

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

LAMINGTON POLICY ASSESSMENT AND CAPACITY STUDY

DECEMBER 2013

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1 BACKGROUND

Introduction

Given the recent development pressure in this area, it was decided that the Lamington area could benefit from some analysis as to the remaining potential for housing development that can still accord with the Development Plan provisions. The principal concern for the Development Plan within this study area is to ensure that the capacity of the landscape, and its character, settlement pattern and local road network is not adversely affected by development. In consultation comments on an application within the area (ref 12/03368/FUL) both TECs and Policy had highlighted the need for a capacity study to be undertaken in advance of any further development proposals within the area. The North Planning Applications Committee endorsed this approach at its meeting on 27 November 2012 and asked that a capacity study be undertaken by TECs (Transport) and Planning and Development (Development Plans) within 12 months of the Committee date.

Since the adoption of the Ross and Cromarty East (RACE) Local Plan in February 2007 there have been 14 houses granted planning permission as shown on Map 1. This compares to the indicative capacity for 12 homes identified in RACE Local Plan. The capacity of 12 houses identified in RACE Local Plan was not however based on detailed analysis, and was purely indicative.

The aim of this study is therefore to assist in the determination of future planning applications in the area by providing guidance on the capacity for future development taking account of the Development Plan, particularly in relation to landscape, character, settlement pattern and the local road network.

Current Policy Context

The extent of the study area is defined by the RACE Local Plan Scotsburn settlement boundary which remains part of the current Development Plan until the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) is adopted. Please see the map on page 5 which indicates the area covered by the study and the key development constraints present within this area.

The following Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) Policies are relevant, these are in particular (but not restricted to) the following

- Policy 28 Sustainable Design
- Policy 29 Design Quality and Place-making
- Policy 31 Physical Constraints
- Policy 34 Settlement Development Areas (before RACE Local Plan is superseded by IMFLDP)
- Policy 47 Safeguarding Inbye/Appportioned Croftland
- Policy 51 Trees and Development
- Policy 52 Principle of Development in Woodland
- Policy 56 Travel
- Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
- Policy 61 Landscape

- Policy 65 Waste Water Treatment
- Policy 78 Long Distance Routes (discussions on providing core path connections from this area to Alness point are ongoing)

The Changing Policy Context

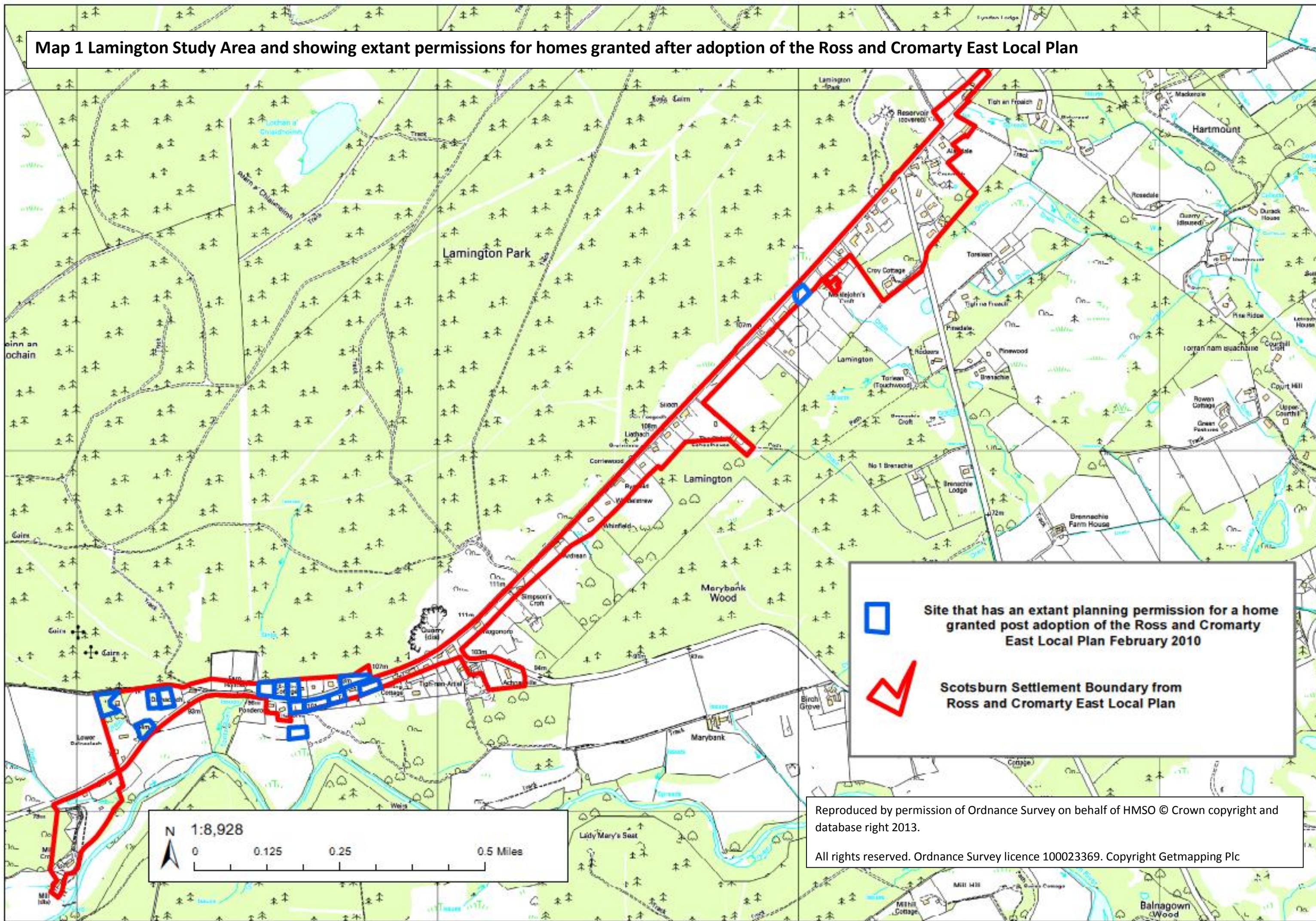
After the IMFLDP is adopted proposals will also be primarily assessed against


- Policy 35 Housing in the Countryside (Hinterland Areas) and its associated Housing in the Countryside: Siting and Design Supplementary Guidance


The scope for new development under the Housing in the Countryside: Siting and Design Supplementary Guidance relating to housing groups is restricted to infill and rounding off. When explaining the potential for infill the guidance says this must be, “within or round off an existing housing group” and should be, “respecting the character of the group and spacing of the individual houses.” With regard to rounding off, the following caveat is made, “further applications on the edge of a group that has already been rounded off will be considered as an inappropriate extension to the group.”

In light of the above, it is considered that the conclusions of this study should also be applied after the IMFLDP supersedes the RACE Local Plan. This is because the same principles as those identified for housing groups in the Housing in the Countryside: Siting and Design Guidance were used to define the RACE Local Plan settlement boundary for Lamington. Therefore whilst the RACE Local Plan settlement boundary will no longer be part of the Development Plan in practice the housing group guidance detailed above will mainly result in a continuation of the same spatial boundaries for Lamington. However at the western end of Lamington there is currently no established group of 3 or more houses as defined by the Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design Guidance. If there is no housing group in this area before the adoption of the IMFLDP then any proposal will be assessed against the criteria in the Supplementary Guidance.

Map 1 Lamington Study Area and showing extant permissions for homes granted after adoption of the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan

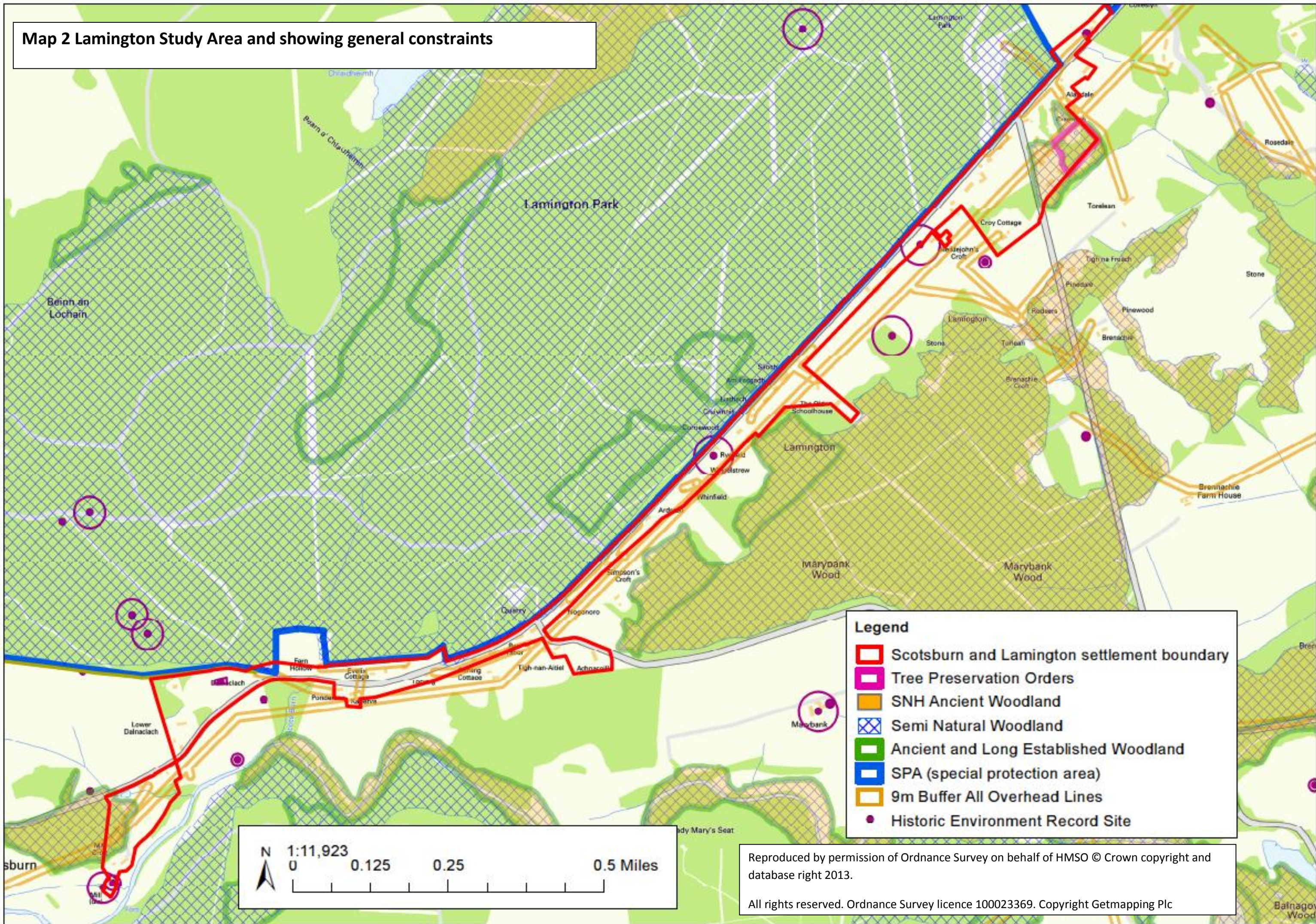


 Site that has an extant planning permission for a home granted post adoption of the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan February 2010

 Scotsburn Settlement Boundary from Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan

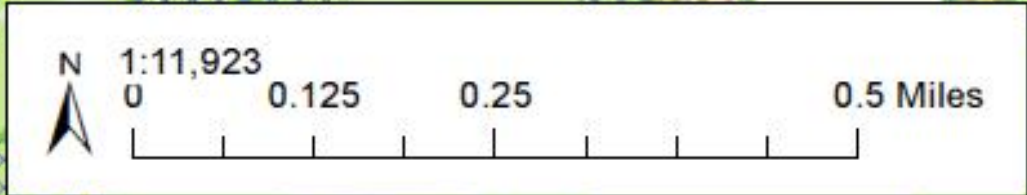
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Map 2 Lamington Study Area and showing general constraints



Legend

- Scotsburn and Lamington settlement boundary
- Tree Preservation Orders
- SNH Ancient Woodland
- Semi Natural Woodland
- Ancient and Long Established Woodland
- SPA (special protection area)
- 9m Buffer All Overhead Lines
- Historic Environment Record Site



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ANALYSIS

Methodology

This study was prepared using a combination of desk-based analyses of existing and approved housing developments using the Council's geographical information system (GIS) and the Council's planning and building standards case management system (Uniform), supplemented with a site visit.

The initial GIS based analysis examined physical constraints such as forestry and woodland interest and mapped the existing and approved housing within the area using data from uniform.

A joint site visit was then carried out by the Council's Development Plan, Development Management and TECs road colleagues. This joint site visit allowed officers to assess the remaining capacity for development from a landscape, visual, character, settlement pattern and roads perspective.

FINDINGS

Spatial Guidance

Applying the Development Plan policy provisions relating to landscape, character, settlement pattern, and local road capacity results in the following spatial guidance for new development.

Four separate distinct denser development groups: have been identified where there is potential to further infill and round off the existing groups. This recognises and responds to the character of the existing settlement pattern and allows for opportunities that will reinforce the existing settlement pattern.

Three less developed sections: have been identified where there is a need to resist further development. Retaining the more open nature of the areas between the denser housing groups ensures that the overall area retains its rural character; and prevents the area from becoming one continuous densely developed linear housing group. From a local road network perspective if there is no further development in the two open sections (sections 2+3) between these denser housing groups this gives a greater chance of drivers sticking to a reasonable speed through the more built-up sections rather than having the whole 3km densely built up and expecting drivers to slow down for this entire length.

There are 2 distinct less developed sections identified (sections 2+3) that should remain less developed to retain the rural settlement pattern, and to assist from a local road network perspective. There is a further less developed section (section 1) which is identified purely from a landscape, and a rural settlement pattern perspective to maintain the rural character of the area.

The map overleaf provides the interpretation of these Development Plan provisions into spatial policy. Within these green Denser Development Groups Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) Policies are relevant, these are in particular (but not restricted to) those identified in the Current Policy Context section. Also whilst not comprehensive the following section on General Constraints identifies some key issues that require consideration in relation to development proposals.

Map 3 Lamington Policy Findings

Denser Development Groups: There is some remaining potential here but this needs to observe adequate spacing between houses. However proposals within the areas of established woodland adjacent to the road serving the mill at Lamington, and south of Crannach will be resisted.

Less Developed Sections: There is no potential for further development here. Separation between discrete cluster groups is required to maintain the character of the groups and prevent coalescence; there should be no further development here to maintain the area's rural character.

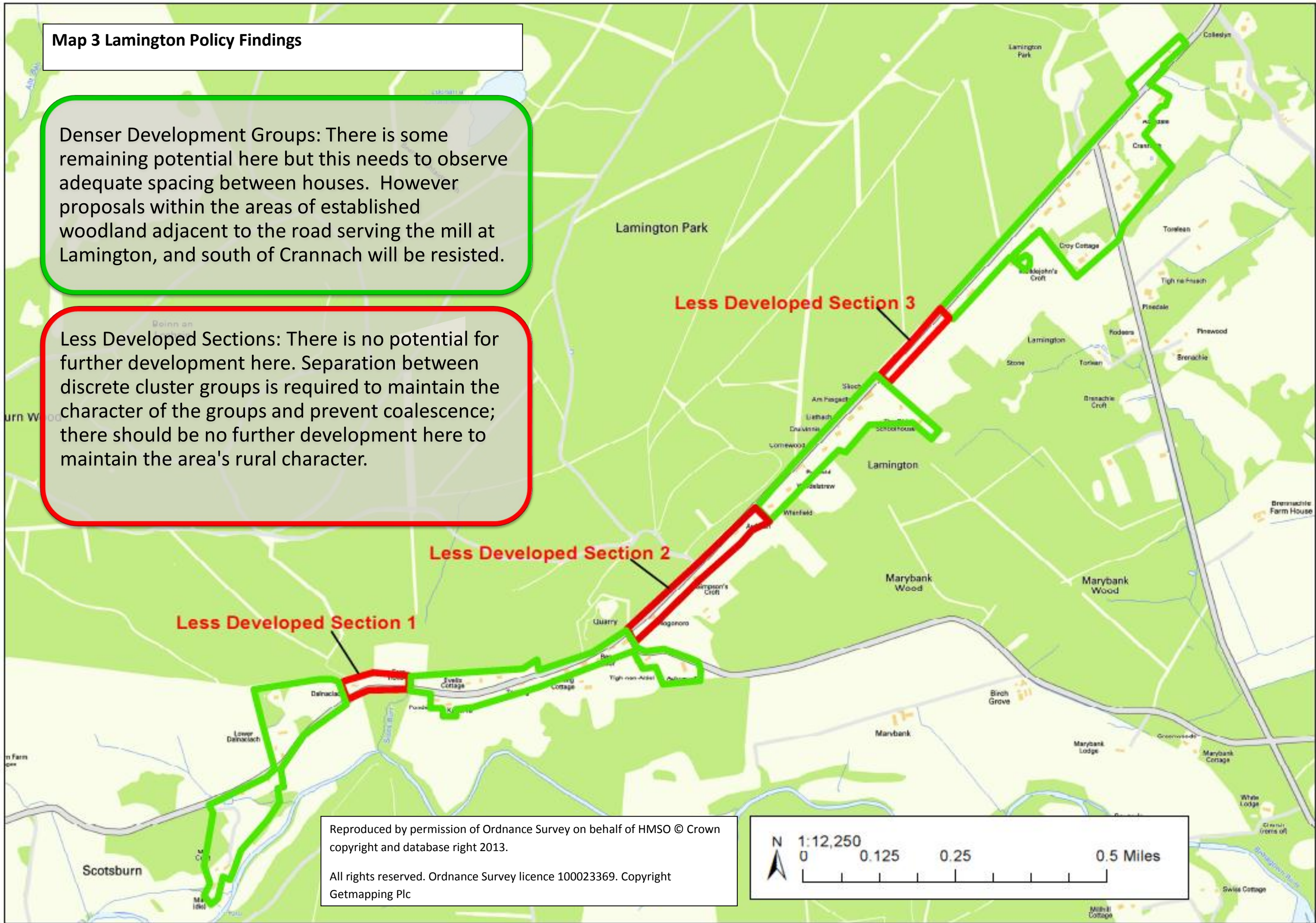
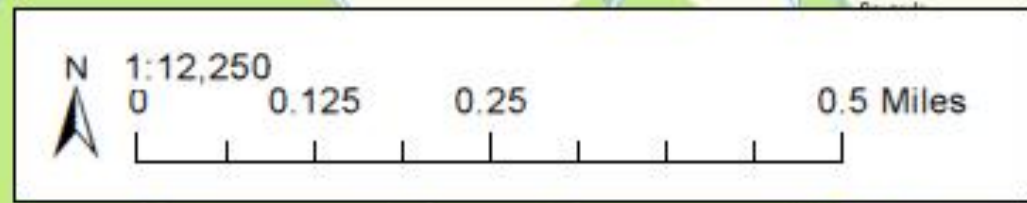
Less Developed Section 1

Less Developed Section 2

Less Developed Section 3

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General constraints

Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) Policies are relevant, these are in particular (but not restricted to) those identified in the Current Policy Context section. Also whilst not comprehensive the following are some key issues that require consideration in relation to development proposals in the green areas identified on Map 3 that have some remaining potential for development:

Access and road network: It is apparent that traffic on the public road serving and Lamington has increased to the extent that there is extensive edge overrun and the formation of informal passing places at a number of locations along the full route between Tain and Badachonacher. Whilst widening of the road to two-way is not considered necessary at this stage, the road would benefit from the provision of additional and improved passing places to address capacity concerns. Developer contributions will therefore be sought toward such with a minimum requirement of provision of a new passing place for each new house proposed or alternative equivalent improvements depending on location and scale of new development in relation to narrow sections of road, bends and distance to nearest passing place etc. This will be in addition to any service bay provided at the house access. As the road remains subject to the national speed limit, and is predominantly rural in character, the number of new individual accesses onto it should be minimised.

Trees and Woodland: There is a need to secure necessary setback from forest edge, need to minimise/avoid tree loss, secure appropriate native planting, and avoid areas of established woodland adjacent to the road serving the mill at Lamington and south of Crannach (see map 2), please refer to Trees, Woodland and Development Supplementary Guidance.

Housing design and boundary treatment: There is a requirement for houses to have traditional proportions, clean simple design, and larger houses should break down their mass, stone wall or post and wire fencing are acceptable boundary treatments. Please refer to Housing in the Countryside: Siting and Design Supplementary Guidance.

Waste Water treatment: Applicants will be required to submit evidence to Building Standards or the Scottish Environment Protection Agency that their proposal complies with the relevant legislation and will not result in or add to significant environmental or health problems.

Archaeology: Please refer to the general constraints map, and where there are Historic Environment Records consult the Council's Historic Environment Team for guidance.

Further Information

This guidance is intended to clarify and summarise the existing planning policy for the / Lamington area to help applicants, Planning Officers, Members and the local community to assess future development proposals and planning applications for new housing.

The advice provided here is by its very nature generic, and the specific issues associated with a particular proposal and its site require individual consideration based on a number of factors unique to that development.

Applicants and developers are therefore advised to seek early discussions with their local Area

Planning Office in order to ascertain how this document and its supporting planning policies/Supplementary Guidance relate to their specific proposal.

Contact details for the Highland Council's Area Planning Offices can be found here:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/planning-and-development-contacts.htm>

In order to enhance the level of service and standard of advice given to our customers, we offer [pre-application advice services](#). We have done this in order to enhance the level of service and standard of advice provided to our customers, and improve speed of delivery and consistency. Other than brief verbal advice which can still be given over the phone or in person at the planning office, all pre-application advice requests must now be made using this service (electronically or via post).