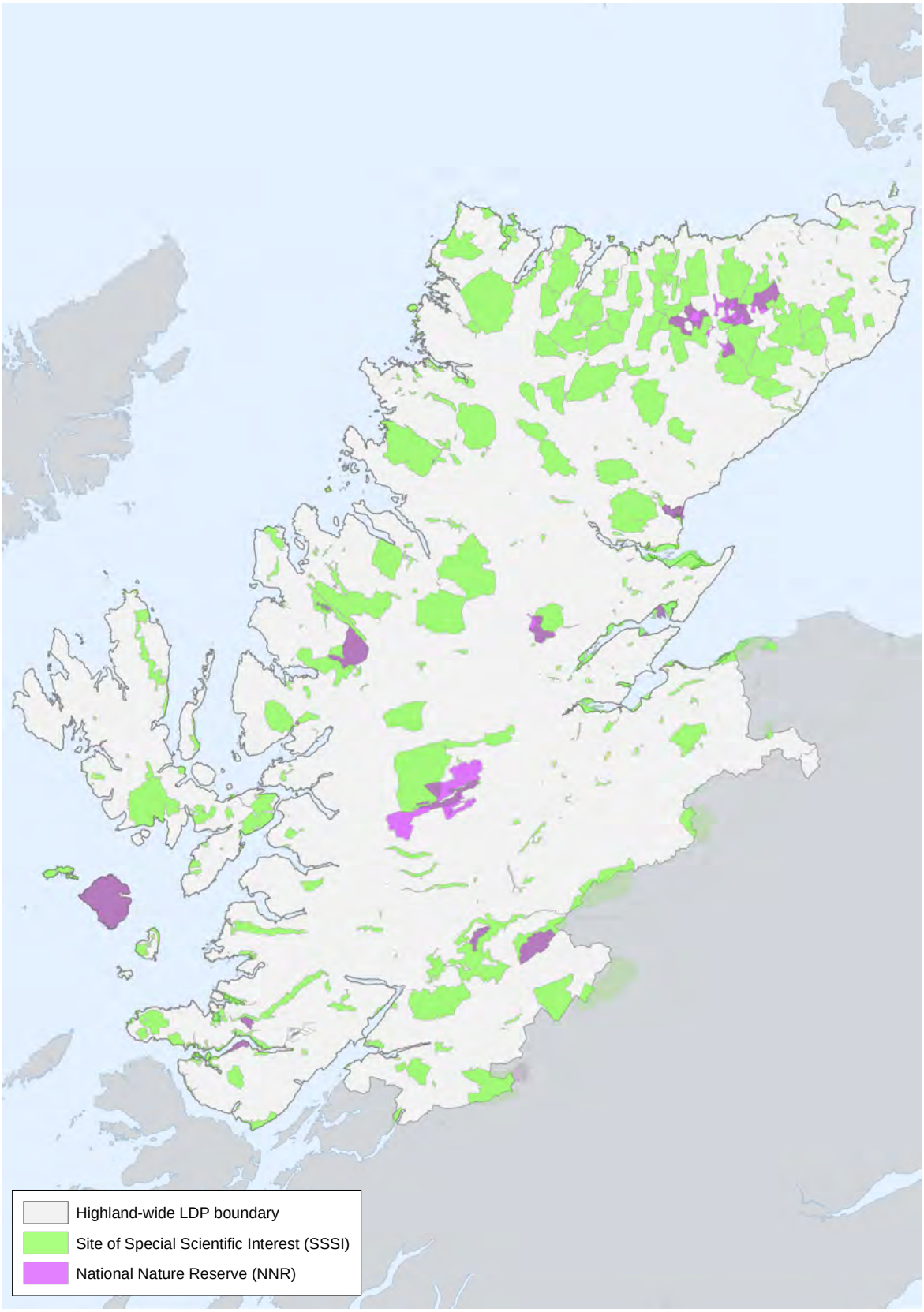
Baseline Environmental Data	Source
1 - Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	
There are currently 356 SSSI's, 89 SAC's, 44 SPA's, 18 NNR's, 11 RAMSAR, 1 Local Nature Conservation Site in the Plan area.	SNH website for information on designated sites, site condition and qualifying interests/features: www.snh.org.uk Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (Scotland's Biodiversity - It's In Your Hands; 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity)
Flow Country, nominated to UNESCO as a tentative World Heritage Site, is a vitally important habitat on a regional and international scale. It is the largest expanse of blanket bog in Europe, and covers about 4,000 km^2 and home to a rich variety of wildlife, and is used as a breeding ground for many different species of birds.	The Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland - Management Strategy 2005 - 2015
Highland supports 15 of the 65 (c.25%) priority habitats of conservation importance in Scotland with over half of their Scottish distribution area in Highland. Highland also supports 864 of 1149 (75%) of the priority species of conservation importance in the UK.	Highland Biodiversity Action Plan www.highlandbiodiversity.com Habitat and Birds Directive – Annex 1
Protected Species	THC's Statutorily Protected Species Supplementary Guidance. SNH website. Presence of protected species may be able to be derived from the NBN Gateway http://data.nbn.org.uk/ (although absence of any record is not conclusive that the species is not present).
In the Plan area there are 5,037 Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland sites, 22,782 Native Woodland and Nearly Native Woodland sites, 1,596 Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites and 128 Tree Preservation Orders.	The Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy. Forestry Commission Scotland: www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland Native Woodland Survey of Scotland
Mapped extent of Green Networks	Green Networks Supplementary Guidance
8 Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas	SNH website for information Marine Protected Areas
35 Seal Haul-out Areas	Scottish Government website:

Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

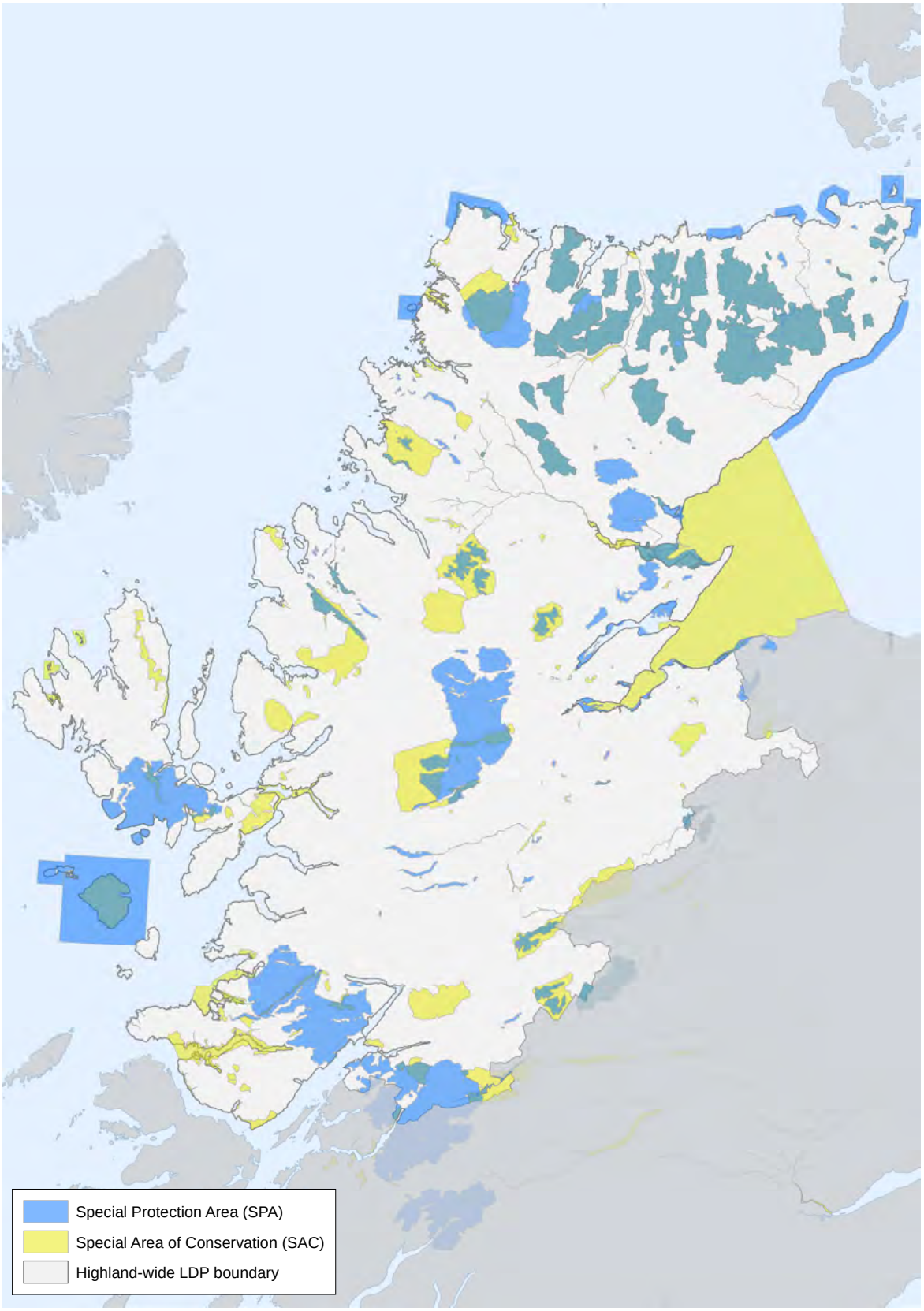
Baseline Environmental Data	Source
	Seal Haul-out Areas

Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Map .1 SSSIs and NNRs

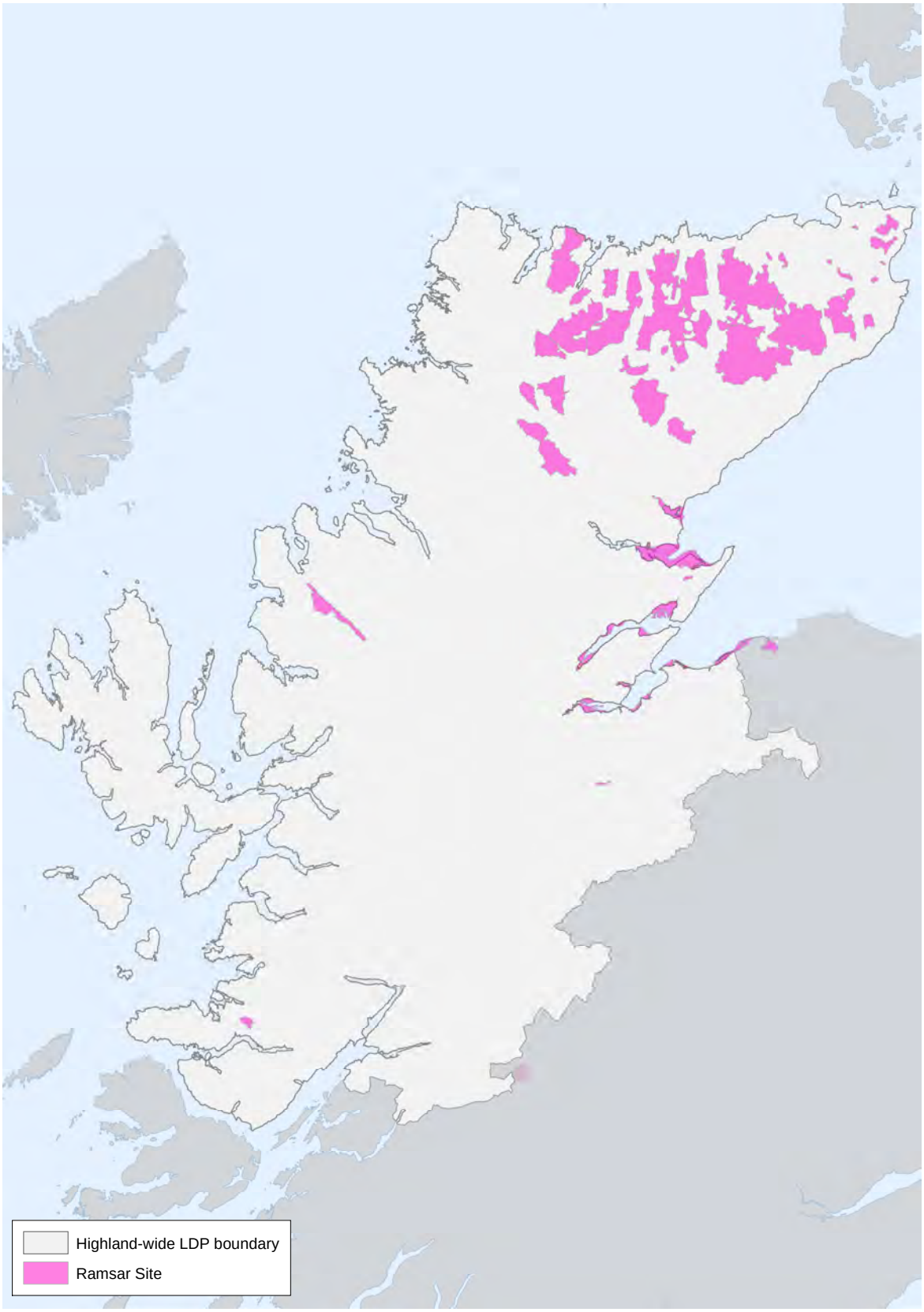


Map .2 SPAs and SACs

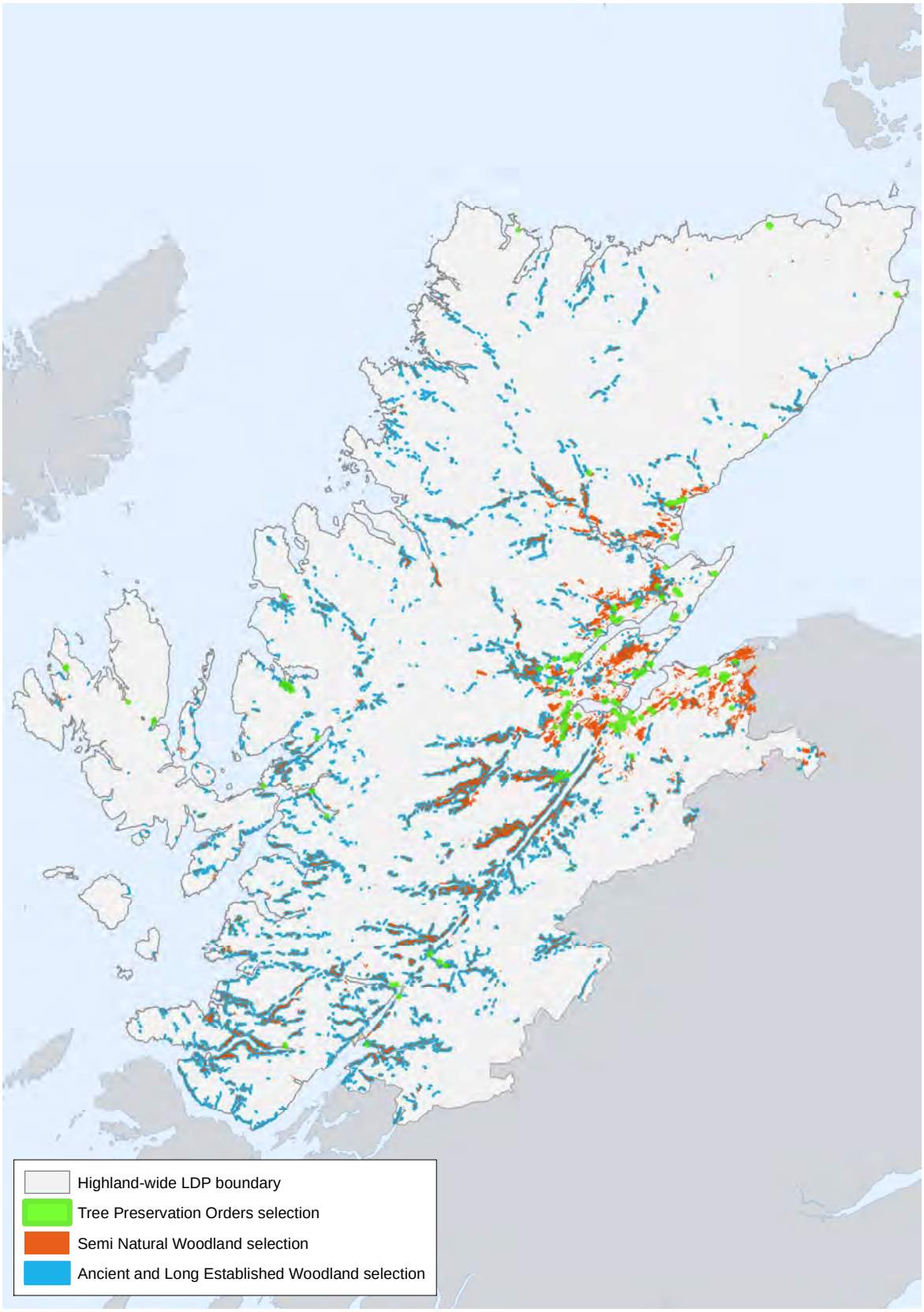


Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Map .3 Ramsar Sites

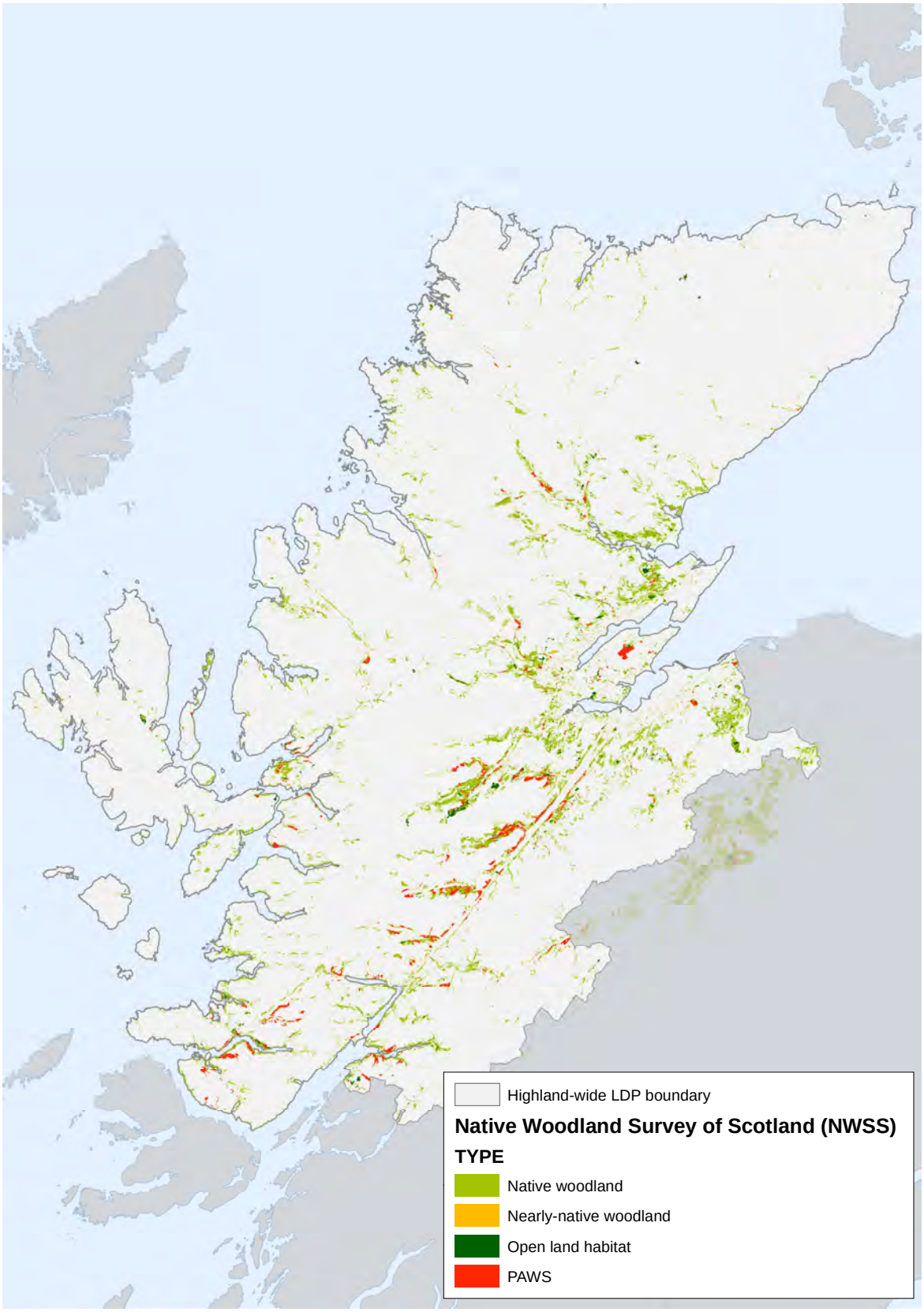


Map .4 Trees and Woodland

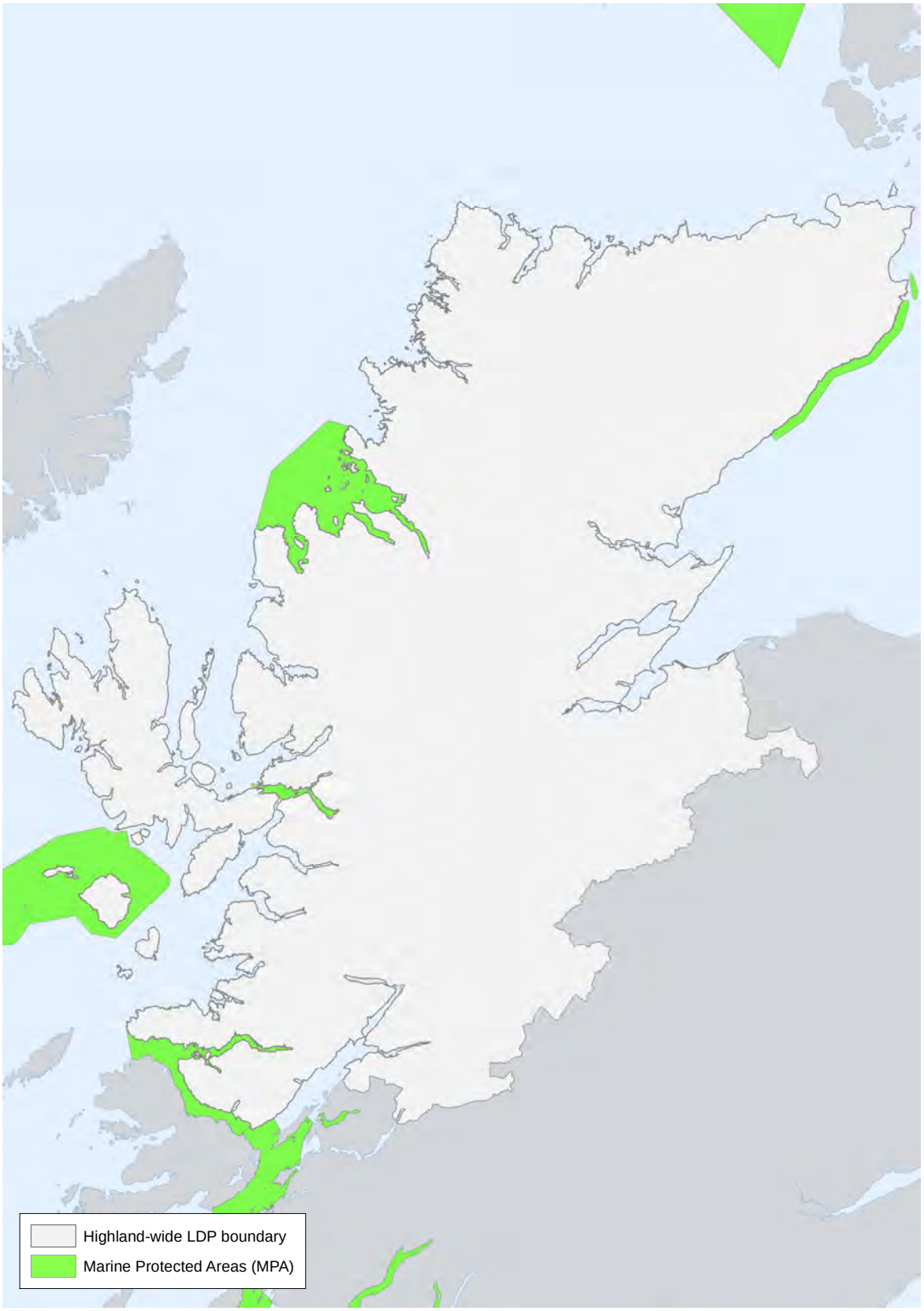


Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Map .5 Forestry

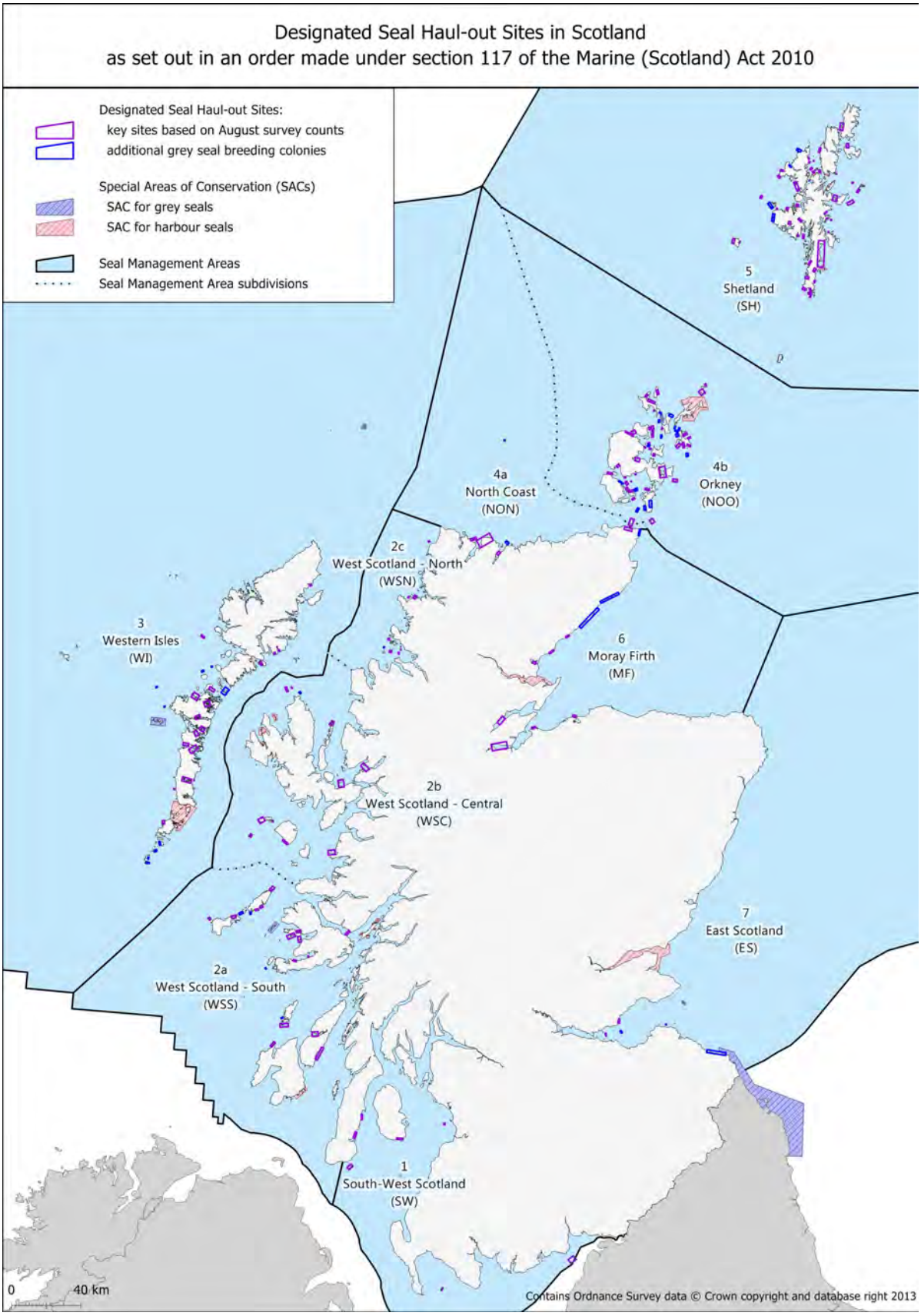


Map .6 MPAs



Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Map .7 Seal Haul Out Sites

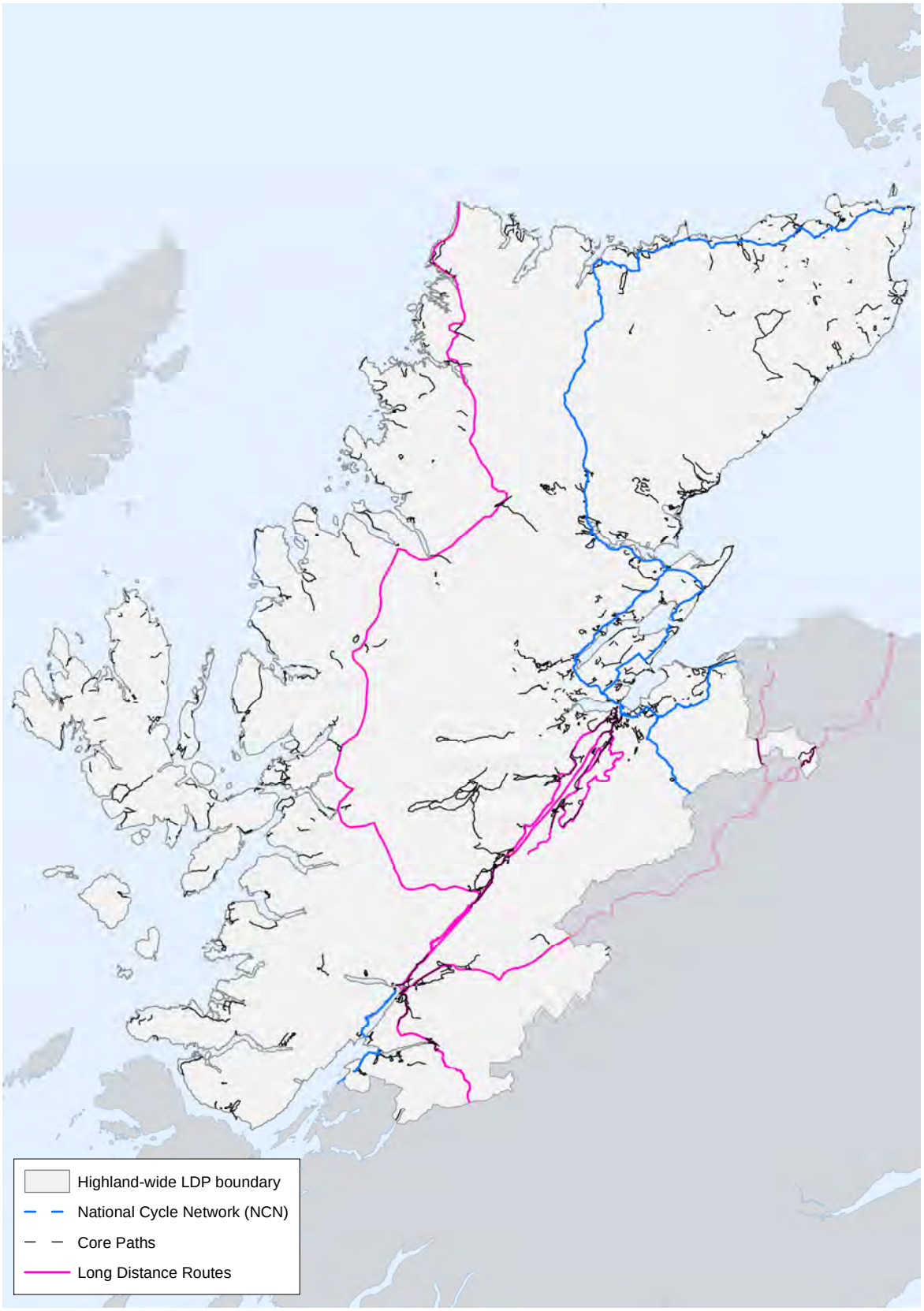


Baseline Environmental Data	Source
2 - Population and Human Health	
Current and future forecasts for demographics at Highland level: - Population of the plan area in 2011 was 232,100 with a population density of 8.7 people per sq km; Scottish average of 67.4. - Highland has witnessed steady growth over the last 30 years, with an 11.1% increase in population since 2001. - Population expected to increase to 235,607 by 2035. - There is expected to be an increase of c.28,500 people aged between 65 to 75+ between 2015 and 2035.	Census statistics and analysis www.ons.gov.uk Scottish Household Survey 2012 www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/16002
Fragile areas - Highland has 17 datazones in the most deprived 15% in Scotland.	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Highland Council Deprivation and Fragility Informaton
Health and well-being: current situation and forecasts for future trends on a variety of topics including health and crime.	www.isdscotland.org Transport Scotland: Household Survey 2012 www.audit-scotland.gov.uk www.transportscotland.gov.uk/ news/scottish-household-survey-travel-diary-2012
School rolls - many of the primary and secondary schools are significantly under capacity.	THC School roll forecasts
Information on physical activity and current and planned active travel projects.	2012 Scottish Household Survey www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/16002 Active Travel audits are available for Alness, Invergordon, Dingwall, Fort William, Inverness, Tain, Nairn, Thurso and Wick. Sustrans National Cycle Network Map: www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/national-cycle-network
Core Paths and Rights of Way	THC Core Paths /Scotways
Greenspace Mapping and attitudes to Greenspace in Scotland	THC Open Space Supplementary Guidance and Greenspace Audit Greenspace Scotland

Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Baseline Environmental Data	Source
2 - Population and Human Health	
	www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/audits-and-strategies.aspx Scottish Household Survey 2012 www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002 SNH - Attitudes to Greenspace in Scotland

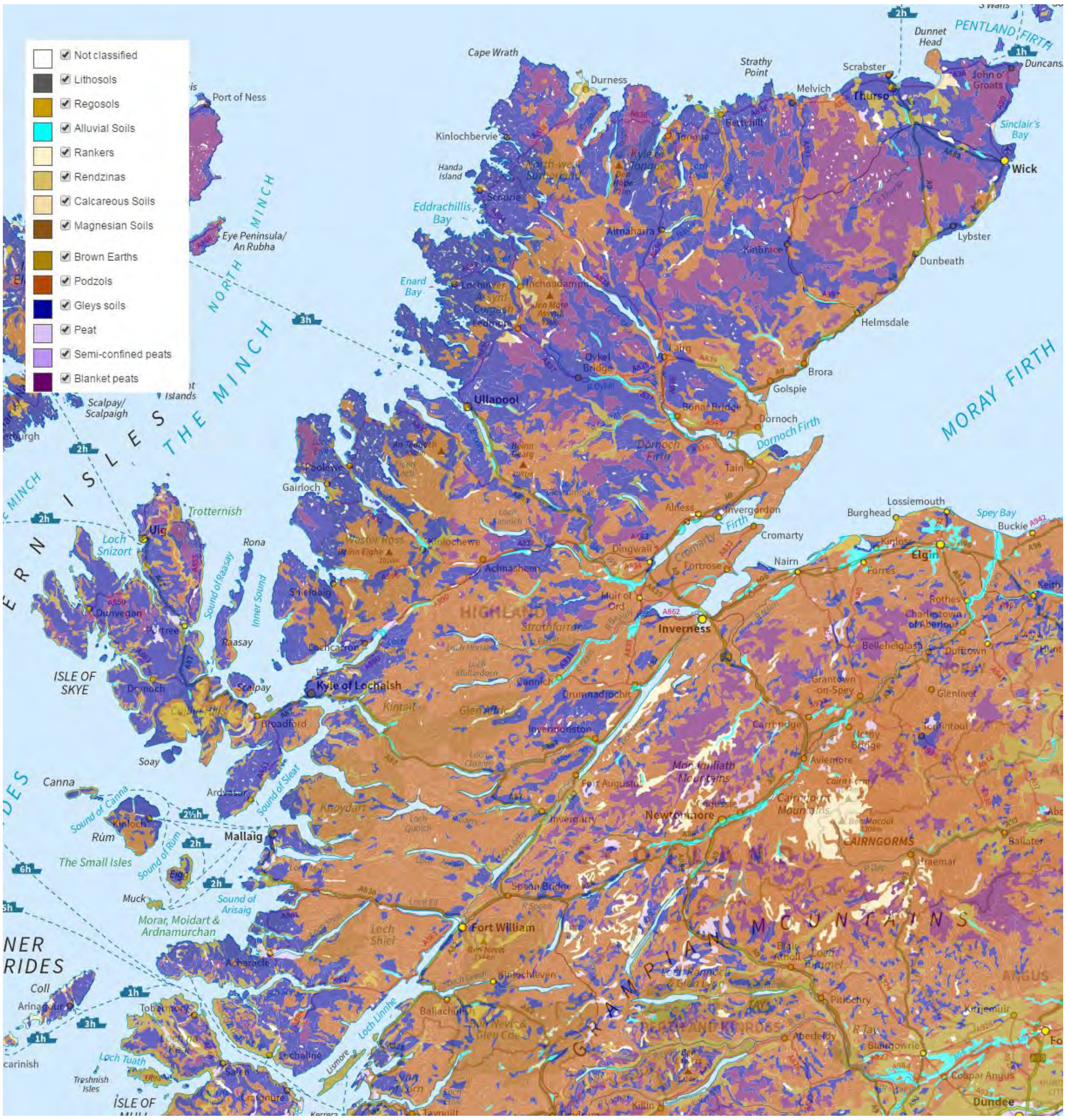
Map .8 National Cycle Routes, Core Paths and Long Distance Routes



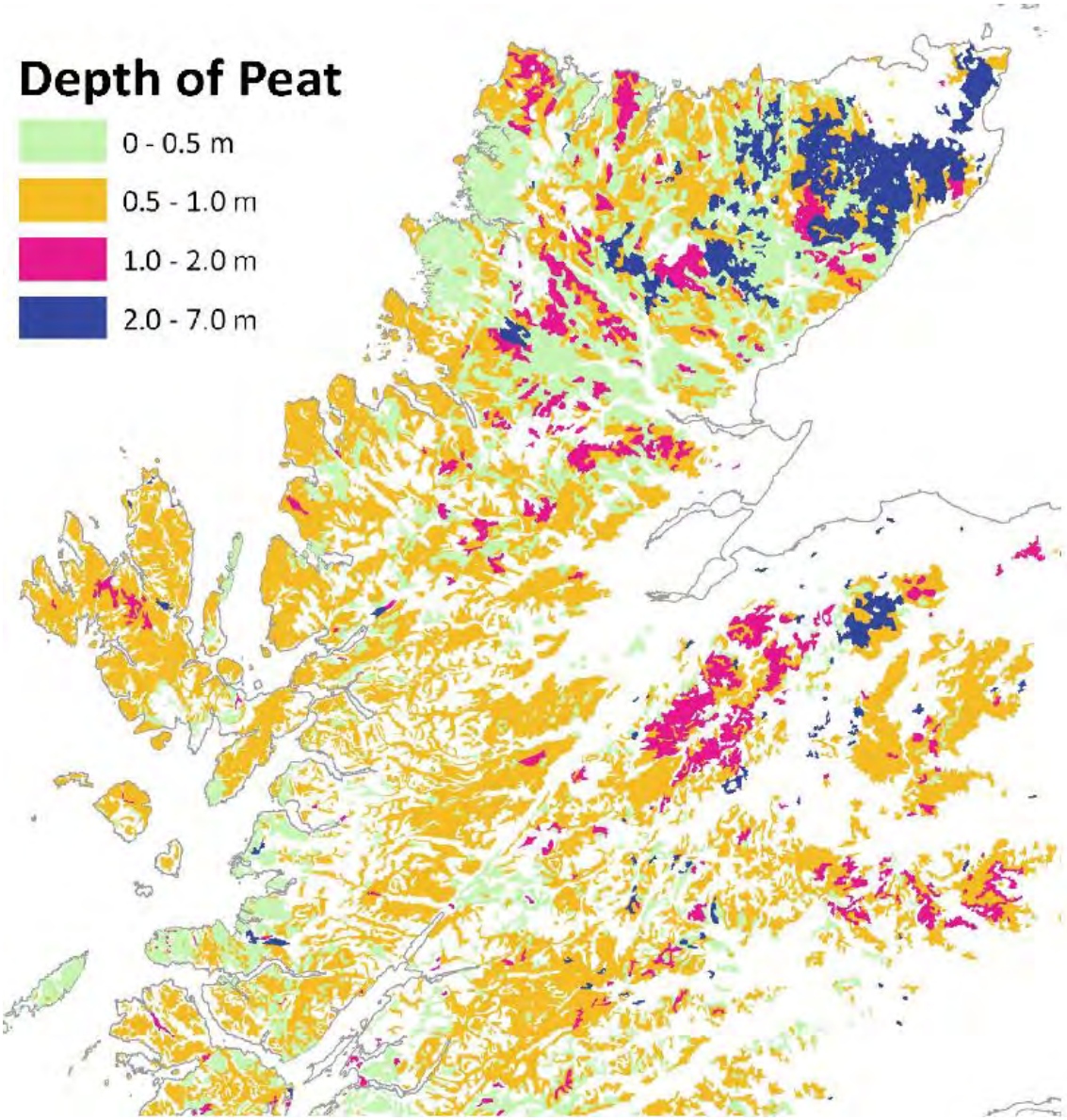
Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Baseline Environmental Data	Source
3 - Soils & Peat	
Erosion of soils from poor path construction	No data available but possible monitoring of THC core path plans.
Contaminated Land	Highland Council Contaminated Land Database. Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey
Agricultural land - land use, employment and production information. Crofting in Highland. Prime agricultural land (considered to be 3.2 and above).	National Farmers Union Scotland www.nfus.org.uk/facts_index.asp Scotland's Soils www.soils-scotland.gov.uk/data/lca250k Crofting Commission Annual Report www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/documents.asp?catid=29
Key indicators of soil quality	Soil Indicators for Scottish Soils sifss.hutton.ac.uk/
Carbon rich soils	Scotland's Soils – survey data www.soils-scotland.gov.uk/data/soil-survey SNH www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/advice-for-planners-and-developers/
Geology - Geological Conservation Review sites (GCRs)	www.scottishgeology.com/ SNH GCR Sites

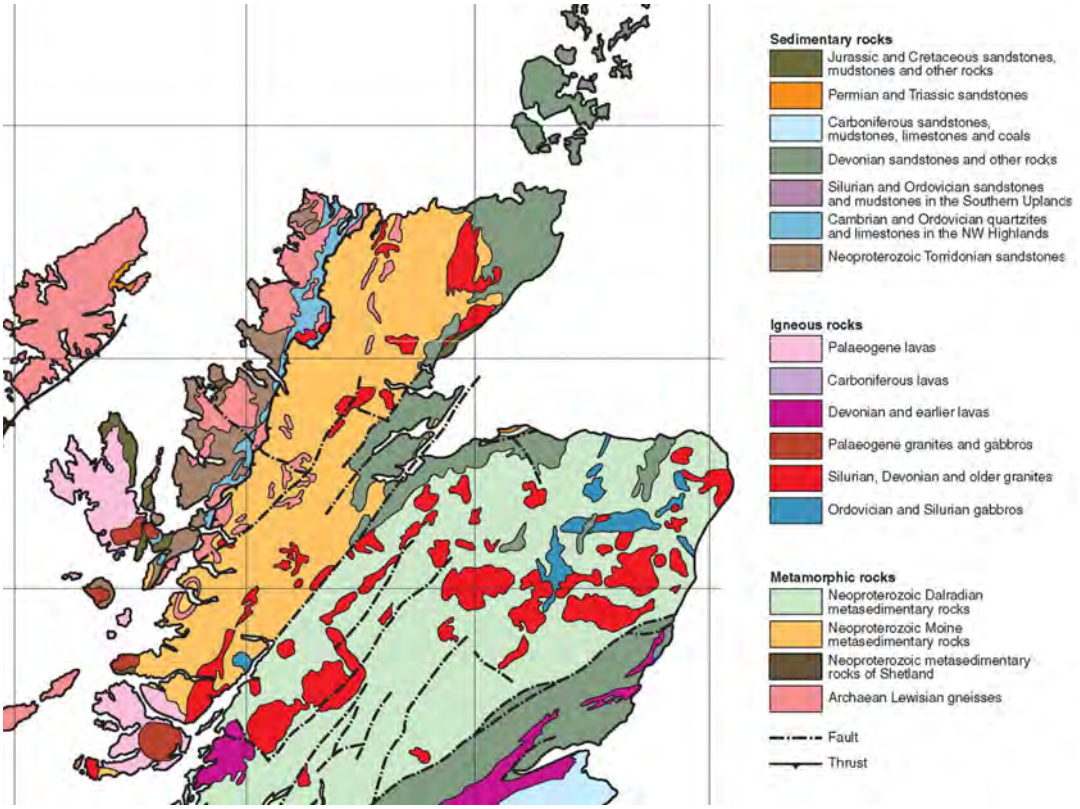
Map .9 Soil Types



Map .10 Peat Depth



Map .11 Geology



Baseline Environmental Data	Source
4 - Water	
Flood risk	SEPA flood risk management maps Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - SEPA technical guidance to support Development Planning
Water Quality (Ecological Status)	River Basin Management Plans SEPA http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/monitoring SEPA Water Quality Classifications
Hydro-power schemes	Hi-Energy www.hi-energy.org.uk/Renewables/Hydro-Energy.htm
Wave and tidal renewable energy	Hi-Energy www.hi-energy.org.uk/Renewables/Tidal-Energy.htm

Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Baseline Environmental Data	Source
4 - Water	
	www.hi-energy.org.uk/Renewables/Wave-Energy.htm

Baseline Environmental Data	Source
5 - Air	
Air quality in Highland	THC Air Quality Report 2013 www.scottishairquality.co.uk/ The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Baseline Environmental Data	Source
6 - Climatic Factors	
Vulnerability to effects of climate change	The Scottish Climate Change Impacts Partnership www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/1/1/0/Home.aspx Consideration of Climatic Factors within Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/18102927/0 SEPA flood risk management maps Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership UKCP09 The climate of the United Kingdom and recent trends. ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk http://www.sniffer.org.uk/
Energy Consumption	THC energy consumption www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/354/energy_consumption
Energy from renewable sources and promotion of renewable energy	Renewable energy in THC buildings www.highland.gov.uk/info/1034/land_and_property/ 271/renewable_energy_in_our_buildings

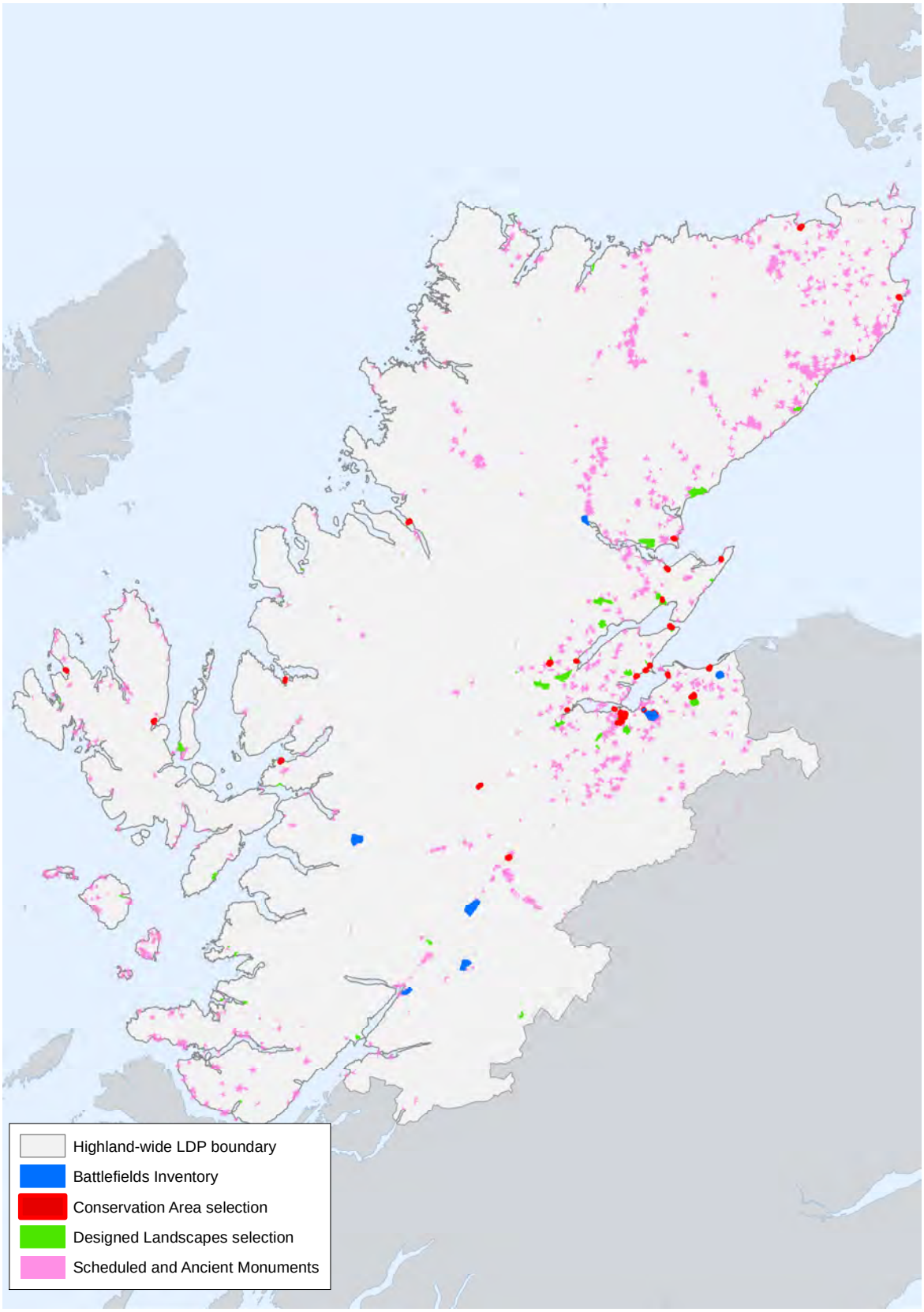
Baseline Environmental Data	Source
6 - Climatic Factors	
	Highland Council Renewable Energy Strategy www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning_-_long_term_and_area_policies/152/renewable_energy Community Benefits from Renewables Highland Council Wind Turbine Map
Travel	THC Local Transport Strategy and Active Travel Plans www.highland.gov.uk/info/1523/transport_and_streets/121/local_transport_planning
Improve the use of sustainable building techniques	Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands

Baseline Environmental Data	Source
7 - Material Assets	
Vacant & Derelict Land Register	Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey
Waste Generation and Management	Scotland's Zero Waste Plan Scotland's Environmental Waste Discovery Data Scottish Waste Sites and Capacity Tool Household Waste Summary Data THC Waste Data Report www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/13531/annual_waste_data_report_2011_to_2013
Core Path Plan & Rights of Way	The Highland Council (THC) /Scotways www.highland.gov.uk/info/1457/tourism_and_visitor_attractions/163/paths_in_the_highlands
Land Use Plan & Open Space Audit	THC Open Space Supplementary Guidance and Greenspace Audit: www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/

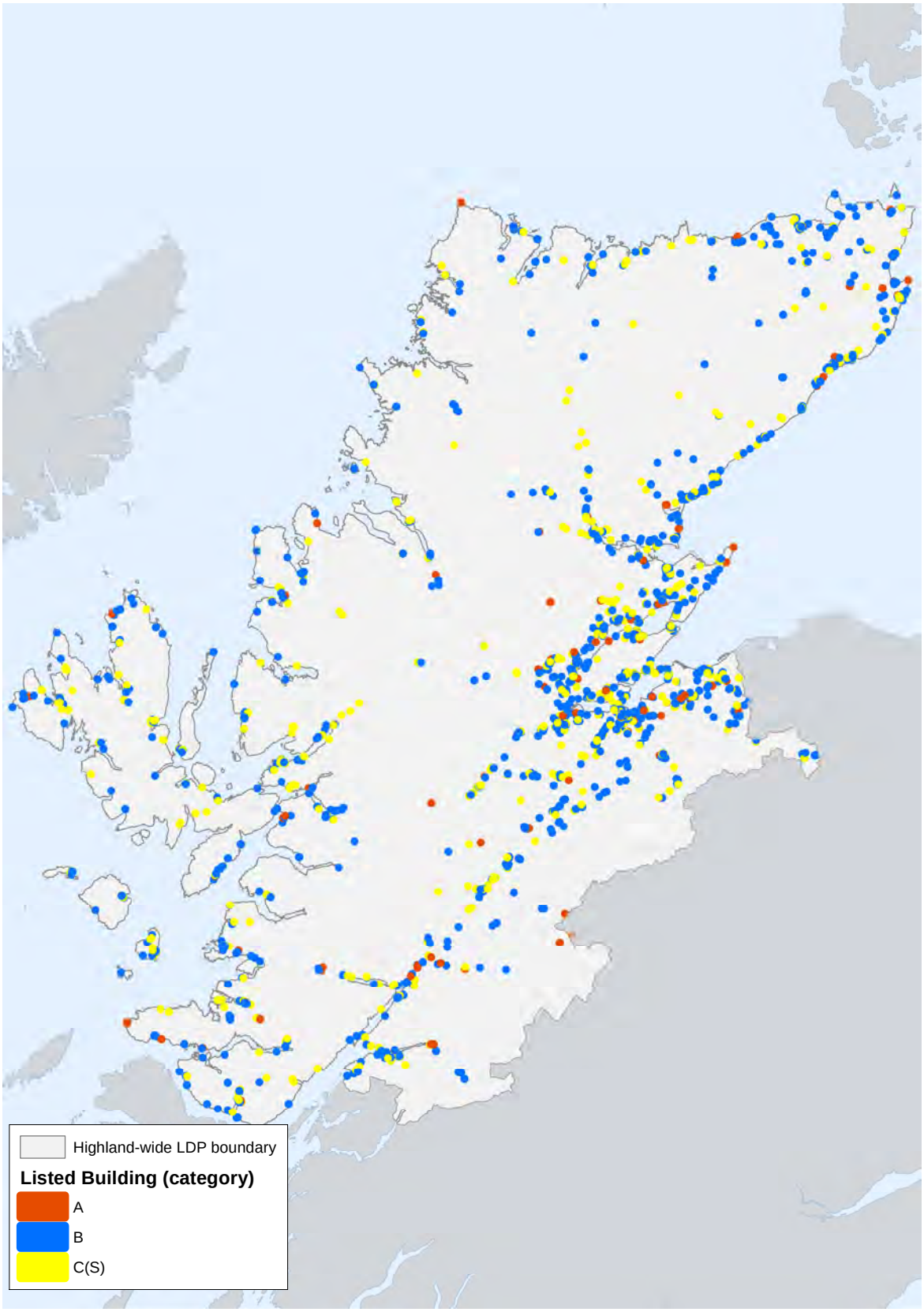
Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Baseline Environmental Data	Source
8 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage	
8 sites in Inventory of Historic Battlefields	Historic Scotland data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmldb/f?p=2000:10:0.
Listed Buildings A - 175 B - 1,121 C - 1,121	Historic Scotland data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmldb/f?p=2000:10:0.
1,201 Scheduled Monuments	Historic Scotland data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmldb/f?p=2000:10:0.
29 Conservation Areas	THC www.highland.gov.uk/info/192/planning_-_listed_buildings_and_conservation_areas/167/conservation/2
46 Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Historic Scotland data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmldb/f?p=2000:10:0.
44,309 Historic Environment Record Sites	THC Historic Environment Record Sites
Buildings at Risk	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (on behalf of Historic Scotland) - Buildings at Risk Register www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/.

Map .12 Heritage



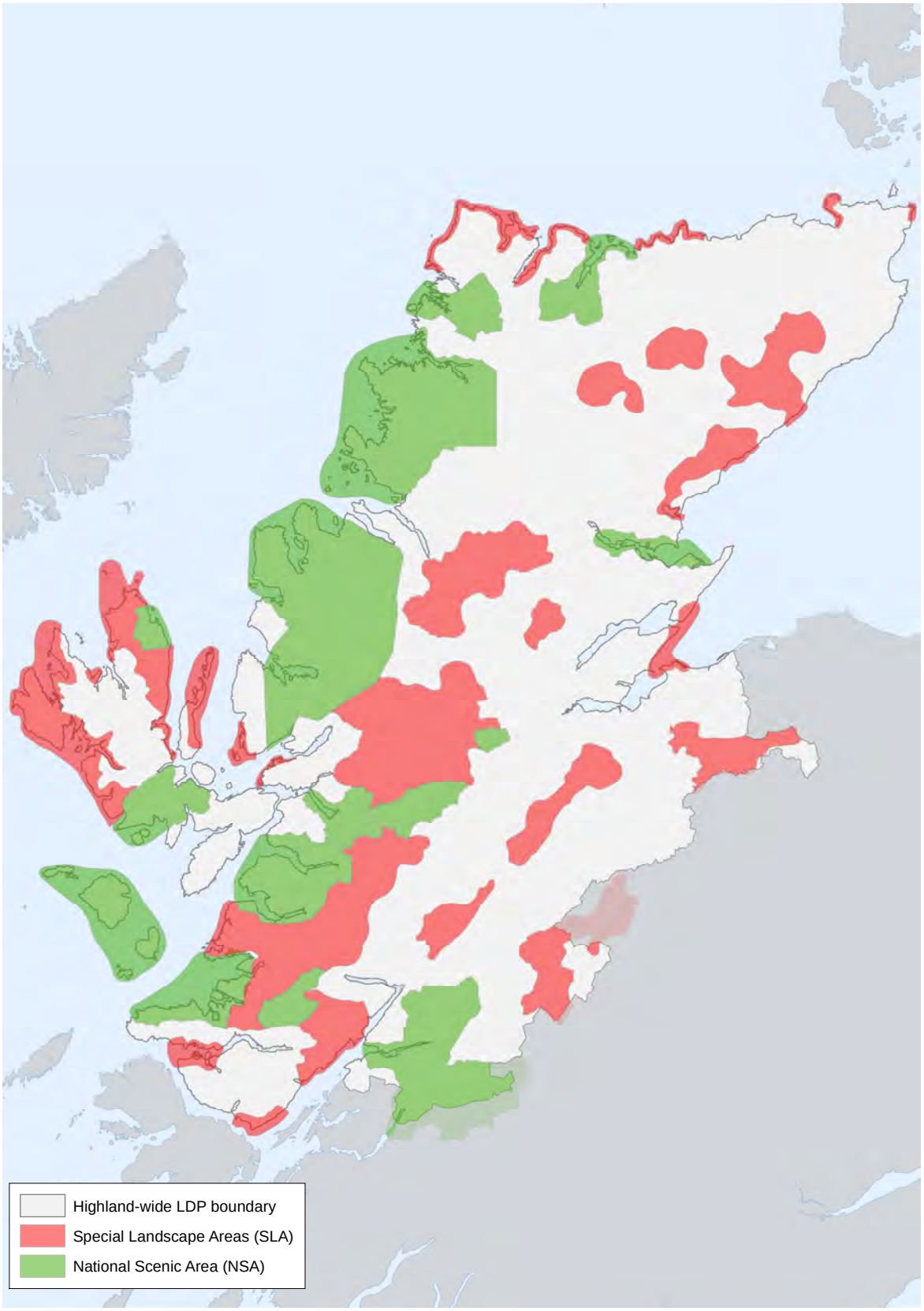
Map .13 Listed Buildings



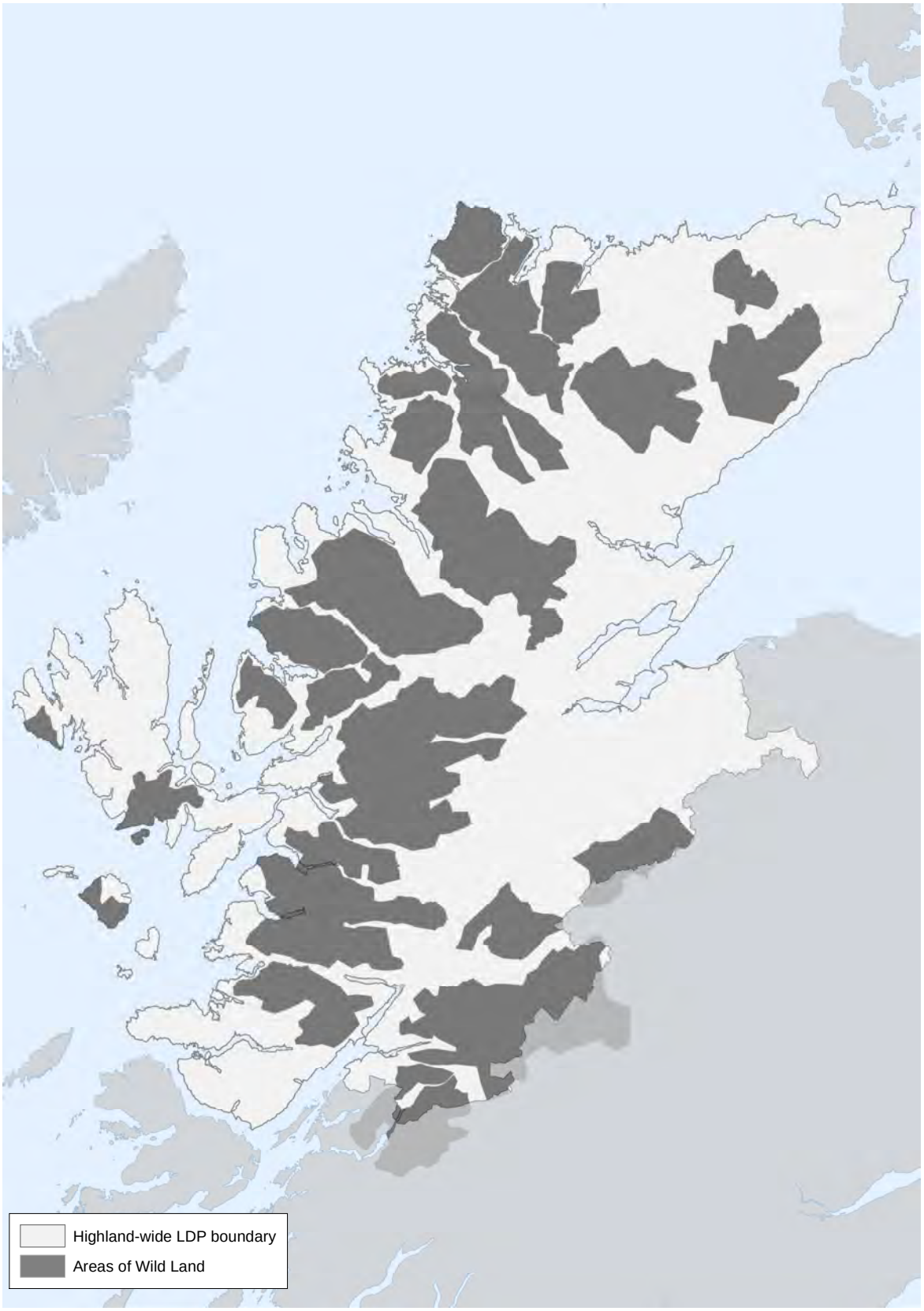
Baseline Environmental Data	Source
9 - Landscape	
Landscape Character Assessments and Landscape Capacity Studies	SNH www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/lca/
15 National Scenic Areas	SNH National Scenic Areas
25 Wild Land Areas	SNH Wild Land Areas
27 Special Landscape Areas	SLA Citations www.highland.gov.uk/developmentplans
Unspoilt Coast (based on 'Isolated Coast' defined within the Highland Coastal Strategy)	THC Highland Coastal Strategy

Appendix D - Environmental Baseline Data

Map .14 NSAs and SLAs



Map .15 Wild Land



Appendix E - Assessment Matrices

This appendix contains detailed assessments of the vision and spatial strategy and preferred policies contained within HwLDP2 and any reasonable alternatives which have been identified. To assess the HwLDP2 in an accurate and consistent way, the following scoring system and assessment matrix have been used. The assessment considers what level of impact the vision / spatial strategy / policy or alternative may have in the short/medium/long term on each of the SEA Objectives.

Scoring System

Significant Positive Impact	Minimal Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Minimal Negative Impact	Significant Negative Impact	Positive and Negative Impacts	Unknown Impact
++	+	=	-	--	+/-	??

Assessment Matrix

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 yrs)	Medium Term (5-10 yrs)	Long Term (10+ yrs)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1							

- The assessment matrix includes a justification of the assessment for each SEA objective. This is intended to guide the reader through the decision making process. To aid in this there are assumptions recorded at the beginning of each matrix, which have been made in the decision making process. Common to all assessments all proposals will be assessed against all relevant policies in the Development Plan, including HwLDP2 and Area LDPs. This is recorded at the start rather than against each SEA Objective as the assumptions made apply to all the Objectives.
- Each assessment will be followed by a concise commentary on the findings of the assessment of the policy/reasonable
- To identify future proposed policy areas and spatial strategy elements of the replacement Plan which are likely to require specific attention for HRA Screening, 'HRA Commentary' has been added below each relevant SEA Assessment Matrices for cross-check purposes.
- Any mitigation measures that will be required to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate any negative effects have been identified as well as who and when these will be required to be implemented. All assessments have been carried out assuming that the mitigation is already included in the policy.

Key Considerations

The key considerations below have been used in the assessment of each of the policies/reasonable alternatives.

1	**To conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity and accord to the protection of valued nature conservation habitats and species** • Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland? • Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species? • Will it contribute to achieving local and regional biodiversity action plan targets? • Will habitats of importance for biodiversity be protected? • Will designated sites be protected?

	• Will it avoid the introduction or spread of non-native species? • Will habitat networks and corridors be maintained or enhanced?
2	**To improve the living environment for all communities and promote improved health of the human population** • Will it ensure better connectivity of open spaces? • Will it create or enhance green networks for people or wildlife? • Will it give additional benefit to human health? • Will human health be significantly reduced? • Will it ensure a healthier lifestyle for the residents within the settlements?
3	**Safeguard the soil quality, geodiversity and improve contaminated land** • Will it lead to the avoidance of areas of landslide/landslip? • Will it ensure the re-use of brownfield sites? • Will it prevent the sealing of good quality soil on sites? • Will it protect areas of importance for geodiversity in Highland? • Will carbon storage of peat land be protected?
4	**Manage and reduce flood risk and protect the water environment** • Will it ensure new developments are free from flooding? • Will it reduce the vulnerability of existing areas to flooding? • Will it enhance natural drainage? • Will it ensure SUDS are included in new residential developments? • Will it ensure development is supported by appropriate drainage infrastructure • Will it ensure that development has no detrimental impact on the water environment? • Will it ensure developments enhance the water environment where possible?
5	**Maintain and, where possible, improve air quality** • Will it prevent a reduction in air quality? • Will it improve air quality?
6	**Reduce greenhouse gases and contribute to the adaptation of the area to climate change** • Will it reduce the need to travel? • Will it ensure an increase in use of more sustainable transport methods? • Will it ensure better opportunities for walking and cycling? • Will it ensure more renewable energy production where appropriate? • Will it ensure energy efficiency is taken into consideration in new developments? • Will it ensure suitable connection to electricity infrastructure? • Will it reduce the risk of coastal inundation through sea level rising?
7	**Manage, maintain and promote sustainable use of material assets** • Will it improve connectivity of open space, movement (including roads, footpaths etc) and access, including green network? • Will it support the minimisation of waste production? • Will it support the achievement of government targets through the use of the waste management hierarchy? • Will it ensure recovery of energy and heat from waste is considered where appropriate?
8	**Protect and where appropriate enhance the historic environment** • Will it protect and enhance the historic environment?
9	**Protect and enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape** • Will local diversity and distinctiveness be maintained or enhanced? • Will the special qualities of designated areas be maintained or enhanced? • Will existing landscape character be maintenance or enhanced?

	• Will visual impact be minimised? • Will scenic value be maintained or enhanced? • Will it safeguard the ability of people to experience qualities of wildness?

List of Assessments

MIR Section	Main Issues	Existing HwLDP Vision, Strategy & Policy Reference	Go to Page
1 - Vision and Strategy	1a	Vision	76
	1b	Spatial Strategy, 1 to 27	
2 - Where we Guide Development	2a	Development Hierarchy, 34, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41 & 49	79
	2b	40	80
	2c	New Growing Settlements Policy	81
	2d	36	85
	2e	New Rural Economic Development Policy, 36, 41 & 43	89
3 - Placemaking, Design & Efficient Travel	3a	28, 29 & 56	92
	3b	28, 56, 77 & 78	93
	3c	60, 74, 75 & 76	95
4 - Resource Management	4a	67 & 68	98
	4b	57, 58, 59 & 60	99
	4c	70, 71 & New Heat Networks Policy	101
	4d	53 & 54	102
5 - Delivering Development	5a	31 & 32	105
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6 - Other Amendments	6	30, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 61, 62, 69, 72 & 73	108

1 - Vision and Strategy

Issue 1a) and 1b) Vision and Spatial Strategy

Table 12 - Preferred Vision and Spatial Strategy (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	The vision promotes high quality places where out outstanding natural, historic and cultural assets are protected and celebrated, resulting in lasting economic and environmental benefits. A high quality natural environment provides protection for habitats and species. The vision may go some way in taking forwards from the LBAPs.	Review vision and spatial strategy on a 5 year rolling basis - during next review of HwLDP2	THC	3 years post HwDLP2 Adoption 2020- 2022
2	+	+	+	The vision promotes high quality places and successful, sustainable communities where people want to live, which provide the most convenient access to services, education and employment within a strong and diverse economy with a wide labour market that is competitive, adaptable and prosperous. The vision also specifically looks to ensure that the economic and environmental benefits of sustainable resource management, benefits all communities. Active travel and green infrastructure is also specifically referenced within the vision.			
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	The vision makes no explicit mention of soil quality, geodiversity or improving contaminated land. That said, it does promote high quality places and sustainable resource management. It is not anticipated that the vision would lead to a reduction in either soil quality, geodiversity or a lack of improvement to contaminated land. These issues are to be covered by detailed policies of the HwLDP2 and are considered when allocating sites and determining planning applications.			
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	The ambition for development and growth through a network of successful, sustainable communities will lead to an increased demand for water. Any water abstraction will need to be carefully managed though regimes outwith the planning system. Wider policies within HwLDP2 will address this SEA objective.			
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	The vision does not specifically reference air quality. However, active and sustainable travel is referenced and the HwLDP will have specific policies which relate to different travel requirements and waste management. Arguably the spatial strategy's approach to focus growth within our larger settlements could give rise to rises additional air quality impacts.			
6	+	+	++	The vision does not specifically mention climate change however it does reference Carbon Clever energy which is an important aspect of mitigating the rate at which climate change is occurring. It is likely that the vision and spatial strategy will contribute to a slight positive impact in the short to medium term with significant positives in the long term.			
7	=	+	++	The vision and spatial strategy makes a clear commitment to sustaining existing material assets through ensuring development contributes proportionately towards resilient infrastructure and services. Such contributions, together with ongoing Council investment would over time result in significantly positive impact on material assets, including the transport network.			
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	The vision makes reference to the celebrating our outstanding natural, historic and cultural assets, resulting in lasting economic and environmental benefits for all communities. It does not however go on to explicitly mention enhancement. These assets will however be covered by other detailed HwLDP2 policies.			
9	+	+	+	Positive impacts will occur through supporting development, Carbon Clever energy and the responsible management of our resources (which includes landscape). There is no explicit reference to landscape enhancement, however, this will be covered by other detailed polices of HwLDP2.			

Commentary: The vision is based on four outcomes linked to the Single Outcome Agreement 3. Economic development is a key element of the vision and spatial strategy and whilst this is not a consideration of SEA, the vision and spatial strategy sets out how economic growth in the area can be achieved with broadly positive impacts on the environment. It is anticipated that the vision and spatial strategy will have minimal negative impacts on the environment but have significantly positive effects in terms of SEA Objective 6 and 7: Climate Factors and Material Assets.

Table 13 - The Non-Preferred Vision and Spatial Strategy (Option 2)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	The vision promotes the protection and enhancement of habitats and species and recognises the benefits this brings to the area.	Review vision and spatial strategy on a 5 year rolling basis - during next review of HwLDP2	THC	3 years post HwDLP2 Adoption 2020-2022
2	+/-	+	+	The vision and spatial strategy does not specifically mention living environment or improved health of the human population; it does mention a high quality of life and a regenerating place which could go some way to helping achieve this SEA Objective in the medium or longer term.			
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	The vision and spatial strategy makes no explicit mention of soil quality or improving contaminated land however it does promote a high quality natural environment. It is anticipated that this will ensure a slight positive impact in the short, medium and long term for geodiversity but it is not anticipated that the vision would lead to a reduction in either soil quality or that it would not improve contaminated land. These issues are covered in detail by policies of the HwLDP and will be considered when allocating sites (and providing developer requirements) and determining planning applications.			
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	The vision and spatial strategy makes no mention of managing and reducing flood risk or protecting the water environment however it does promote a high quality natural environment and adequate water and waste water networks. It is not anticipated that the vision would lead to increased flood risk or that it would not protect the water environment. These issues are covered in detail by policies of the HwLDP and will be considered when allocating sites and determining planning applications.			
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	Air quality is not referenced however a sustainable waste management and reducing the need to travel is.			
6	+	+	++	The vision makes specific reference to taking a lead in reducing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the air. This commitment intends to make a positive step towards reducing air quality impacts from development, travel and our energy needs.			
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	The vision and spatial strategy makes provision to work in partnership to deliver transportation infrastructure improvements as well as waste strategy. The vision does not however explicitly back the delivery of infrastructure improvements in order to facilitate development.			
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	The vision promotes a place of outstanding heritage and the use of this for a high quality tourist industry should mean that the qualities of the landscape and the will be protected and enhanced and visual impact of development minimised. The landscape will be safeguarded through other policies of the HwLDP.			
9	+	+	+	The vision and spatial strategy promotes the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. The landscape will be safeguarded through other policies of the HwLDP.			

Commentary: The non-preferred vision and spatial strategy carried forward from HwLDP sets out a comprehensive approach to ensuring the heritage of the area is safeguarded and, while not a consideration of SEA, demonstrates how economic growth of the area can be brought forward ensuring limited negative impacts on the environment. It is anticipated that this vision and spatial strategy would have little/no negative impacts on the environment but have significant positive effects in relation to SEA Objective 6 - Climatic Factors.

Appendix E - Assessment Matrices

2 - Where we Guide Development

Issue 2a) Development Hierarchy

Table 14 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	++	++	++	Improvements to the Development Hierarchy and assisting to make clear it's intention to guide the right development to the right locations will contribute toward the protection of biodiversity through minimising urban sprawl.			
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	Provision of a network of successful places which people want to live and work is the aim of the Development Hierarchy which is anticipated to result in lasting health benefits. That said, rural dispersed development could be argued as being healthier, with lower crime rates and peaceful qualities. Our approach to removing new settlements Policy 38 will also ensure that any such significant proposals are brought forward through Area LDPs, thus maximising community involvement and providing a greater level of certainty for communities.	Monitor housing completions in SDAs, Growing Settlements, hinterland areas, wider countryside and fragile areas to monitor application of the Development Hierarchy.	THC	Ongoing
3	+	+	+	Avoidance of urban sprawl and consideration of soil quality and contaminated land through a plan-led approach - such as assessing individual development site allocations.	Reconsider loss of prime agricultural land within the review of the IMFLDP allocations and maintain a HwLDP policy in favour of soil protection, restoration of contaminated sites and enhancing geodiversity.	THC	IMFLDP Review due 2020 / Post Plan Adoption
4	+	+	+	Terrestrial and marine planning will be integrated into the Development Hierarchy. This will help guide developers when considering coastal and marine areas.			
5	-	-	-	Concentration of population generally results in increased air quality issues, with Inverness bing Highland's first air quality management area.	Inclusion of HwLDP travel policies which promote Carbon Clever initiatives leading to less reliance upon the car. Setting modal shift targets for developments, specified within the revised LTS. Monitoring air quality within Inverness City Centre.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan with LTS as SG
6	+	+	+	Application of the Development Hierarchy will reduce the need to travel.			
7	+	+	++	Concentrating populations and places of work could result in the potential for more viable heat networks and energy from waste facility opportunities in the medium to longer term. Concentration of population also maximises the benefits of maintaining other material assets.			
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	The Development Hierarchy has limited influence on protecting or enhancing the historic environment.			
9	++	++	++	Improvements to the Development Hierarchy and assisting to make clear it's intention to guide the right development to the right locations will contribute toward the protection of the landscape through minimising urban sprawl.	Monitor housing completions in SDAs, Growing Settlements, hinterland areas, wider countryside and fragile areas to monitor application of the Development Hierarchy.	THC	Ongoing

Commentary: Considerable environmental benefits are anticipated to result from the application of a more clearly defined Development Hierarchy, with significant positive impacts on SEA Objectives 1,7 and 9: biodiversity, material assets and the landscape.

Non-Preferred Approach (Option 2)

We have not considered any alternatives to the Development Hierarchy. However, issues 2b to 2e set out alternatives for each policy area contained within the Development Hierarchy.

Issue 2b) Enhancing the City and Town Centres

Table 15 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	The policy does not make any specific provision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, habitats or species. Therefore it is not anticipated that this policy would make a significant contribution towards achieving LBAP targets locally or regionally. Other policies within HwLDP2 will make provision for this.		THC/SNH	Ongoing
2	+	+	+	The policy aims to direct development towards the centre of settlements. This will help to consolidate and concentrate services and facilities and encourage a social interaction and cohesion. By directing development to town centres, services that people need will be available in a location which is accessible and it may encourage people to walk to facilities rather than use private transport. It is likely that this policy will have a positive impact at a local level but it is unlikely to have any impact on a regional level as the impact will be on a settlement by settlement basis.		THC	Ongoing
3	+	+	+	A fundamental function of the policy is to encourage the re-use of brownfield sites. By encouraging development of brownfield sites rather than the use of greenfield sites there could be a positive impact on the improvement of contaminated land and it will have an indirect positive impact on soil quality.		THC	Ongoing
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	It is considered that this policy will not have an effect on the SEA Objective as the policy is solely concerned about directing growth to town centres.		THC/SEPA	Ongoing
5	+	+	+	By encouraging development to town centres there would be opportunity to have development in the most accessible locations by public transport, walking and cycling which would help to reduce the need to travel by private car. It is likely that this policy will have a slight positive impact at a local level but it is unlikely to have any impact on a regional level as the impact will be on a settlement by settlement basis.		THC	Ongoing
6	+	+	+	This policy seeks to create vibrant and viable town centres and the focal point for economic and social activity. This provides a more sustainable form living by reducing vehicle transport and encourages active travel and shared services. As a result it is expected that this policy will help to reduce CO2 emissions.		THC	Ongoing
7	=	=	=	It is not considered that this policy will have an effect on the SEA Objective as the policy is solely concerned about directing growth to town centres.		THC	Ongoing
8	+	+	++	This policy may have a positive impact on this SEA Objective. The re-use of historic buildings in town centres may have a positive impact if it is done correctly and sympathetically.	Ensure that redevelopment of existing buildings and the siting and design of new buildings complement the historic environment.	THC / Historic Scotland	Ongoing
9	=	=	=	It is not considered that this policy will have an effect on the SEA Objective as the policy is solely concerned about directing growth to town centres.		THC/SNH	Ongoing

Commentary: This policy is likely to have some positive environmental effects with the key benefits relating to the re-use of (often historic) buildings and ensuring that services and facilities are located in a central place which increases their accessibility. These are important elements of sustainable development and it is anticipated that this policy will lead help to reduce GHGs and the adaptation of the area to climate change. Due to the nature of the policy there are many SEA Objectives where there will be little or no impacts. However the application of this policy in combination with the general polices of the Highland wide Local Development Plan, it is likely that the overall effect would be positive.

SEA assessments have not been carried out for the alternative approaches as they relate more to the way the policies are structured within the Development Plan hierarchy rather than alternative policy directions. A single Highland-wide Town Centre First policy will ensure that the Council takes a consistent approach across the whole of Highland.

Table 16 Non-Preferred Approach (Option 2)

SEA Objective	Mitigation			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	The policy does not make any specific provision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, habitats or species.			
2	+	+	+	The policy aims to direct development towards the centre of settlements. This will help to consolidate and concentrate services and facilities and encourage a social interaction and cohesion. By directing development to town centres, services that people need will be available in a location which is accessible and it may encourage people to walk to facilities rather than use private transport.			
3	+	+	+	A fundamental function of the policy is to encourage the re-use of brownfield sites. By encouraging development of brownfield sites rather than the use of greenfield sites. There could be a positive impact on the improvement of contaminated land and it will have an indirect positive impact on soil quality.			
4	=	=	=	It is considered that this policy will not have any direct effects on the water environment.			
5	-	-	-	By introducing town centre boundaries for all settlements, this would support significant footfall development to all of these locations. There are many settlements which would not be suitable to supporting this scale of development and by locating such facilities in more remote areas, outwith traditionally defined town centres, this could generate additional vehicular journeys, resulting in a decline in air quality.			
6	-	-	-	As above - due to the dispersed nature of some rural areas the policy may encourage additional vehicular journeys.			
7	=	=	=	It is considered that this policy will not have any direct effects on material assets.			
8	+	+	+	This policy may have a positive impact on the historic environment. The re-use of historic buildings in town centres may have a positive impact if it is done sympathetically. This could be more challenging for smaller settlements to accommodate more significant footfall generating uses.			
9	-	-	-	Although the town centre first policy reduces the pressure on developing greenfield land, some rural communities do not have traditional town centres and are served by a more dispersed range of services. Imposing a town centre boundary/policy may result in development which damages the traditional pattern of development and impacts on the landscape qualities.			

Commentary: The first aspect of the non-preferred approach, by devolving the Town Centres First policy to Area LDPs should not result in any environmental impacts which differ from those set out in the preferred approach. By introducing Town Centre boundaries for all settlements this may be too prescriptive for some communities, especially for rural areas which are not served by traditional town centres. It would also conflict with the proposed Rural Economic Development policy which aims to create more sustainable, resilient communities by recognising the different needs in rural and fragile areas. Overall, the non preferred approach is not anticipated to result in any significant environmental effects, however, more adverse impacts are predicted in terms of SEA Objectives 5 (air), 6 (climatic factors) and 9 (landscape) when compared to the preferred approach.

Issue 2c) Deciding How Smaller Settlements Can Grow

Table 17 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	The policy does not specifically make provision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, habitats or species. Therefore it is not anticipated that this policy would make a contribution towards achieving LBAP targets locally or regionally. Other policies within HwLDP2 will make provision for this. However it does include avoiding net loss of amenity/recreational areas and locally important heritage features, which could include areas with local biodiversity value.	Review the policy approach for HwLDP2 based on earlier	THC	Ongoing through to finalised proposed policy wording to be set out in
2	+	++	++	The policy aims to help sustain and where possible enhance facilities in settlements. By encouraging development within active travel distance of facilities this provides an opportunity for people to walk/cycle to facilities rather than a dispersed growth which would encourage private car use. The			

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
				policy also aims to avoid a net loss of amenity/recreational areas or locally important heritage feature. By maintaining open space this provides opportunities for people to improve/maintain their health. It is anticipated that it would have a slight positive impact in the short term and a significant positive effect in the medium and longer term.	drafting prepared for IMFLDP and CaSPlan MIR.		the Proposed Plan
3	=	=	=	This policy does not address soil quality, geodiversity or contaminated land.			
4	+	+	+	The policy approach considers the capacity of the water and sewerage networks ensuring that development supported by this policy will be supported by appropriate drainage infrastructure and where possible, improved infrastructure. This will help to ensure there in no detrimental impact on the water environment. The issue of flooding is not directly covered by this policy.			
5	+	++	++	The policy promotes sustaining good levels of air quality through reducing the need to travel by car to utilise local services. By supporting growing settlements in locations to sustain local service provision, this help to prevent longer journeys and more traffic congestion / poorer air quality in larger settlements and towns. This will have localised impacts which may be significantly positive in the medium to long term.			
6	+	++	++	The issues of climate change and renewable energy are not directly addressed by this policy however the policy is encouraging growth in defined settlements. By encouraging development within active travel distance of facilities this provides an opportunity for people to walk/cycle to facilities rather than a dispersed growth which would encourage private car use. This will have localised impacts which may be significantly positive in the medium to long term.			
7	+	+	+	The policy criteria seeks to maximise the use of material assets including roads, other transport, water and sewerage.			
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	The policy aims to ensure that no development would have an adverse impact on any locally important heritage feature; it does not specifically deal with enhancement. In some cases the re-use or enhancement of a historic building or development within the setting of a historic monument could have a negative impact. Taken in combination with other policies in HwLDP2, this may have a positive impact.			
9	+	+	+	The policy considers how new developments would effect locally important heritage features such as important public viewpoints/vistas. The policy approach does not consider the regionally and nationally important landscape designations such as Special Landscape Areas or National Scenic Areas. The policy does seek to support development which is similar in terms of spacing, character and density with a settlement; this should go some way in helping to ensure landscape character in maintained and visual impact of development minimised. In addition by the considerations set out in this policy the cumulative impact on the landscape of existing development and new development is taken into consideration.			

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objectives 2, 5 and 6: population / human health, air quality and climatic factors. It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Table 18 Non-Preferred Approach - Option 2: A More Localised Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	The policy does not specifically make provision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, habitats or species. Therefore it is not anticipated that this policy would make a contribution towards achieving LBAP targets locally or regionally. General policies within HwLDP2 will make provision for this. However it does include avoiding net loss of amenity/recreational areas and locally important heritage features, which could include areas with local biodiversity value.			
2	+/-	+	++	It is anticipated that the active travel and avoidance of amenity / recreational net losses would be retained regardless of which Area LDP policy this is contained within. There are however greater potential for developer and community confusion if growing settlements policies differ on a plan by plan basis as well	Retain active travel distances to sustain local services.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
				as through local placemaking priorities. This confusion could give rise to both negative and positive impacts for the population in the short term but should resolve in the longer term resulting in lasting environmental benefits.			
3	=	=	=	This policy does not address soil quality, geodiversity or contaminated land.			
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	There is no guarantees that plan by plan policy criteria variations would consistently consider the capacity of the water and sewerage networks ensuring that development supported will have appropriate drainage infrastructure and where possible, improved infrastructure. General policies in the HwLDP2 would however still apply.	Mitigation through criteria based approach would potentially differ between each Area LDP.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
5	+	++	++	Positive impacts still assumed based on restricting growth to within active travel distances.	Retain active travel criteria to be applied across all Area LDP policies.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
6	+	++	++	Positive impacts still assumed based on restricting growth to within active travel distances.	Retain active travel criteria to be applied across all Area LDP policies.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
7	+	+	+	The policy criteria for each Area LDP could maximise the use of material assets including roads, other transport, water and sewerage. If this criteria was not to be utilised, this could potentially result in negative environmental impacts.	Retain this policy criteria to be applied across all Area LDP policies.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	The policy aims to ensure that no development would have an adverse impact on any locally important heritage feature; it does not specifically deal with enhancement. In some cases the re-use or enhancement of a historic building or development within the setting of a historic monument could have a negative impact. Taken in combination with the general policies to be contained within HwLDP2, this may have a positive impact.	Retain criteria for consideration of locally important heritage features.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
9	+	+	+	The policy considers how new developments would effect locally important heritage features such as important public viewpoints/vistas. The policy approach does not consider the regionally and nationally important landscape designations such as Special Landscape Areas or National Scenic Areas. This will be dealt with via the general policies of the HwLDP2. The policy does seek to support development which is similar in terms of spacing, character and density with a settlement; this should go some way in helping to ensure landscape character in maintained and visual impact of development minimised. In addition by the considerations set out in this policy the cumulative impact on the landscape of existing development and new development is taken into consideration.	Retain policy criteria relating to character, spacing and density within the settlement, no net loss of open space, and placemaking priorities.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.

Commentary: This policy non-preferred alternative approach is likely to have identical significant positive environmental effects on the same SEA Objectives as the preferred approach. This is however based on the effective incorporation of set policy criteria wording across many environmental considerations which would be required to be applied to all three Area LDPs. In the interests of clarity and the consistent application of environmental mitigation, a single HwLDP2 policy is preferable.

Table 19 Non-Preferred Approach - Option 3: SDAs for All Settlements

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	By maintaining SDAs for all settlements this would have no real biodiversity implications other than particular biodiversity interests could be expressed on a site by site allocation basis rather than through particular placemaking	Incorporation of references to biodiversity interests in Area LDP site specific allocations.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
				priorities which may reference particular green networks. Due to an allocation led approach unlikely to result in up to date Development Plans, the proportion of development on allocated sites is predicated to fall, therefore potentially placing pressure on other areas of land and habitats which have not been subject to any plan-led assessment. Biodiversity matters would also be covered by general HwLDP2 policy.			
2	--	--	--	This suggested approach would provide developers and communities with a clearer understanding of which areas of land are allocated for development. Unfortunately this would also lead to much longer Development Plan preparation timescales resulting in outdated plans which are ineffective in responding to emerging development pressures. We believe that reverting back to this traditional, rigid approach would result in more development proposals not conforming to old land use allocations, resulting in less certainty for developers and communities.	Due to the vast geograpghical area of Highland, considerable more resources would be required to effectively deliver this alternative approach. This is not considered to be a realistic and therefore SEA scoring assumes no mitigation.	N/A	N/A
3	=	=	=	As the loss of prime agricultural land (IMFLDP area only) is possible through allocated sites in SDAs and through a growing settlements approach. In both instances, this matter is considered a 'component of the settlement strategy' (as per SPP Para 80) and placemaking priorities could specify particular prime soil areas for limiting growth through directing development in other directions. This matter should be covered by Area Plan SEAs with soils and peat also being the subject of a general HwLDP2 policy.	SDAs being subject to Area LDP SEAs.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
4	+	+	+	Both SDAs and growing settlements would be subject to scrutiny of the implications for the water environment. For allocations, a greater degree of certainty is provided in terms of the planned number of units for particular allocations and capacity of the existing network.	SDAs being subject to Area LDP SEAs.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
5	-	-	-	By selecting SDAs for all settlements there is no clear priority for areas which would benefit from growth to sustain and improve local services. This in turn could lead to poorer levels of service provision in rural areas as resources are being spread too widely, resulting in the centralisation of provision within the most populated areas. This will result in longer journeys for rural communities and increased congestion / poorer air quality in the City.	Keep all SDAs but only prioritise growth through allocations within certain SDAs.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
6	-	-	--	By selecting SDAs for all settlements there is no clear priority for areas which would benefit from growth to sustain and improve local services. This in turn could lead to poorer levels of service provision in rural areas as resources are being spread too widely, resulting in the centralisation of provision within the most populated areas. This will result in longer journeys for rural communities and greater carbon emissions.	Keep all SDAs but only prioritise growth through allocations within certain SDAs.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.
7	-	-	--	SDAs without clear priorities for growth, or outdated allocations that do not result in effective plan-led decision making results in a more dispersed development pattern leading to increased traffic and carbon emissions.			
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	Particular heritage considerations within allocation descriptions or as placemaking priorities have equal merit, however with more up to date development plans, these placemaking priorities can be revisited and refined on a more frequent basis.			
9	+	+	+	SDAs offer definitive boundaries for land use allocation envelopes to be assessed through Area LDP SEAs, however, if these are out of date, these may not be effectively guiding development, leading to unplanned impacts on the landscape. Placemaking principles and growing settlements approach gives a clear steer of areas to be avoided or considered in further detail. Both approaches undergo Area LDP SEA and both approaches will also be subject to a HwLDP2 general landscape policy.	SDAs being subject to Area LDP SEAs.	THC	Variable - based on each Area LDP review cycle.

Commentary: This policy non-preferred alternative approach is likely to result in significant adverse impacts in relation to SEA Objectives 2, 6 and 7: population, climatic factors and material assets. The critical reasons for these predicted impacts are due to uncertainty surrounding the Development Plan preparation process and outdated land use allocation not effectively guiding development.

Issue 2d) Housing in the Countryside

Table 20 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have a direct affect on biodiversity. The impact and mitigation required for this SEA objective will be best addressed by natural heritage policies within the plan.			
2	+	+	++	By supporting a more permissive approach to single houses in fragile areas this is intended to support fragile communities. This is predicted to attract developers to repopulate these areas to enable the retention of existing services.	Steer applicants towards more sustainable sites close to existing communities and active travel networks through pre- application discussions.	THC	Ongoing
3	+	+	+	This is due to houses in hinterland areas and wider countryside having exceptions for brownfield land and therefore encouraging development on brownfield sites.			
4	-	-	-	Housing in the countryside is not always supported by private foul drainage infrastructure and the clustering of houses can intensify water quality impacts. In an ideal world any new development would be connected to a public sewer, however in much of the wider countryside area this is not possible. Water environment policies will maintain a presumption against developing in areas at risk of flooding.			
5	=	=	=	By introducing a more relaxed approach to housing in our most fragile areas, this is not anticipated to give rise to air quality issues.			
6	-	-	-	By supporting a more permissive approach to single houses in fragile areas this is likely to result in new houses in remote areas that may not be linked to an active travel network. As such this may discourage active travel and result in most trips being vehicular which may result in increased carbon emissions.	Steer applicants towards more sustainable sites close to existing communities and active travel networks through pre- application discussions.	THC	Ongoing
7	+	+	+	By encouraging less single house sites in the wider countryside, refuse collection from housing groups will be more economical.			
8	=	=	=	The policy is too general to anticipate potential impacts.			
9	-	-	-	Supporting the development of new single houses in the fragile areas and in the wider countryside in certain circumstances is likely to have a negative landscape impact. This may not however always be the case as in fragile areas, new houses could follow a traditional housing pattern and design which respects existing landscape designations. Similarly the clustering of houses in the countryside into groups will minimise impacts on the landscape.	Design policies and SG to ensure appropriate sitting and design of new houses in the countryside.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post Plan Adoption 2017.

Commentary: This policy will set out the Council's criteria for assessing applications in for housing in the countryside. The assessment found that there are likely to be minimal negative impacts on the water environment, greenhouse gases and the landscape due to the inherent environmental impacts of living in the wider countryside. Whilst design policies and SG seek to ensure appropriate siting and design can help mitigate impacts, it is unlikely that all impacts can be fully mitigated. Overall this approach was found to have minimal negative effects and would result in significantly positive for maintaining and growing populations and supporting rural economic growth.

Table 21 Non-Preferred Approach - Option 2: A More Restrictive Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have a direct affect on biodiversity.			

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
2	+	+	+	Introducing hinterland areas within countryside areas affected by development pressure will help to steer new housing to existing settlements and housing groups. By most new development being located in these locations this would allow for better connectivity of green spaces and benefit human health due to availability of existing and new active travel opportunities.	Steer applicants towards more sustainable sites close to existing communities and active travel networks through pre- application discussions.	THC	Ongoing
3	+	+	+	By directing new housing to existing settlements and housing groups this will help reduce the number new of green field sites being used and be likely to reduce impacts on good agricultural and croft land, for example reducing severance of crofts and unplanned development on quality farm land.			
4	+	+	+	By directing most development to settlements will allow for most development to connect to appropriate drainage infrastructure.			
5	-	-	-	Whilst steering development towards settlements and housing groups may help to reduce the need to travel it may result in increased vehicle trips within urban areas, therefore having potential to increase carbon emissions.			
6	+	+	+	Steering development towards settlements and housing groups may help to reduce the need to travel with less commuting.			
7	+	+	+	By directing most development to settlements this will support waste minimisation and reduce pressure on existing infrastructure.			
8	=	=	=	The policy is too general to anticipate what impacts there might be on the historic environment.			
9	+	+	+	By directing most development to settlements and housing groups this will minimise widespread landscape impact on sensitive landscapes in the wider countryside and fragile areas.			

Commentary: By introducing more hinterland areas and directing most new housing development to existing settlements and housing groups this contributes to minimising the amount of additional traffic generated. Within settlements residents are generally close to services and facilities and therefore have the option to use active travel to reach these destinations. However, on balance, this may result in the potential for adverse air quality impacts (due to potential congestion).

Table 22 Non-Preferred Approach - Option 3: A More Relaxed Approach For the Wider Countryside

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	-	-	--	A more dispersed pattern of development is likely to give rise to greater biodiversity losses.			
2	-	-	-	By supporting a more permissive approach to housing in the countryside this is likely to result in new houses in remote areas that may not be linked to a path network. As such this may discourage active travel and result in most trips being vehicular which may adversely affect human health.			
3	-	--	--	This is due to limited availability of, and constraints, associated with previously used land and a lack of incentive to locate new housing on brownfield land. As such it is likely that the majority of new houses in the countryside will be built on greenfield land.	Steer applicants towards more sustainable sites close to existing communities and active travel networks	THC	Ongoing
4	-	-	-	This is because housing in the countryside is not always supported by appropriate drainage infrastructure. In an ideal world any new development would be connected to a public sewer, however in much of the countryside area this may not be possible.			
5	+	+	+	A more dispersed pattern of development generally would give rise to air quality improvements.			
6	-	-	-	By supporting a more permissive approach to single houses this is likely to result in new houses in remote areas that may not be linked to a path network. As such this may discourage active travel and increase the need to travel by unsustainable transport methods.	Steer applicants towards more sustainable sites close to existing communities and active travel networks	THC	Ongoing
7	-	-	--	Dependant on the location of development in the wider countryside it may be difficult to ensure the waste hierarchy is taken into consideration as in some rural areas recycling collections may not be in place and it could be some distance from the nearest recycling point/centre.			
8	=	=	=	The policy is too general to anticipate what impacts there might be on the historic environment.			
9	-	--	--	Supporting the development of new single houses anywhere in the wider countryside is likely to have a negative landscape impact. This may particularly be the case in the many areas of Highland that are characterised by landscape designations including National Scenic Areas, Special Landscape Areas and Wild Land Areas. Design and siting polices as well as the SG help to mitigate this but over the long term this may lead to significantly adverse landscape impacts.	Design policies and SG to ensure appropriate sitting and design of new houses in the countryside.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post Plan Adoption 2017.

Commentary: The assessment found that a more relaxed approach for housing in the wider countryside would likely result in several negative impacts, including significant adverse impacts in relation to safeguarding biodiversity, soil quality, material assets and landscape. The only positive impact of a more dispersed pattern of development would be on air quality.

Table 23 Non-Preferred Approach - Option 4: A More Relaxed Approach For Croft Houses In Hinterland Areas

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy amendment would have a direct affect on this SEA Objective.			
2	=	=	=	This approach would support the availability of crofters to sell on their house on the open market. This is not considered to be of any particular benefit to improving the lieving environment or health of the population.			
3	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy amendment would have a direct affect on this SEA Objective.			
4	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy amendment would have a direct affect on this SEA Objective.			
5	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy amendment would have a direct affect on this SEA Objective.			
6	-	-	-	By removing the need for legal agreements this may result in an increase in new single croft houses in unsustainable locations that is likely to increase the need to travel by motorised vehicle.			
7	-	-	-	Dependant on the location of new croft houses it may be difficult to ensure the waste hierarchy is taken into consideration as in some hinterland areas recycling collections may not be in place and it could be some distance from the nearest recycling point/centre.			
8	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy amendment would have a direct affect on this SEA Objective.			
9	-	-	-	By removing the need for legal agreements this may result in an increase in new single croft houses in the countryside that is likely to have a negative landscape impact.	Design policies and SG to ensure appropriate sitting and design of new houses in the countryside.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post Plan Adoption 2017.

Commentary: The assessment found that by removing the requirement for legal agreements for croft houses in hinterland areas, the effects on SEA Objectives were largely neutral on the basis that the policy is unlikely to have a direct effect on those objectives. Negative impacts were found for climate change, material assets and landscape on the basis that an increased number of single croft houses were likely to result in increased vehicle trips that would create carbon emissions; would result in additional waste and likely have negative landscape impacts.

Issue 2e) Supporting Rural and Fragile Areas

Table 24 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	Development in rural areas has the potential to impact on biodiversity. However the policy would promote development which supports sustain rural communities while also protecting and where possible enhancing the environmental quality of the area.	Include reference within policy wording that although the Council will support development which supports sustainable rural communities it must also protect and enhance the environmental quality of the area.	THC	Ongoing
2	+	+	+	It is anticipated that this policy will have slight positive impacts on the living environment for communities. It would help to strengthen rural and fragile communities by encouraging employment related development.			
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	Development in rural areas has the potential to impact on soils. However the policy would promote development which supports sustain rural communities while also protecting and where possible enhancing the environmental quality of the area.			
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	Development in rural areas has the potential to impact on the water environment. However the policy would promote development which supports sustain rural communities while also protecting and where possible enhancing the environmental quality of the area.			
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	Development in rural areas has the potential to impact on air quality. However the policy would promote development which supports sustain rural communities while also protecting and where possible enhancing the environmental quality of the area.			
6	+/-	+/-	+/-	The policy could reduce the need to travel longer distances by providing local employment opportunities. This may not however increase the use of sustainable travel modes. The policy does however not cover significant footfall generating uses and therefore any impacts will not be significant.			
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	Development in rural areas has the potential to impact on material assets. Through supporting rural and fragile areas, assets in these areas will be utilised as populations are sustained.			
8	=	=	=	The proposed policy approach would result in limited impacts on the historic environment.			
9	+/-	+/-	+/-	The existing policies do not address employment related development in the rural areas. As a result there is little policy guidance on ensuring appropriate siting and design for these types of development in rural areas.	Include within the policy a statement that development must be sympathetic with the existing patterns of development in the area, compatible with the landscape character and avoid, where possible, locally important croftland.	THC/SNH	Ongoing

Commentary: A rural economic development policy would outline the Council's support for development in rural and fragile areas which helps increase employment opportunities. The policy would particularly help to deliver the SEA Objective 2. Due to the nature of the policy there could be impacts on the other SEA objectives. As the potential impacts would only be known at the individual planning application stage the policy would include a general statement that the environmental quality of the area must be protected and enhanced where possible

Table 25 Non-Preferred Approach (Option 2)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	The existing policy structure does not provide specific guidance for employment related development in rural areas which can have both positive and negative impacts on biodiversity.			
2	-	-	-	The existing policies direct development towards larger villages and towns. They provide no clear support for rural communities and this can lead to reductions in services and make some communities unsustainable.			
3	=	=	=	It is unlikely that the existing policies will have any noteworthy affects on soils.			
4	=	=	=	It is unlikely that the existing policies will have any noteworthy affects on water.			
5	=	=	=	It is unlikely that the existing policies will have any noteworthy affects on air quality.			
6	-	-	-	Failing to provide support for employment opportunities in rural areas means that people wishing to remain living in more remote areas are travelling long distances to places of work.			
7	=	=	=	It is unlikely that the existing policies will have any noteworthy affects on material assets.			
8	=	=	=	It is unlikely that the existing policies will have any noteworthy affects on the historic environment.			
9	-	-	-	The existing policies do not address employment related development in the rural areas. As a result there is little policy guidance on ensuring appropriate siting and design for these types of development in rural areas.			

Commentary: The existing policy structure does not provide specific guidance for employment related development in rural areas despite Council and national policy which promotes sustainable rural communities. Policy 36 is aimed almost exclusively at housing in the countryside and does not provide guidance on employment related development. Although Policy 41 and Policy 43 direct development towards towns and villages they fail to provide policy guidance for developments in rural areas. The existing policy structure does not provide clear support for new employment opportunities close to rural communities and could result in some rural communities becoming unsustainable in the long term. There is also less control over the siting and design of employment related development in rural areas.

3 - Placemaking, Design & Efficient Travel

Issue 3a) Design Requirements

Table 26 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	Whilst not specifically focused on biodiversity and nature conservation, this reinforces other Plan policies by ensuring development is assessed against a wide range of sustainable design criteria, including the extent to which it minimises negative impact on natural resources such as habitats, species and freshwater systems. It would not make a direct contribution, however, towards achieving local or regional LBAP targets.			
2	+	++	++	This promotes active lifestyles and seeks to limit car dependency by setting criteria for assessing design quality in placemaking that support and encourage active travel. It is anticipated that it would have a slight impact in the short term and a significant positive impact in the medium to long term as greenspace matures, active travel routes are better connected, and public transport provision improves.			
3	+	+	+	Whilst not specifically focused on soil quality, geodiversity or contaminated land, this reinforces other Plan policies by ensuring development is assessed against a wide range of sustainable design criteria including the extent to which it makes use of brownfield sites, takes advantage of existing topography, and minimises negative impact on soils.			
4	+	+	+	Whilst not specifically focused on flood prevention or water management, this reinforces other Plan policies by ensuring development is assessed against a wide range of sustainable design criteria including the extent to which it manages and reduces flood risk, protects the water environment and makes use of green infrastructure, such as urban greenspace, to reduce water run-off.			
5	+	++	++	This promotes high standards of air quality in new development by setting design requirements that would minimise pollution by limiting car dependency, and mitigate pollution by expanding urban greenspace. It is anticipated that it would have a slight impact in the short term and a significant positive impact in the medium to long term as greenspace matures and car use decreases.			
6	+	++	++	This would help to limit greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use by setting design requirements to limit car dependency through appropriate neighbourhood design and layout. The policy would also promote resource efficient building design that exceeds standards set by Building Regulations for energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable materials, and water conservation. Although climate change adaptation is not specifically addressed, the promotion of greenspace and tree planting in urban areas should help to moderate temperature increases arising from climate change. Overall, this approach would have localised impacts that are anticipated to have a significantly positive effect in the medium to long term.			
7	+	++	++	Whilst not specifically focused on sustainable use of resources or waste minimisation, this reinforces other Plan policies by ensuring development is assessed against a wide range of sustainable design criteria including the extent to which it minimises negative impact on non-renewable resources, demonstrates resource efficiency, and minimises waste in construction and operation.			
8	+	+	+	Whilst not specifically focused on protection and enhancement of the historic environment, this reinforces other Plan policies by ensuring development is assessed against a wide range of placemaking criteria including contribution to local distinctiveness through the retention, reuse or enhancement of existing buildings, structures or features of historic, archaeological or local interest, as well as, sensitive siting and design, appropriate to local and historic character.			
9	+	+	+	Whilst not specifically focused on protection and enhancement of landscape character this ensures development is assessed against a wide range of sustainable design criteria including the extent to which it minimises negative impact on visual amenity, and demonstrates sensitive siting and design appropriate to local character and the natural environment.			

Commentary: This policy approach is not expected to give rise to negative environmental impacts. It is likely to have significant positive impacts on SEA Objectives 2 (human health; living environments), 5 (air quality), 6 (climate change) and 7 (material assets).

Non Preferred Approach (Option 2)

Commentary: As the non-preferred approach would involve the same policy provisions, albeit across three separate policy areas, this would score identically to the preferred approach. It could, however, be less straightforward to implement because it would require design quality to be assessed against three separate sets of policy criteria, rather than one "catch-all" policy addressing sustainable design, place-making and active travel. **Mitigation:** Should this non preferred approach be followed, careful wording and cross-referencing would be required to avoid duplication and manage overlaps between all 3 policy areas.

Issue 3b) Sustainable Travel

Table 27 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	The increased focus on active travel would generate greater potential for associated walking and cycling routes to be incorporated within green infrastructure and habitat provision. A focus on developing more active travel corridors would result in less biodiversity losses with development creating opportunities to improve habitat connectivity.			
2	++	++	++	The approach to sustainable travel and particularly measures to increase active travel, would help deliver lasting health benefits which improve quality of life.			
3	-	-	-	The development of travel infrastructure would generally have a negative impact on soils.	Minimise disturbance and soil losses through retaining existing Policy 55 and requiring Policy 28's requirement for Site Waste Management Plans.	THC	Ongoing
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	A greater reliance on an active travel network would result in less water run-off and potential water quality issues. Additionally. SuDS could be incorporated within active travel corridors. The strategic transport and recreational journeys policies would also focus on developing our path, road, rail and water infrastructure which collectively can have negative impacts on water quality and if not designed effectively can lead to increased run-off and flood risk. This would however be mitigated through applying the various water environment policies in the replacement Plan.			
5	+	+	++	A modal shift towards more sustainable means of travel could lead to significant improvements to air quality.			
6	+	+	++	A modal shift towards more sustainable means of travel would result in significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than what would otherwise be the case without any intervention.			
7	+	+	++	The approach for sustainable travel would maximise the use of our material assets and expand these in line with the proposed Spatial Strategy Map.			
8	+	+	+	The Recreational Journeys Policy would seek to enhance our tourist routes. This would include routes which relate to the accessibility of our historic environment.	Proposed policy wording to make reference to relationship between improving tourist routes and accessibility and interpretation of the historic environment.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan
9	+/-	+/-	+/-	The development of our travel infrastructure would generally have a negative impact on the landscape. This would be mitigated through other HwLDP policies. Improved travel infrastructure would however make the wider countryside and key views of the landscape more accessible which could result in more people valuing this natural asset.			

Commentary: This policy approach is expected to give rise to a limited negative environmental impacts and is likely to have significant positive impacts on a number of SEA Objectives including, 2 (human health; living environments), 5 (air quality), 6 (climate change) and 7 (material assets).

Table 28 Non-Preferred Approach (Option 2)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	-	-	-	A limited focus on delivering active travel would generate greater potential impacts for biodiversity.			
2	+	+	+	A limited focus on delivering active travel would only result in some positive impacts on public health.			
3	-	-	-	The development of travel infrastructure would generally have a negative impact on soils.	Minimise disturbance and soil losses through retaining existing Policy 55 and requiring Policy 28's requirement for Site Waste Management Plans.	THC	Ongoing
4	-	-	-	Limited development of active travel networks places a greater reliance upon other car based infrastructure which would have greater potentially adverse water environment impacts.			
5	+	+	+	A limited modal shift towards more sustainable means of travel could lead to some improvements to air quality.			
6	=	=	=	Limited sustainable means of travel will not alter the rate of greenhouse gas emissions.			
7	-	-	-	A less effective sustainable travel strategy will place additional pressure on our material assets, making these more difficult to maintain and improve.			
8	=	=	=	Travel polices of the existing Plan make no reference to the historic environment.			
9	+/-	+/-	+/-	The development of our travel infrastructure will generally have a negative impact on the landscape. This will be mitigated through other HwLDP policies. Improved travel infrastructure will however make the wider countryside and key views of the landscape more accessible which could result in more people valuing this natural asset.			

Commentary: This policy approach is not considered to result in any significantly positive or negative environmental impacts against any of the SEA Objectives.

Issue 3c) Green Infrastructure

Table 29 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	++	++	++	The policies specifically make provision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, habitats and species. The inclusion of Policy 60 within the Green Infrastructure section of the replacement Plan develops helps to enhancing habitat corridors, creation of new sites and protection of all designated and non-designated sites. The application of these policies to all scales of development proposals also has significant benefits. This approach will contribute significantly toward achieving LBAP targets both regionally and locally.	Area LDPs to reflect Green Networks and key areas of open space in mapping and placemaking priorities. Monitor biodiversity actions and loss of woodland habitat through development.	THC	Ongoing / Triennial Biodiversity Duty Report
2	++	++	++	The policies aim to create connections for both people and wildlife, enhancing accessibility, well being and rural identity to achieve high quality places. Together the green infrastructure policies will encourage a better approach to land use management, through connectivity of open spaces to each other and to the wider green network. This will ensure better provision of quality spaces, which enable opportunities to access the wider countryside, enhancing active travel facilities, and defining sense of place.			
3	=	=	=	This policies do not address soil quality, geodiversity or contaminated land.			
4	+	+	+	The policies do not directly impact on flood risk and the water environment. However, by safeguarding and enhancing the green network and open spaces may have an indirect positive impact upon alleviating flood risk.			
5	+	+	+	The policies will have a direct positive impact on air quality by safeguarding and enhancing the green network and open space.			
6	++	++	++	The policies would have a direct positive impact through encouraging and providing better opportunities for walking and cycling, which increases the use of more sustainable transport methods.			
7	+	+	+	By encouraging the provision of green infrastructure, including green networked active travel connections, this will have a positive impact on our material assets.			
8	=	=	=	The policies does not address the historic environment.			
9	+	+	+	The policies will have a direct positive effect on maintaining and enhancing the local distinctiveness and characteristics of the area.			

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objectives 1, 2 & 6: biodiversity, health of the human population and climate change. It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Table 30 Non-Preferred Approach (Option 2)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	The policies make provision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, habitats and species. However, the separate presentation of topics of biodiversity and green networks and open space leads to a fragmented and unsupported approach to delivery. Therefore it is not anticipated that this policy would make a significant contribution toward meeting LBAP targets both regionally and locally.			
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	The policies add to health benefits and quality of life; however, this is not specifically mentioned in existing policies. Other policies reference the importance of the connectivity of open space, yet, this is not considered alongside green network policy provision.			
3	=	=	=	The policies do not address soil quality, geodiversity or contaminated land.			
4	+	+	+	The policies do not directly impact on flood risk and the water environment. However, by safeguarding and enhancing the green network it may have an indirect positive impact upon alleviating flood risk.			
5	+	+	+	The policies will have a direct positive impact on air quality by safeguarding and enhancing the green network.			
6	+	+	+	The policies will have a direct positive impact through encouraging and providing better opportunities for walking and cycling, which increases the use of more sustainable transport methods.			
7	=	=	=	By encouraging the provision of green infrastructure, including green networked active travel connections, this will have a positive impact on our material assets. This will however be limited due to the existing policies not being applicable to all scales of development.			
8	=	=	=	The policies do not address the historic environment.			
9	+	+	+	The policies will have a direct positive effect on maintaining and enhancing the local distinctiveness and characteristics of the area.			

Commentary: This non-preferred alternative approach is likely to result in less positive environmental effects than the preferred approach positive due to the separated presentation of policies, which heightens fragmentation and lacking understanding of the benefits of green infrastructure.

4 - Resource Management

Issue 4a) Carbon Clever Energy

Table 31 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	These policies aim to support a reduction in fossil fuel use and an increase in renewable energy sources. This in turn will therefore help biodiversity by supporting measures that help mitigate some of the effects of climate change but may lead to some net loss of habitat or biodiversity.	New policy supported by new SG for wind energy.	THC	Preparation ongoing for publication alongside HwLDP2
2	+	++	++	These policies will have a slight overall positive impact as it will support a reduction in fossil fuel use which in turn brings health benefits by reducing the amount of harmful particulates and residues of fossil fuels. Community Benefit schemes, whilst voluntary and separate from planning, are also likely to lead to health and social benefits for local communities.			
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	These policies will help ensure renewable energy devices are in locations that minimise impacts on geodiversity and peatlands but may lead to some net losses of peat. Though there may be the potential for peatland restoration and improvement.			
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy supports renewable energy generation thereby reducing climate change impacts which in turn may have a small positive effect on flood reduction. Both onshore and offshore devices may however have the potential for slight negative impacts on water quality.			
5	++	++	++	These policies will have a significant positive impact on air quality as it will support renewable energy production thereby reducing reliance on fossil fuels.			
6	++	++	++	These policies will directly help to mitigate climate change as renewable energy reduces reliance on fossil fuels.			
7	+	+	+	These policies have the opportunity to indirectly improve material assets through requiring related infrastructure improvements, for example local roads, in order to facilitate the construction and decommissioning of wind farms.			
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	These policies will help ensure energy developments are located in appropriate places but may have some minimal impact on the historic environment. That said, without development this would not result in any new archaeological findings.			
9	+/-	-	-	These policies will help ensure energy developments are located in appropriate places with appropriate mitigation where landscape and seascape issues are fully considered. Not all landscape impacts can be mitigated and therefore overall cumulative negative impacts may occur as the number of devices increases. For wind energy, this could lead to significant negative cumulative impacts without addressing this matter within the proposed SG.			

Commentary: This policy approach will help ensure the negative effects of climate change are reduced due to a reduction in fossil fuel reliance, with a net positive environmental effect. Significantly positive impacts are predicted for SEA Objectives: 2 (human health), 5 (air quality) and 6 (greenhouse gases).

Non-preferred Approach (Options 2 and 3): The proposal to carry forward and improve existing HwLDP policies for renewable development, or establish different policies for 'wind' and 'other' renewable developments, would achieve identical SEA scoring to that set out for the preferred approach. This would however lead to a less logical distinction between different types of renewable energy developments and their associated assessment criteria.

Issue 4b) The Historic and Natural Environment

Table 32 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	++	++	++	By separating the policy to provide for the natural and historic environments explicitly, and integrating biodiversity-related policies, this approach helps to make a significant contribution towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. This will contribute to achieving LBAP targets. Together with the policies on green infrastructure it will help ensure that habitat networks and corridors are maintained and enhanced. Other elements of the preferred approach (e.g. forming a separate historic environment policy) do not make specific provision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.	Monitor biodiversity actions and loss of woodland habitat through development and provision of compensatory planting.	THC	Triennial Biodiversity Duty Report
2	+	+	+	The green network is made up of a number of natural environment features and the aim of enhancing biodiversity with a separate natural environment policy could help to increase the quality and quantity of open space in settlements, which in turn could help to improve the living environment and human health. Other elements of the preferred approach (e.g. forming a separate historic environment policy) will not contribute to improving the living environment and human health.	Ensure the connections between green infrastructure and biodiversity are highlighted in the policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan
3	+	+	+	The approach will help to safeguard geodiversity on designated sites.			
4	=	=	=	There are no direct impacts of the preferred approach on the water environment. However by maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, the approach may indirectly contribute to natural drainage and help keep developments free from flooding.			
5	+	+	+	The natural heritage policy covers the protection of wider habitats including woodland which has a positive impact on air quality.			
6	+	+	+	The natural heritage policy covers the protection of wider habitats including woodland which has a positive impact on climate change.			
7	=	=	=	This approach does not address the use of material assets.			
8	++	++	++	The preferred approach will make a significant positive contribution to protecting and enhancing the historic environment. The formation of a new historic environment policy will deliver clarity about how to safeguard and enhance Highland historic assets.			
9	++	++	++	This policy makes specific provisions to address this SEA objective. Through the appropriate consideration of features it will be possible to ensure that the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape are protected and enhanced.	Wild Land Areas will be added to the list of designations covered by the policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objectives 1, 8 and 9: biodiversity, historic environment and landscape. It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Table 33 Non-Preferred Approach (Option 2)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	++	++	++	This approach makes a significant contribution towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. It will contribute to achieving LBAP targets. Together with the policies on green infrastructure, it will help ensure that habitat networks and corridors are maintained and enhanced.			
2	+	+	+	The green network is made up of a number of natural environment features and enhancing biodiversity could help to increase the quality and quantity of open space in settlements which in turn help to improve the living environment and improved health.	Ensure the connections between green networks and biodiversity are highlighted in the policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan
3	+	+	+	This approach will help safeguard geodiversity that is on designated sites.			
4	+	+	+	This approach does not directly impact on the water environment. However by maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, the policies may indirectly help with natural drainage and help keep developments free from flooding.			
5	+	+	+	The natural heritage policy covers the protection of wider habitats including woodland which has a positive impact on air quality.			
6	+	+	+	The natural heritage policy covers the protection of wider habitats including woodland which has a positive impact on climate change.			
7	=	=	=	This approach does not address the use of material assets.			
8	=	=	=	This policy approach makes specific provisions to address this SEA Objective with historic environment features identified in the policy hierarchy, leading to the appropriate consideration of them when determining planning applications. However, at present some features are wrongly categorised and generally there is limited detail on how we value of expect features to be safeguarded.			
9	++	++	++	This approach makes specific provisions to address this SEA objective. Through the appropriate consideration of features it will be possible to ensure that the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape are protected and enhanced.	Wild Land Areas will be added to the list of designations covered by the policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objectives 1 and 9: biodiversity and landscape. Objective 8, Historic Environment, scored neutrally because this approach present a confusing picture of historic environment features and fails to provide adequate detail about how development should safeguard or enhance features. This policy approach does not have a significantly different environmental effect from the preferred policy approach as the difference between the two approaches is about presentation rather than content. The preferred policy approach is to have stand alone historic and natural environment policies.

Issue 4c) Heat Networks and Waste Strategy

Table 34 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	These policies aim to support a reduction in fossil fuel use and promote the development of a network of waste sites. This in turn will therefore help biodiversity by supporting measures that help mitigate some of the effects of climate change but may lead to some net loss of habitat or biodiversity.			
2	++	++	++	The development of heat networks and a network of waste management sites can provide significant benefits for human health through de-carbonising our energy needs.			
3	=	=	=	The move towards less material going to landfill will result in less disturbance to soils. New waste facilities will be guided towards existing or allocated waste, industrial or storage and distribution sites whereby the disturbance to soils can be considered through Area LDP allocations.			
4	-	=	=	The development of waste facilities, if not properly operated and designed with sufficient safeguards put in place can lead to water quality issues. As technology and site regulations have improved, this is become less of a concern.	Environmental regulation of waste facility operations.	SEPA	Ongoing
5	-	-	-	Although heat networks and EfWs can lead to a reduction in our reliance on fossil fuels, such operations can give rise to other air quality issues. Such facilities therefore require further regulation and ongoing monitoring through obtaining Pollution Prevention Control licences.			
6	++	++	++	Development of waste facilities and heat networks will lead to a reduction in our reliance on fossil fuels.			
7	++	++	++	The approach to improving our waste strategy provision within the replacement Plan will enhance this material asset, facilitated where appropriate by the promotion of networks to use waste heat.	Monitor % of residual waste going to landfill.	THC	Ongoing
8	+	+	+	Retrofitting heat networks to older buildings that require significant amounts of energy to run, could result in adverse impacts. That said, without intervention the cost of retaining such assets may be unsustainable in the longer term with any intervention being potentially the best environmental option. This specific matter is not however proposed to be addressed in this policy area.			
9	-	-	=	The development of heat networks and waste facilities can give rise to adverse impacts. Particularly challenging elements of certain waste treatment technologies is the requirement for substantial buildings with high stacks which generate plumes. As technologies and the design of facilities improve, the severity of impacts are predicted to decrease.	Impacts will be mitigated by the current Waste Strategy considering the development of three local EfW facilities rather than one larger facility.	THC	Review of the Waste Strategy is ongoing.

Commentary: The approach to having a new heat networks policy and improved waste management policies is predicted to give rise to significantly positive impacts for SEA Objectives 2 (human health), 6 (climate change) and 7 (material assets).

Non-preferred Approach (Option 2): The non-preferred approach sets out alternatives to how heating requirements and waste sites could be selected. This would involve covering heating within the Design Requirements Policy and waste management sites to be identified within Area LDPs which would specify which types and scales of development would be appropriate. These variations to the preferred approach are not anticipated to result in any different environmental impacts to those set out for the preferred approach set out above.

Issue 4d) Minerals

Table 35 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	-	+/-	+	By supporting the responsible extraction of resources this is anticipated to result in adverse biodiversity impacts in the short term, even with good site selection, there will be biodiversity losses. During extractive operations, through progressive site restoration this will lead to the introduction of habitat creation which supports biodiversity. Over time as operations cease and sites are fully restored, mineral sites can result in long term positive impacts for biodiversity.	Securing effective site restoration guarantees in policy wording for all scales of development.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	Mineral extraction can have both positive and negative impacts on human health. Issues relating to noise and ineffective dust suppression can result in residential amenity issues, however, this can be effectively regulated through ongoing monitoring and sites being developed in accordance with annual progress plans. Positive impacts can relate to the creation of new paths and an enhanced green infrastructure through restoration.	Secure effective site monitoring and reporting requirements in policy wording.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
3	-	-	-	Soil quality will generally be negatively impacted upon by mineral development. To minimise disturbance, if suitable areas of search were progressed, this could guide development away from prime agricultural land. However, the findings of the ongoing minerals audit will dictate if areas of search are required.	Secure best practices soil management through policy wording or SG.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	Ineffective water management can lead to a reduction in water quality without regular monitoring and reporting. Mineral development can result in increased levels of water runoff due to the loss of vegetation, however, in other cases mineral development can be effective in increasing flood capacity storage.	Secure effective site monitoring and reporting requirements in policy wording.	THC	Post plan Adoption 2017
5	-	-	-	Issues relating to ineffective dust suppression can result in air quality issues, however, this can be effectively regulated through ongoing monitoring and sites being developed in accordance with annual progress plans. Large scale mineral operations can also generate significant haulage with excessive vehicle movements generating the potential for PM^{10} emissions. Such impacts can however be regulated and monitored to ensure no significant adverse effects will occur.	Secure effective site monitoring and reporting requirements in policy wording and ensure Strategic Transport policy focuses on haulage via water and rail ahead of road.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
6	++	++	++	By helping to secure an effective supply of mineral reserves to serve local market area requirements this should avoid aggregates being transported excessive distances, thereby reducing haulage related carbon emissions and associated costs.			
7	++	++	++	The preferred approach should result in less impacts on the local road network as materials will not be travelling excessive distances.	Complete the minerals supply audit and continue monitoring on an annual basis to help inform the demand for additional minerals supplies.	THC	Ongoing
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	Mineral development occasionally can have a positive impact on the historic environment through the requirement to undertake extensive archaeological trial pits and trenching. Through careful site selection and screening, mineral development can usually be accommodated without adversely affecting the setting of historic assets. Potential does however remain for adverse impacts to occur.			
9	-	+/-	+	Generally, mineral development can result in adverse landscape impacts. However, through better assessment of applications through a more robust policy and integral monitoring and restoration guarantees, these adverse impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated. The proposals help to ensure that the long term impacts can be neutralised wherever possible with the potential for positive impacts over time through effective site restoration.	Secure effective site monitoring and reporting requirements in policy wording. Include requirement for restoration guarantees informed through an independent valuation of potential maximum site restoration costs.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017

Commentary: The approach to the responsible extraction of resources has been scored as having significant positive impacts for SEA Objective 6 (climatic factors) and 7 (material assets). The potential for negative impacts on a number of SEA Objectives still remains, however through robust planning policy with associated improved restoration schemes and effective sit monitoring, it is predicted that any negative impacts will not be significant and over time, can be reduced wherever possible.

Table 36 Non-Preferred Approach (Option 2)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	-	-	-	Without improving our policies, the potential for net adverse impacts on biodiversity remains with any positive impacts being dependant on operators complying with the terms of planning permissions and site restoration plans which are difficult to monitor.			
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	Positive impacts can relate to the creation of new paths and an enhanced green infrastructure through restoration. The quality of restoration is dependant on ongoing monitoring and without sufficient arrangements being put in place with annual reporting, the potential for poorly resorted sites and negative impacts remain.			
3	-	-	-	Minerals development will generally continue to have an adverse impact on soil quality.			
4	-	-	-	Without effective monitoring this increased the risk of water quality issues.			
5	-	-	-	In terms of air quality, the potential for adverse impacts remain, however, complaints from nearby residential receptors should help limit these incidents from occurring.			
6	++	++	++	By helping to secure an effective supply of mineral reserves to serve local market area requirements this should avoid aggregates being transported excessive distances, thereby reducing haulage related carbon emissions and associated costs.			
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	A more flexible approach should lead to an increased supply of aggregates. This could however become an environmental issue should increased competition force existing sites to be left dormant, without sufficient restoration safeguards being put in place.			
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	Mineral development generally can have a positive impact on the historic environment through the requirement to undertake extensive archaeological trial pits and trenching. With a more flexible approach to site selection, this increases the possibility of minerals adversely affecting the setting of historic assets.			
9	-	-	--	Generally, mineral development can result in adverse landscape impacts. Without a more robust policy approach, the potential for adverse effects will remain and over time, significantly adverse impacts may emerge as sites are worked any unsatisfactorily restored.			

Commentary: A more flexible approach to development would generally result in a wider rage of potential negative environmental impacts, with potential significant adverse impacts on SEA Objective 9 (landscape) occurring over time. This alternative non-preferred approach would also result in fewer significant positive impacts with only SEA Objective 6 (climatic factors) potentially benefiting.

5 - Delivering Development

Issue 5a) Planning Obligations

Table 37 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	This SEA Objective does not specifically relate to this main issue.	Updating the Developer Contributions SG and identifying service and infrastructure constraints through the preparation of Area LDPs, development briefs and masterplans. Revising the LTS for adoption as SG to the HwLDP2. Monitoring of planning obligations and associated financial contributions or physical provision of services / infrastructure will be undertaken.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
2	++	++	++	A cumulative approach and more equitable planning obligations from all scales of development will help to deliver access / open space improvements and provision of additional facilities where required.			
3	=	=	=	This SEA Objective does not specifically relate to this main issue.			
4	++	++	++	A cumulative approach and more equitable planning obligations would enable proportionate contributions to be sought towards Council led flood risk proposals.			
5	+	+	+	A cumulative approach to planning obligations would help deliver active travel initiatives which will help to minimise congestion and improve air quality.			
6	++	++	++	A cumulative approach to planning obligations would help deliver active travel initiatives.			
7	+	+	+	A cumulative approach to planning obligations would help to facilitate better waste management communal storage and collection points.			
8	=	=	=	This SEA Objective does not specifically relate to this main issue.			
9	=	=	=	This SEA Objective does not specifically relate to this main issue.			

Commentary: The preferred approach is predicted to result in no adverse impacts and result in significantly positive impacts on SEA Objectives 2 (population & human health), 4 (water) and 5 (air).

Non Preferred Approach (Option 2): Continuing with the current approach would result in similar SEA scoring with the exception that all significantly positives are predicted to be reduced to positive impacts to reflect that smaller scale developments would continue not to contribute towards overcoming services and infrastructure constraints.

Issue 5b) Water, Flooding and SuDS

Table 38 Preferred Approach (Option 1)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure (mitigation)	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	Impacts on habitats and species will be both positive and negative and difficult to predict. For example, maintenance of drainage devices will be aimed at reducing flooding not at habitat creation and maintenance. However, water quality improvements, other things being equal, will improve certain habitats for certain species. Removing a preference for natural ahead of engineered flood measures may result in fewer biodiversity benefits.	Seek high quantity and quality of habitat creation within SuDS implemented through SG and consideration of proposals. Policy to require a net betterment requirement for developers proposing additional private waste water treatment facilities within the groundwater catchments of a very sensitive water body (target Natura water bodies).	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
2	+	+	+	Impacts on human health and green networks are likely to be limited but positive. Some SuDS devices will create or be part of a green network and if these areas are better provided and maintained they will be more useable for human movement. Reducing the fear of flooding may also provide health benefits.	Better provision and maintenance through use of financial guarantees for SuDS devices.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	Soil disturbance will occur with all "greenfield" physical flood / drainage works so some negative impacts are inevitable. However, it may be possible to improve soil drainage and/or restore natural drainage regimes with the correct provision and maintenance of certain flood / drainage schemes.	Maximise the usability of land following drainage works in determining proposals (SG to consider this best practice further).	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
4	+	++	++	All of the preferred policy approach is directly relevant to the SEA topic flooding & water environment and is predicted to result in medium to long term positive impacts.	Monitoring the quality of rivers and bathing waters to identify emerging issues and appropriate policy responses for sensitive water bodies.	SEPA / THC	Annual
5	=	=	=	The preferred policy approach will not have direct impact on air quality.			
6	+	+	+	The preferred policy approach will not have direct impact on climate change. Rather, it will contribute to the adaption of the area to climate change.			
7	=	+	+	The preferred approach will have little or no impact on heat management but a positive impact on waste water management through a higher level of treatment than existing within the groundwater catchment of relevant water bodies, and by allowing existing plants to be expanded which, sometimes, will allow a greater level of treatment.	Area LDPs to make provision for development setback from waste water facilities to control bad neighbour impacts and allow expansion if necessary. Policy to require a net betterment requirement for developers proposing additional private waste water treatment facilities within the groundwater catchments of a very sensitive water body (target Natura water bodies).	THC, Scottish Water and SEPA	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
8	=	=	=	The preferred policy approach will not have direct impact on the historic environment.			
9	+/-	+/-	+/-	The removal of the current preference for natural rather than engineered flood measures may result in more negative landscape impacts. That said, ineffective flood management can lead to increased erosion and landslides which can also result in negative landscape impacts.	Maximise good design principles through applying replacement Design Requirement's Policy 28.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017

Commentary: The preferred policy approach is predicted to be neutral or generally positive and give rise to significant positive impacts on SEA Objective 4 (water). The one negative effect change as compared to HwLDP's application will be the removal of the current preference for natural rather than engineered flood measures. However, discussions with key agencies to date have resulted in agreement that natural measures alone are not effective and therefore habitats and species SEA gains are offset by these measures not effectively mitigating flood risks.

Table 39 Non-Preferred Approach (Option 2)

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	The retention of existing policy measures would continue to have a positive albeit localised impact on water bodies and their related species.	Most existing mitigation is achieved via planning condition and is not always effective and enforceable.	THC	Ongoing
2	=	=	=	The impact of existing policies on public health and green networks is generally neutral.			
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	Soil disturbance occurs with most water environment works. Arguably, Policy 64's presumption in favour of natural flood measures will encourage more positive effects than the new preferred approach.			
4	+	+	+	The old policies are not working as effectively as they could but have still deliver net benefits compared to the 'do nothing' approach in terms of flooding and the water environment.			
5	=	=	=	The alternative policy approach will not have direct impact on air quality.			
6	+	+	+	The alternative policy approach will not have direct impact on climate change. Rather, it will continue to mitigate for the impacts of climate change.			
7	+	+	+	Existing policies have a limited positive impact on waste management but this positive impact could be enhanced by the preferred approach above.			
8	=	=	=	The preferred policy approach will not have direct impact on the historic environment.			
9	=	=	=	The preferred policy approach will not have direct impact on landscape issues.			

Commentary: This assessment assumes that developers will continue to be subject to current legislation, national policy and advice (in addition to the existing HwLDP policies taken forward unaltered). The assessment predicts that this would result in minimal negative impacts and fewer positive impacts when compared with the preferred approach, with no significantly positive impacts occurring.

6 - Other Amendments

Housing in Hinterland Areas

Policy 35 - Housing in the Countryside (Hinterland areas)

Commentary: The preferred approach (issue 2d) has already been assessed. This includes the environmental implications of how Policy 35 is intended to be taken forward. Issue 6, amongst other matters, specifically details our intended changes to the Hinterland area exceptions in SG. All SG amendments will be the subject of a separate SEA Screening exercise to be undertaken post the MIR stage.

Crofting

Policy 47 - Safeguard Inbye-Apportioned Croftland & Policy 48 - New Extended Crofting Townships

Table 40 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	Inbye land can be considered for development but the primary use as a croft should not be lost. This gives some protection for inbye land and its associated habitats.			
2	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have a direct affect on population and human health.			
3	+	+	+	The policy will help safeguard the best crofting soils from development.	The policy wording will help safeguard the best crofting soils from development.	THC	Post Plan Adoption
4	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have a direct affect on water.			
5	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have a direct affect on air.			
6	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have a direct affect on climatic factors.			
7	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have a direct affect on material assets.			
8	+	+	+	The policy positively seeking the relationship between the croft and the house being retained (in hinterland areas), helping to preserve the cultural heritage of the area.	Legal agreements being required for Hinterland areas.	THC	Ongoing
9	+	+	+	The policy would help preserve historic farming and crofting patterns. The policy will protect inbye croft land to a point but not exclusively. It does not limit the options to a point whereby you accept a site that is a lot less acceptable in terms of landscape impact.	The policy to set out criteria to ensure it is clear what will be taken into consideration for development safeguarding inbye land and landscape is one of the key considerations.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017

Commentary: By combining Policies 47 and 48 this will continue to support crofting townships and minimise the loss of in-bye/apportioned croft land. The effects on SEA objectives were found to be largely neutral, however positive effects are likely for some SEA objectives relating to biodiversity, soils, historic environment & cultural heritage as well as landscape.

Accommodation, Houses in Multiple Occupancy and Gypsies / Travellers

Policy 37 - Accommodation for An Ageing Population

Table 41 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance in achieving biodiversity targets.			
2	++	++	++	The issue seeks to encourage the provision of suitably sited housing and facilities. These will provide better access and support for the populace requiring access to specialist accommodation.			
3	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance in relation to this objective.			
4	=	=	=	Delivery of specialist accommodation may occur in areas of existing housing where flood risk may exist. Any new build proposals will be required to consider the potential of flood risk on sites.			
5	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance to this objective.			
6	+	+	+	Identification of land for the provision of specialist accommodation located close to services and infrastructure will assist and encourage opportunities for active and sustainable travel.	Policy to require specialist accommodation in proximity to services and infrastructure.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
7	=	=	=	New developments will be required to provide waste bin storage and recycling facilities.	All proposals would have to comply with existing/new policy in relation to provision of waste facilities.	THC	Ongoing
8	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance to this objective.			
9	=	=	=	The provision of specialist accommodation will be delivered in the main settlements where landscape impact will be minimal.	All proposals would have to comply with replacement Design Requirements Policy 28.	THC	Ongoing

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objective 2 (population and human health). It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Policy 33 - Housing in Multiple Occupation

Table 42 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance in achieving biodiversity targets.			
2	++	++	++	The provision of houses in multiple occupation across Highland will provide significant benefits to areas where housing shortage is detrimental to community and individual wellbeing. HMOs will also provide housing opportunities for the delivery of the University of the Highlands and Islands.	Monitor density levels of HMOs	THC	Ongoing
3	=	=	=	The development of any new build HMOs would have to address any issues arising and where costs of investigation and remediation can be addressed within budgets.			
4	=	=	=	Delivery of HMOs may occur in areas of existing housing where flood risk may exist. Any new build proposals will be required to consider the potential of flood risk on sites.			
5	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance to this objective.			
6	=	=	=	The majority of HMOs will be situated within existing centres and suburban areas where existing transport infrastructure will provide opportunities for sustainable travel.			
7	=	=	=	The majority of HMOs will be situated within existing buildings where waste recycling facilities are already established. New developments will be required to provide waste bin storage and recycling facilities.	All proposals would have to comply with existing/new policy in relation to provision of waste facilities.	THC	Ongoing
8	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance to this objective.			
9	=	=	=	The provision of HMOs will be delivered in the main settlements where impact will be minimal.			

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objective 2 (population and human health). It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Policy 39 - Gypsies / Travellers

Table 43 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance in achieving biodiversity targets.			
2	++	++	++	The identification of an adequate supply of suitable sites, both transit and permanent will be of benefit to human health and be better connected to infrastructure and services.	Area LDPs to identify transit and permanent sites as and when required as identified and monitored through the HNDA.	THC	Ongoing
3	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance in relation to this objective.			
4	=	=	=	The identification of any permanent or transit sites will consider the potential of flood issues.			
5	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of limited relevance in relation to this objective.			
6	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this option would contribute to these objectives, however encouraging the development of sustainable transport links will be taken into account.			
7	+	+	+	The development of serviced sites will provide the necessary infrastructure for the management of waste.			
8	=	=	=	This issue is considered to be of low relevance in relation to this objective.			
9	=	=	=	The development of facilities to serve gypsy/traveller communities would have to consider any potential impacts on the landscape.			

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objective 2 (population and human health). It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Business and Industry

Policy 41 - Business and Industrial Land

Table 44 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on biodiversity.	Area LDPs to identify EDAs and allocate sufficient land for a wide range of business and industrial uses. All Strategic Highland-wide Business and Industrial Sites to undergo SEA through the preparation of Area LDPs. To date all have undergone SEA, with the exception of Kishorn which will be assessed through the emerging WHILDP.	THC	Ongoing and during preparation of Area LDPs.
2	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on population and human health, other than supporting a wide range of sites for employment opportunities.			
3	+	+	+	By directing new business and industrial development to allocated sites and Economic Development Areas this will help reduce the number new of green field sites being used.			
4	+	+	+	By directing most development to settlements and Economic Development Areas this will allow for most development to connect to appropriate drainage infrastructure.			
5	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on air quality.			
6	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on climatic factors.			
7	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on material assets.			
8	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on the historic environment.			
9	+	+	+	There are potential positive landscape benefits in directing development towards allocated sites as this will help to limit greenfield development.			

Commentary: The Business and Industrial policy will continue to direct development towards site allocations and strategically important employment sites. This will help to steer employment development to the most appropriate places and where sufficient services and infrastructure is located. Where appropriate Area LDPs will identify brownfield land and Economic Development Areas which have development potential. This is predicted to have no negative environmental impacts and result in positive impacts for SEA Objectives 3 (soils), 4 (water) and 9 (landscape).

Tourism

Policy 43 - Tourism & Policy 44 - Tourism Accommodation

Table 45 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on biodiversity.			
2	+	+	+	The policy on Town Centres First, includes significant hotel developments to be located in the town centre in the first instance which will help to improve health of our town centres, which is critical to supporting the wider community.	Include hotels in Town Centres First Policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
3	+	+	+	By stating a preference for town centre sites for hotels, this will reduce impacts on soils through limiting green field development.	Include hotels in Town Centres First Policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
4	+	+	+	By stating a preference for town centre sites for hotels, these locations are better served in terms of water supply and site drainage.	Include hotels in Town Centres First Policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
5	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on air quality.			
6	+	+	+	The policy will encourage development in town centres in the first instance which will reduce the need to travel and consolidate facilities.	Include hotels in Town Centres First Policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
7	=	=	=	It is unlikely that this policy will have any noteworthy affects on material assets.			
8	+	+	+	Promoting a thriving and growing tourism industry could help to support the maintenance and enhancement of our built environment.			
9	+	+	+	The policy directs development to towns and villages in the first instance. The removal of the holiday home exception in Hinterland areas will also help to protect the countryside from inappropriate development.	Exclude self-catering homes from exceptions to Hinterland area policy. Include hotels in Town Centres First Policy.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017

Commentary: The revised Tourism Development Policy is expected to have no adverse environmental impacts and several positive impacts on many SEA Objectives. It is anticipated that the focus of development in town centres will help to improve existing facilities and the historic environment. The removal of the holiday home exception in the hinterland will help to protect the landscape qualities of the wider countryside.

Coastal and Marine Planning

Policy 49 - Coastal Development

Table 46 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy aims to ensure integration of marine and land use planning which will help biodiversity by supporting measures that protect the marine and coastal environment but may lead to some net loss of habitat.	Development of new policy	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
2	+	+	++	This policy will help ensure integration of marine and land use planning which in turn will help people by ensuring key coastal amenities are protected.			
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy will help safeguard key coastal areas of importance for geodiversity but may lead to some net losses.			
4	+	+	++	This policy aims to ensure integration of marine and land use planning therefore will support measures that will help manage flood risk and protect the water environment. In the long term this may result in significant water environment improvements.			
5	=	=	=	This policy will have limited impact on air quality.			
6	+	+	+	This policy will support development of marine renewable energy by providing a link between offshore and onshore requirements, ensuring both elements are considered together.			
7	=	=	=	This policy will have limited impact on material assets.			
8	+	+	+	This policy will help ensure a joined approached to considering marine, coastal and land-based historic assets.			
9	+	+	++	This policy will help ensure a joined approached to considering landscape and seascape issues in relation to coastal development.			

Commentary: This policy approach will help ensure the marine and coastal environment are considered in an integrated way with the terrestrial environment, with a net significantly positive impact on SEA Objectives 2 (population and human health), 4 (water) and 9 (landscape).

Aquaculture

Policy 50 - Aquaculture

Table 47 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy will support the sustainable development of aquaculture, which may lead indirectly to some net loss of biodiversity but will aim to ensure appropriate mitigation.	Review of existing policy and prepare Aquaculture SG	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and Post plan Adoption 2017
2	+	+	+	This policy will have limited effect on population and human health as it mainly relates to the marine environment. It will however help support development of an industry which will result in employment opportunities which supports local populations, often in remote and fragile areas.			
3	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on soils as it mainly relates to the marine environment.			
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy will contain elements that support the retention of good water quality when aquaculture developments are considered.			
5	=	=	=	This policy will have limited impact on air quality.			
6	=	=	=	This policy will have limited impact on climate change adaptation.			
7	+	+	+	This policy and/or its supporting SG will contain elements that support waste minimisation when aquaculture developments are considered.			
8	+	+	+	This policy and/or its supporting SG will contain elements ensure the historic environment is given due consideration when aquaculture developments are considered.			
9	+/-	+/-	+	This policy and its supporting SG will contain elements ensure the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape and seascape are protected and any impacts from aquaculture development are suitably mitigated.			

Commentary: This policy is predicted to have a net positive environmental effects, particularly for landscape/seascape, waste minimisation and protecting the historic environment. No significantly positive or negative impacts are predicted to occur.

Landscape

Policy 61 - Landscape

Table 48 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	The policy approach has potential to offer some benefit to biodiversity by safeguarding natural heritage features that contribute to the landscape. For example, by highlighting the importance of, and safeguarding native woodland that forms a key landscape component for a development proposal site.			
2	+	+	+	The approach has scope to offer some benefit to the living environment, which may result in health benefits.			
3	=	=	=	This policy does not address soil, geodiversity or contaminated land.			
4	=	=	=	This policy does not address flood risk or the water environment.			
5	=	=	=	This policy does not address air quality.			
6	=	=	=	This policy does not address climate change mitigation or adaptation.			
7	=	=	=	This policy does not address use of material assets.			
8	+	+	+	Where historic environment assets make a contribution to the landscape, this policy offer scope to contribute to this objective.			
9	++	++	++	The central aim of this policy is to enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape. The approach provides a strengthened policy framework to achieve this.			

Commentary: The policy will build upon the natural heritage policy by providing more specific landscape assessment criteria. This is predicted to result in net positive impacts, and significantly positive impacts for SEA Objective 9 (landscape).

Trees and Woodland

Policy 51 - Trees and Development & Policy 52 - Principle of Development in Woodland

Table 49 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	++	++	++	This policy approach has potential to directly contribute to conserving and enhancing biodiversity through maintaining and increasing tree/ hedge planting in developments and safeguarding important woodland resources, whilst contributing to protection and enhancement of biodiversity. It will make a significant positive contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of habitat networks and corridors.			
2	++	++	++	The preferred approach will significantly improve the living environment by ensuring that important woodland resources are safeguarded, and development only permitted where there is a demonstrable need. It will also provide direct benefits by enabling increased opportunity for improving connectivity of green networks and higher quality open space, with potential for improving human health.	Ensure link is made in revised Policy 51 to Green Infrastructure policies.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
3	+	+	+	The preferred approach has potential to contribute to safeguarding soil quality by ensuring afforested carbon rich soils are only felled where there is a demonstrable need. It also offers potential to prevent sealing of soil surfaces through maintaining and enhancing planting in developments.			
4	++	++	++	There are potential direct impacts of the preferred approach on the water environment. By maintaining and enhancing trees/ hedges, the approach will contribute to natural drainage and help to minimise flood risk.			
5	++	++	++	The policy approach will provide direct benefits to air quality.			
6	++	++	++	By maintaining and increasing tree planting and safeguarding valuable woodland resources, the policy approach will provide direct and significant benefits for climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration. It also has potential opportunities for climate change adaptation, for example by creating opportunities for natural flood risk management in new developments.			
7	=	=	=	This policy approach does not address the use of material assets.			
8	=	=	=	This policy approach does not address the historic environment.			
9	+	+	+	The approach offers positive opportunities to safeguard and enhance the character and qualities of the landscape where trees and woodland form an important landscape component.			

Commentary: The preferred approach is predicted to result in no adverse impacts and significantly positive impacts in relation to SEA Objectives 1 (biodiversity), 2 (population and human health), 4 (water), 5 (air) and 6 (climatic factors).

Peat, Soils and Geodiversity

Policy 55 - Peat and Soils

Table 50 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	++	++	++	This policy makes provision for avoiding disturbance to peat and carbon rich soils which will help with protection of biodiversity for these particular areas.	Monitor number of planning applications granted on brownfield land in the last 12 months and remedial action required.	THC	Annual
2	=	=	=	This policy does not address the living environment of all communities and the improved health of the human population.			
3	++	++	++	This policy is specifically tailored to ensure that soil quality is safeguarded, that disturbance to peat and carbon rich soils is avoided and that release of greenhouse gas emissions is minimised.			
4	=	=	=	This policy does not directly address flood risk and the protection of the water environment.			
5	=	=	=	This policy does not address air quality issues.			
6	+/-	+/-	+/-	Whilst this policy will not reduce greenhouse gases it will ask for the release of greenhouse gas emissions to be minimised where developments are happening on land where peat or other carbon rich soils are present.	Within policy include that greenhouse gas emissions should be minimised where development is taking place on peat or carbon rich soils.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
7	=	=	=	This policy does not address the use of material assets.			
8	=	=	=	This policy does not address the historic environment.			
9	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy has the potential to address the protection of the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape by helping to ensure that landscapes where peat and carbon rich soils are present, that disturbance is avoided and where it is unavoidable that a peatland management plan is provided. The policy will also ensure that commercial peat extraction will continue to only be allowed in areas demonstrated to be degraded and not capable of restoration.	Monitor applications for commercial peat extraction as part of the ongoing mineral survey.	THC	Ongoing

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objectives 1 (biodiversity) and 3 (soil). It is not anticipated that there will be any significant negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Policy 62 - Geodiversity

Table 51 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	This policy approach does not address biodiversity.			
2	=	=	=	The approach will not improve nor impact the living environment.			
3	++	++	++	The policy approach will safeguard and promote earth science features and assets in Highland. The approach offers positive encouragement for all geodiversity interests to be furthered, emphasising the potential of scientific and educational opportunities.			
4	=	=	=	The approach will have a neutral effect on the water environment.			
5	=	=	=	The approach will have a neutral effect on air quality.			
6	=	=	=	The approach will have a neutral effect on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation.			
7	=	=	=	The approach will have a neutral effect on user of material assets.			
8	+	+	+	The approach has some potential to enhance the historic environment, where the geodiversity interest has particular cultural or historical interest.			
9	=	=	=	The approach will have a neutral effect on enhancing the character, diversity and qualities of the landscape.			

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have no adverse impacts and significant positive impacts on SEA Objective 3 (soils inc. geo diversity).

Pollution and Air Quality

Policy 72 - Pollution

Table 52 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on biodiversity.			
2	+	+	+	The consideration of a wider range of pollution sources will likely have a positive effect on human health as a general reduction in pollutants, noise, air fumes etc will be beneficial to the general populace.	Limitations tput in place through guidance on all scales of pollution and potential impacts allied to other existing statutory controls.	THC/SEPA	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
3	+	+	+	Management of potential pollution sources will be beneficial in the protection of good quality soils.	Introduction of controls on low level pollution will cumulatively impact positively on the retention of soil quality.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
4	+	+	+	Management of potential pollution sources will be beneficial in the protection of the water environment.	Introduction of controls on low level pollution will cumulatively impact positively on the water quality.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
5	+	+	+	Management of potential pollution sources will be beneficial in the protection of air quality.	Introduction of controls on low level pollution will cumulatively impact positively on the air quality.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
6	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on climate factors.			
7	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on material assets.			
8	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on the historic environment.			
9	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on landscape.			

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to result in no negative impacts and is predicted to have a wide range of positive environmental effects on a number of SEA Objectives. The policy approach seeks to improve on the impacts of lower levels of pollution that fall below statutory legislation and will deliver a consequent reduction in minor pollutants incidences.

Policy 73 - Air Quality

Table 53 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on biodiversity.			
2	+	+	+	This policy area will have a significant effect on improving the environment in areas where air quality has been degraded through the cumulative effects of development and growth in vehicular transport usage.	Monitoring of air quality within Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and requirement for developers to consider impact of development on air quality.	THC	Ongoing and Post Plan Adoption 2017
3	+	+	+	Management of air quality and contributory pollution sources will benefit the protection of good quality soils.			
4	+	+	+	Management of potential pollution sources will be beneficial in the protection of the water environment.			
5	++	++	++	Management of potential pollution sources will be significantly beneficial to air quality.	Policy to highlight the issue of high levels of air pollution will impact positively on the air quality. THC will continue to monitor problems areas.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
6	+	+	+	Management of high levels of air pollution will lead to restrictions and reductions in vehicle usage affected areas and will lead to a consequent reduction in vehicle emissions.	Policy to highlight the issue of high levels of air pollution will impact positively on emissions.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
7	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on this objective.			
8	=	=	=	This policy will have a positive impact on the reduction of pollutants in the environment and impacts these may have on the historic environment.			
9	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on this objective.			

Commentary: This policy approach is likely to have no negative environmental impacts and result in minor positive environmental effects on a number of SEA Objectives. The policy approach seeks to focus on any areas within Highland that are declared as an Air Quality Management Area. Subsequent preparation of a Detailed Assessment and Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) will identify issues and evaluate options for dealing with issues identified to improve on the impacts of levels of pollution that fall within statutory legislation and will deliver a consequent reduction in pollutants.

Physical Constraints and Previously Used Land

Policy 30 - Physical Constraints

Table 54 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on biodiversity.			
2	+	+	+	The policy objective is to ensure that proposed developments do adversely effect human health and safety or pose risk to safeguard areas. This policy intervention is therefore viewed as positive in terms of maintaining human health.			
3	+	+	+	The policy seeks to prevent development of land on steeply sloping areas or areas with increased erosion and landslides risk.			
4	=	=	=	The preferred approach will not present specific guidance on development in flood risk areas with this policy area being covered by water environment policies. The policy will still maintain a preventative approach to avoidance of development in areas of physical constraint.			
5	+	+	+	The avoidance of development in areas where existing developments that may carry air quality risks will help maintain air quality.			
6	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on climatic factors.			
7	+	+	+	This policy objective will maintain the integrity of material assets.			
8	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on the historic environment.			
9	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on landscape.			

Commentary: This policy will have limited net positive environmental effect as it will support sustainable development and reduce conflicts between non-complimentary uses. The proposed approach is not anticipated to result in any adverse impacts.

Policy 42 - Previously Used Land

Table 55 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy promotes the development of previously developed land where this will deliver a net environmental benefit. Development of such sites may have a negative impact on existing biodiversity but may also provide opportunity for the establishment of new habitats. The reuse of such sites would generally also result in less adverse impacts than developing greenfield sites.	Policy to highlight the possibility for protected species surveys on previously used land, particularly the requirement for bat surveys should existing structures remain on site.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
2	+	+	+	The improvement / redevelopment of previously used land will provide a general environmental improvement to generally despoiled areas and provide an improved environment for the population.			
3	+	+	+	The delivery of this policy area will likely lead to improvements in degraded soils and remediation of contaminated soils.	Monitor the number of planning applications granted on brownfield land in the last 12 months and remedial actions required.	THC	Annual
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	The promotion of reusing previously used land could result in both positive and negative potential effects on the water environment through encountering / addressing sources of contamination.			
5	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on air quality.			
6	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on climatic factors.			
7	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on material assets.			
8	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on the historic environment.			
9	+/-	+/-	+/-	The redevelopment of the previously used land may lead to an enhancement of the landscape, however, facilitating development could also result in adverse landscape impacts.	Proposals to comply with new Design Requirements policy.	THC	Ongoing

Commentary: This policy is predicted to have a limited net positive environmental effect as it will support the removal/redevelopment of degraded land and/or buildings.

Communications Infrastructure, Siting and Design

Policy 45 - Communications Infrastructure & Policy 46 - Siting and Design of Communications Infrastructure

Table 56 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy will support proposals for the provision of communications infrastructure that has minimal impact on biodiversity.			
2	+	++	++	This policy will help ensure local communities are well connected, thus supporting and strengthening fragile, rural communities in particular.			
3	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on soils.			
4	=	=	=	This policy will have limited effect on the water environment.			
5	+	+	+	This policy will help reduce the need to travel thereby cutting the use of fossil fuel.			
6	++	++	++	This policy will help reduce the need to travel thereby cutting the use of fossil fuels.			
7	+	+	+	This policy will improve accessibility to information and communications technology.			
8	-	-	-	This policy will seek to limit impacts on the setting of historic environment assets wherever possible.	Policy to reiterate the requirement for high quality design with a potential cross reference to the replacement Design Requirements Policy 28.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
9	-	-	-	This policy will support proposals for the provision of communications infrastructure that has minimal landscape impact.			

Commentary: This policy is predicted to result in minimal negative environmental effects and significantly positive environmental effects in relation to SEA Objective 2 (population and human health) and 6 (climatic factors).

Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

Policy 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

Table 57 Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term (0-5 years)	Medium Term (5-10 years)	Long Term (10+ years)		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy will support the appropriate location of electricity infrastructure, which may lead indirectly to some net loss of biodiversity but will aim to ensure appropriate mitigation. Biodiversity loss may be during construction phases of developments, which would be assessed on a case-by-case basis, but over time, may be enhanced through compensatory habitat creation or enhancement.			
2	++	++	++	This policy will help ensure security of energy supply for local communities, industry and businesses.			
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy will support the appropriate location of electricity infrastructure, which may lead indirectly to some net loss of geodiversity but will aim to ensure appropriate mitigation. Geodiversity loss and soil quality issues may be during construction phases, which over time may be enhanced by mitigation.			
4	=	=	=	This policy will have limited impact on the water environment, with infrastructure projects of this scale requiring construction management plans to mitigate the potential for any impacts.			
5	=	=	=	This policy will have limited impact on air quality.			
6	++	++	++	Improvements to the electricity grid infrastructure to support renewable energy industry is a significantly positive step toward decarbonising our energy needs.			
7	=	=	=	This policy will have limited impact on material assets.			
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy will support the appropriate location of electricity infrastructure, which may lead indirectly to some net negative impact on the historic environment but will aim to ensure appropriate mitigation, which would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. As older infrastructure gets replaced, the policy requirement to remove redundant infrastructure can result in positive impacts for the historic environment.	Policy requirement to insist upon the removal of redundant infrastructure.	THC	Preparation of Proposed Plan and post plan Adoption 2017
9	+/-	+/-	+/-	This policy will support the appropriate location of electricity infrastructure, which may lead indirectly to some net negative impact on landscape and seascape but will aim to ensure appropriate mitigation, which would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. As older infrastructure gets replaced, the policy requirement to remove redundant infrastructure can result in positive impacts for the historic environment.			

Commentary: This policy is predicted to result in limited negative environmental impacts and result in significantly positive environmental impacts for SEA Objective 2 (pollution and human health) and 6 (climate factors) as it will support the renewable energy developments and energy security for local communities.