Appendix 3b: Assessment of Policies included in the Proposed Plan

Contents

Caithness and Sutherland Vision and Spatial Strategy

Assumptions made when assessing: Any proposal which meets the outcomes of the vision will also be assessed against all relevant policies in HwLDP, Caithness and Sutherland LDP and Supplementary Guidance.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude		Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** The vision promotes high quality places where the outstanding environment and natural, built and cultural heritage is celebrated and valued assets are safeguarded. A high quality natural environment provides safeguards for habitats and species. The vision may go some way in taking forward targets from the LBAPs.	Review vision and spatial strategy during next review of CaSPlan	THC	2021
2	=	+	+	+	+	**Justification** The vision promotes high quality places and successful, sustainable and socially inclusive communities where people want to live. It is likely that these will come into effect in the medium to longer term. It focuses on providing access to services in communities which helps to improve people's living environment. The vision does not specifically mention open space or green infrastructure however the promotion of high quality places and valued assets being safeguarded goes some way to ensuring that open spaces within communities are maintained. It is anticipated that the effect of the vision will be positive at both a local and regional scale when working cumulatively with access to the outdoors, open space and green networks policies contained within HwLDP.			
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	=	**Justification** The vision makes no explicit mention of soil quality, geodiversity or improving contaminated land however it does			

						promote high quality places. It is not anticipated that the vision would lead to a reduction in either soil quality or geodiversity protection 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 on a case by case basis.			
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**Justification** The ambition for development and growing communities promoted through the vision, will lead to an increased demand for water and therefore water abstraction which will need to be carefully managed through regimes outwith the control of the planning system. Wider policies within the HwLDP will address this SEA objective and deliver the vision and it will be assessed on a settlement by settlement basis.			
5	+	+	++	+	+	**Justification** The vision does not specifically mention climate change however it includes measures to facilitate the adaptation to it and avoid increasing the rate in which it is occurring. It promotes sustainable communities with convenient access to services, enhanced communications infrastructure and development encouraged at existing or planned provision. It is likely that this will contribute to a slight positive impact in the short to medium term with significant impact in the longer term. The vision makes provision for support of renewables related economic development which may have a slight positive impact on this SEA objective at a local and regional level. These issues are covered in detail by HwLDP policies and will be considerations in allocating sites and determining planning applications on a case by case basis.			
6	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	=	**Justification** The vision is unlikely to have any impact on this SEA objective, HwLDP policies and Supplementary Guidance will deal with sustainable use of material assets and in particular waste management.			
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**Justification** The vision makes provision to celebrate the built and cultural environment and safeguard valued assets; however it does not			

						specifically mention the enhancement of it. These sites will be safeguarded through HwLDP policy and other legislation. 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.			
8	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** The vision through safeguarding valued assets, infers that landscape character, distinctiveness and unique qualities will be protected although there is no explicit mention of enhancement. However it is the policies of the HwLDP that will ensure that this is the case.			

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 whilst this is not a consideration of SEA, the vision sets out how economic growth in the area can be achieved with little impact on the environment. It is anticipated that the vision will have no/little negative impact on the environment but have significantly positive effects in terms of SEA Objective 5.

Policy 1: Town Centre First

Assumptions made when assessing: All proposals will be assessed against all relevant policies in the HwLDP, Caithness and Sutherland LDP and Supplementary Guidance.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude		Justification	Mitigation		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is not considered that this policy will have an impact on the SEA Objective as 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 LBAP targets locally or regionally.	Continue to review the policy through HwLDP2 review	THC	Ongoing
2	+	+	+	+	=	**Justification** 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 the facility rather than use private transport. 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.			
3	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** It is not likely that this policy will have a direct impact on geodiversity. However by encouraging re-use and redevelopment of existing sites and buildings there could be a positive impact on the improvement of contaminated land and it will have an indirect positive impact on soil quality as it is			

						encouraging development of brownfield sites rather than the use of greenfield sites.			
4	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** 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.			
5	+	+	+	+	=	**Justification** By encouraging development to town centres there would be opportunity to have development in the most accessible locations for public transport, walking and cycling which would help to reduce the need to travel by private car. This provides a more sustainable form of living by reducing vehicle transport and encourages active travel. As a result it is expected that this policy will help to reduce C02 emissions. 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.			
6	+	+	+	++	+	**Justification** This policy encourages the re-use and redevelopment of existing sites and buildings in town centres. Coupled with policies in HwLDP, This will have a significant positive impact on a local scale as it encourages the re-use of vacant buildings.			
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**Justification** 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.			
8	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is not considered that this policy will have an impact on the SEA Objective as the policy is solely concerned with directing growth to town centres.			

Commentary

This policy is likely to have some positive environmental effects but have significant positive effects in relation to SEA Objective 6. 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.

Policy 2: Delivering Development

Assumptions made when assessing: All proposals will be assessed against all relevant policies in the HwLDP, Caithness and Sutherland LDP and Supplementary Guidance.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude		Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** This policy focuses on the delivery of development supported by the necessary infrastructure as indicated in the plan and as such it is unlikely that it will have any significant effects on biodiversity. However the infrastructure does include green infrastructure which may have a slight positive effect on biodiversity. This will vary on a site by site basis.	Review the policy approach through the next CaSPlan review	THC	2021
2	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** This policy focuses on the delivery of development supported by the necessary infrastructure as indicated in the plan and as such it is unlikely that it will have any significant effects on biodiversity. However the infrastructure does include green infrastructure, health facilities, community facilities and active travel infrastructure which may have a slight positive effect on human health and an improved living environment. This will vary on a site by site basis.			
3	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** This policy focuses on the delivery of development supported by the necessary infrastructure as indicated in the plan and as such it is unlikely that it will have any significant effects on soil quality, geodiversity and contaminated land.			
4	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** The provision of infrastructure as required by this policy includes contribution to water and waste water infrastructure and the developer requirements in the Plan have set out what is required to ensure developments are free from flooding.			

						This is supported by policies in HwLDP helping to protect and enhance the water environment and flood risk. This will vary on a site by site basis.			
5	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** The provision of infrastructure as required by this policy includes contribution to infrastructure which would reduce the vulnerability to the effects of climate change and contributions to infrastructure which would help to increase the opportunities for active travel and use of public transport. This will vary on a site by site basis.			
6	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** The provision of infrastructure as required by this policy includes contribution to waste infrastructure. This will vary on a site by site basis.			
7	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** This policy focuses on the delivery of development supported by the necessary infrastructure as indicated in the plan and as such it is unlikely that it will have any significant effects on the historic environment.			
8	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** This policy focuses on the delivery of development supported by the necessary infrastructure as indicated in the plan and as such it is unlikely that it will have any significant effects on the qualities of the landscape.			

Commentary

This policy is likely to have some positive effects on SEA Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 due to the policy's support for delivery of supporting infrastructure. In some cases this will simply mitigate against the effects of development and in other circumstances may have a more significantly positive effect but this will vary between sites depending on the opportunities to deliver these improvements.

Policy 3: Growing Settlements

Assumptions made when assessing: All proposals will be assessed against all relevant policies in the HwLDP, Caithness and Sutherland LDP and Supplementary Guidance.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude		Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**Justification** 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 HwLDP 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.	Continue to review the policy through HwLDP2 review	THC	Ongoing
2	+	++	++	++	=	**Justification** The policy aims to help sustain facilities in settlements which could potentially mean that facilities stay within settlements. By encouraging development within active travel distance of facilities you are providing an opportunity for people to walk/cycle to facilities rather than dispersed growth which would encourage them to use private cars. The policy also aims to avoid a net loss of amenity/recreational areas or locally important heritage feature. By maintaining open space you are providing opportunities for people to improve/maintain their health. It is considered that this policy will have more of an impact at the local level as opposed to a regional level. 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.			
3	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** This policy does not address soil quality, geodiversity or contaminated land.			
4	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** 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	+	++	++	++	+	**Justification** 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 you are providing an opportunity for people to walk/cycle to facilities rather than dispersed growth which would encourage them to use private cars. This will have very localised impacts which may be significantly positive in the medium to long term.			
6	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** The policy criteria seeks to maximise the use of material assets including roads, other transport, water and sewerage.			
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**Justification** 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 of the HwLDP, this may have a positive impact at a local level.			
8	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** 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 is dealt with via the general policies of the HwLDP. 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 and 5. It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Special Landscape Areas

Assumptions made when assessing: All proposals will be assessed against all relevant policies in the HwLDP, Caithness and Sutherland LDP and Supplementary Guidance.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude		Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the SLA boundary will have any effect on this SEA objective as it is dependant on the application of policy within the area. The policy approach which will be taken with regard to development within SLAs has been subject to SEA via the Highland wide LDP.	Continue to review the policy through HwLDP2 review	THC	Ongoing
2	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the SLA boundary will have any effect on this SEA objective as it is dependant on the application of policy within the area. The policy approach which will be taken with regard to development within SLAs has been subject to SEA via the Highland wide LDP.			
3	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the SLA boundary will have any effect on this SEA objective as it is dependant on the application of policy within the area. The policy approach which will be taken with regard to development within SLAs has been subject to SEA via the Highland wide LDP.			
4	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the SLA boundary will have any effect on this SEA objective as it is dependant on the application of policy within the area. The policy approach which will be taken with regard to development within SLAs has been subject to SEA via the Highland wide LDP.			
5	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification**			

						It is unlikely that the SLA boundary will have any effect on this SEA objective as it is dependant on the application of policy within the area. The policy approach which will be taken with regard to development within SLAs has been subject to SEA via the Highland wide LDP.			
6	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the SLA boundary will have any effect on this SEA objective as it is dependant on the application of policy within the area. The policy approach which will be taken with regard to development within SLAs has been subject to SEA via the Highland wide LDP.			
7	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the SLA boundary will have any effect on this SEA objective as it is dependant on the application of policy within the area. The policy approach which will be taken with regard to development within SLAs has been subject to SEA via the Highland wide LDP.			
8	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification** It is unlikely that the SLA boundary will have any effect on this SEA objective as it is dependant on the application of policy within the area. The policy approach which will be taken with regard to development within SLAs has been subject to SEA via the Highland wide LDP. The boundary revisions confirmed in the Proposed Plan will lead to suitable expansion of the SLAs in line with a sound methodology as se out in the SLA Citations. This will help to have a robust SLA boundary to support the policy approach and in turn will help to afford greater protection to the regionally important landscape characters and qualities for which these areas are designated.			

Commentary

It is unlikely that this approach will have an effect on any of the SEA Objectives other than the one related to landscape character and qualities where there may be a minimal positive effect at a local and regional scale as the protective policy approach from the Highland wide Local Development Plan will be applied to a wider area.

Housing in the Countryside – Hinterland Boundary

Assumptions made when assessing: All proposals will be assessed against all relevant policies in the HwLDP, Caithness and Sutherland LDP and Supplementary Guidance.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude		Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the hinterland boundary would have a direct effect on biodiversity.	Continue to review the policy through HwLDP2 review	THC	Ongoing
2	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the hinterland boundary would have any effect improving the living environment and human health,			
3	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the hinterland boundary will have any effect on safeguarding soil quality, geodiversity or improving contaminated land.			
4	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the hinterland boundary will have any effect on managing and reducing flood risk and protecting the water environment.			
5	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the hinterland boundary will have any effect on reducing greenhouse gases or helping the area adapt to climate change.			
6	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the hinterland boundary will have any impact on the sustainable use of material assets.			
7	=	=	=	=	=	**Justification** It is unlikely that the hinterland boundary will have any effect on protecting and enhancing the area's historic environment.			
8	+	+	+	+	+	**Justification**			

						There may be slight positive effect on protecting and enhancing the landscape as there is a more restrictive approach to housing development in the hinterland area. However appropriately designed houses do not necessarily have a negative effect on the landscape.			

Commentary

It is unlikely that maintaining the hinterland boundary around Tain will have any significant effects, positive or negative on any of the SEA Objectives. It may have some minor positive effects on maintaining landscape character (SEA Objective 8) by having a more restrictive approach to housing development within the hinterland boundary.