The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment

Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail na Gàidhealtachd an Iar agus nan Eilean Measadh Àrainneachd Ro-innleachdail

April 2016

Environmental Report

www.highland.gov.uk

Contents

Non-technical summary

Purpose and objectives of the Environmental Report

As part of the preparation of the Main Issues Report (the first formal stage in the preparation of the West Highland and Islands 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 any new plans, programmes and strategies (PPS) and for achieving the following aims:

- integrate environmental factors into PPS preparation and decision-making
- improve PPS and enhance environmental protection
- increase public participation in decision making
- facilitate openness and transparency of decision-making

The **Environmental Report** is an important stage in the SEA process. It outlines the contents of the Main Issues Report and highlights how the SEA process has influenced the proposals within the Plan.

Purpose and objectives of the Plan

The purpose of a Local Development Plan is to guide where different types of development can happen, and to contribute towards delivering the Scottish Government's aim for sustainable economic growth. The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WHILDP) aims to set a planning framework for the western parts of the Highland Council region. It is supported by the Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) which sets the strategic planning policy context for whole of Highland (with the exception of the Cairngorms National Park area). WHILDP sets out a vision which is based on four key outcomes which reflect the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement 3 (SOA3), Local Transport Strategy and the Highland Council's Programme.

Following its adoption WHILDP will replace the elements of the Wester Ross Local Plan (2006); West Highland and Islands Local Plan (2010) and Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (2007) which have been continued in force by The Town and Country Planning (Continuation in force of Local Plans) (Highland) (Scotland) Order 2012.

State of the environment summary

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

Biodiversity, flora, fauna
Some of the country's most important natural environments which are protected under international designations: SSSI (142), SAC (45), SPA (19), NNR (14), RAMSAR (3). Also 3,184 Ancient Semi-natural woodland sites; 9,561 Native Woodland and Nearly Native Woodland and 21 Tree Preservation Orders.

Climatic factors
• Areas which are at risk of coastal, fluvial and pluvial flooding have been taken into account with the use of SEPAs latest flood mapping data. • Highland Council Energy Consumption is 22, 250GWH per annum. • Protection of carbon sinks and stores, as well as carbon-rich soil and woodlands.

Population and Human health
• Population of Plan area in 2013 was 39,201 (17% of the Highland population). This is projected to is increase by 5% between 2012 and 2037.

Material assets
Within the Plan area there are: • Four housing markets: Ross and Cromarty West (part); Skye and Lochalsh; Lochaber and Badenoch and Strathspey (part) • In September 2014 there were 21,164 houses

- Current population density is 3.9 people per km^2 (compared to Highland at 8.7 people per km^2 and 67.4 for Scotland).

in the Plan area.
- There is less affordable housing stock within the plan area (16.2%) which compares with Highland (17.1%) and Scotland (23.6%). Lochaber has the highest percentage of affordable housing, with almost 1/3 affordable in Fort William. Affordable housing stock is generally lower in rural areas.
- The Plan area has a high percentage of second/holiday homes, with locally around 40% in some more rural settlements.
- Private renting is less common in Highland overall.
- Waste, transport and access are considered as material assets within the Plan area to be considered given the potential scale and location of development.

Soil

- Large areas of nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitats.
- There are no areas of prime agricultural land within the plan area. Soils are generally infertile and principally used for forestry, recreation, grass production and stock rearing.
- Crofting is commonplace in the plan area, with many landscapes and settlement patterns being characterised by crofting townships and individual crofts.

Cultural heritage

Within the Plan area there are:

- 5 conservation areas
- 661 Listed buildings (45 A Listed; 347 B Listed and 269 C Listed)
- 273 scheduled monuments

Water

- High number of rivers/lochs in good ecological condition.

Landscape

Within the Plan area there many of Scotland's and Highland's finest and wildest landscapes:

- 11 National Scenic Areas
- 15 Special Landscape Areas
- 16 Wild Land Areas

Air

- No Air Quality Management Areas in Plan area.
- Generally the air quality in the area is good. Significant effects to air quality are most likely in the Fort William area, as this is a relatively industrial town with a number of existing businesses having air stack discharges. It also has a relative concentration of traffic.

Expected Environmental Implications without the Plan

It is considered that without WHILDP there would be increasing adverse impacts on the environment from development. This is primarily because the existing planning policy does not provide sufficient guidance to direct development to the best locations. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan contains a number of general policies in relation to the strategic protection and safeguarding of the environment. However it relies upon up-to-date area specific development plans to provide a framework to support these policies in the local context.

Assessment approach and key findings

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

SEA Topic	SEA Objectives
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	To conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity and accord to the protection of valued nature conservation habitats and species.
Population and Human Health	To improve the living environment for all communities and promote improved health of the human population.
Soil	Safeguard the soil quality, geodiversity and improve contaminated land.
Water	Manage and reduce flood risk and protect the water environment.
Air	Safeguard the air quality by ensuring development could not adversely affect additional air discharges and traffic congestion.
Climatic Factors	Reduce greenhouse gases and contribute to the adaptation of the area to climate change.
Material Assets	Manage, maintain and promote sustainable use of material assets.
Cultural Heritage	Protect and enhance, where appropriate, the area's rich historic environment.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape.

The vision, main issues and approaches set out within the WHILDP Main Issues Report (MIR) have been assessed against these objectives. Baseline information on each of the SEA topics, shown in Appendix 2, 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 strategy and vision. A different matrix was prepared for the assessment of each of the sites included in the MIR which used site assessment criteria to assess both environmental and socio-economic factors. As part of the assessment we also identified relevant mitigation measures. Our approach to mitigation is based on the hierarchy of avoid, reduce, remedy and compensate. Where appropriate we also look to enhance environmental features. The full site assessments are shown in Appendix 5.

From the site assessments we have identified issues which may have a significantly positive and a significantly negative impact on the environment. This has then allowed us to provide specific mitigation measures which will help to minimise the negative impact and maximise the positive impact.

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 Main Issues Report and the Environmental Report will be subject to a 10 week consultation period starting from the 1st April 2016. The responses received will be reviewed and evaluated and the results will inform the preparation of the Proposed Local Development Plan and the Revised Environmental Report.

Introduction

Purpose of this Environmental Report and key facts

As part of the preparation of the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan, the Highland Council is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain PPS. SEA aims to:

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

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

Screening	Determining whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether an SEA is required
Scoping	Deciding on the scope and level of detail of the Environmental Report, and the consultation period for the report – this is done in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Environmental Report	Publishing an Environmental Report on the PPS and its environmental effects, and consulting on that report
Adoption	Providing information on: the adopted PPS; how consultation comments have been taken into account; and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS
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.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- provide information on the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan
- identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the PPS and its reasonable alternatives;
- provide an early and effective opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the public to offer views on any aspect of this Environmental Report.

Key facts about the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan

Name of Responsible Authority
The Highland Council (THC)

Title of Plan, Programme or Strategy
West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan

Subject (e.g. transport)
Town and Country Planning

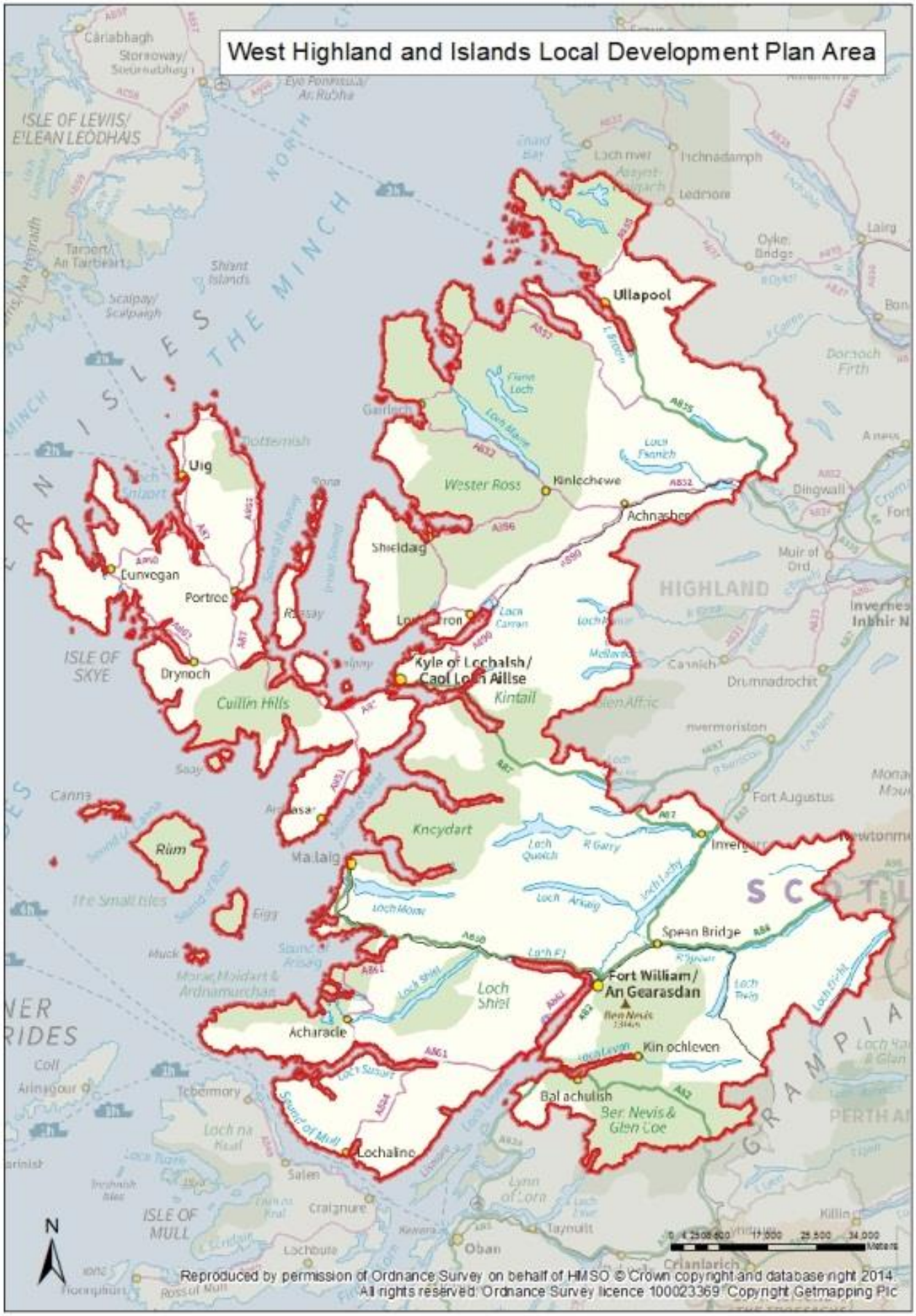
Purpose and or objectives of the PPS
To plan for and help guide the future use of land of the West Highland and Islands areas of Highland. It will give confidence to communities and developers in the future of settlements by determining where development should and should not take place. It will contribute towards sustainable development and tackling climate change.

What prompted the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (e.g. legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)
As a legal requirement of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, the Highland Council is preparing a West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan as the new land use plan for development of a scale and nature that are of local significance. The plan will cover the period from 2018 to 2028 but with a vision and principles extending to 2038. It will replace the Wester Ross Local Plan (2006), West Highland and Islands Local Plan (2010) and Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (2007).

Period covered by PPS
2018-2028 for land use allocations; 2018-2038 for scale and direction of growth

Frequency of updates
Within a 5 year cycle

Area covered by PPS
The West Highland and Islands Plan extends over an area of 1,148,571 ha. See the map on page 7.


West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan Area
Ullapool
Kinlochewe
Achnashee
Uig
Sheildaig
Dunvegan
Portree
Drynoch
Kyle of Lochalsh/
Caol Loch Aillse
Kintail
Cuillin Hills
ISLE OF SKYE
Rum
Knoydart
Mallaig
Fort William/
An Gearasdan
Spean Bridge
Acharacle
Kinlochleven
Balachulish
Lochaline
Tobermory
ISLE OF MULL
Oban
HIGHLAND
Fort Augustus
Drumnadrochit
Inverness
Dingwall
Wester Ross
Loch Shiel
Ben Nevis & Glen Coe
Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO © Crown copyright and database right 2014.
All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey licence 100023369. Copyright Getmapping Plc

SEA activities to date

The table below summarises the SEA activities to date in relation to the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan.

SEA Action/Activity	When carried out
Screening to determine whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects	N/A – The PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and requires an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. No Screening was undertaken and the plan moved straight to scoping
Scoping the consultation periods and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report	A Scoping Report was submitted in March 2015
Outline and objectives of the PPS	Outlined within the Scoping Report submitted in March 2015 (revised for Environmental Report 2016)
Relationship with other PPS and environmental objectives	Outlined within the Scoping Report submitted in March 2015 (revised for Environmental Report 2016)
Environmental baseline established	Outlined within the Scoping Report submitted in March 2015 (revised for Environmental Report 2016)
Environmental problems identified	Outlined within the Environmental Report 2016
Assessment of future of area without the PPS	Outlined within the Scoping Report submitted in March 2015 (revised for Environmental Report 2016)
Alternatives considered	Alternatives considered within the Environmental Report 2016.
Environmental assessment methods established	Outlined within the Scoping Report submitted in March 2015 (revised for Environmental Report 2016)
Selection of PPS alternatives to be included in the environmental assessment	Outlined within the Scoping Report submitted in March 2015 (revised for Environmental Report 2016)
Identification of environmental problems that may persist after implementation and measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects	Outlined within the Scoping Report submitted in March 2015 (revised for Environmental Report 2016)
Monitoring methods proposed	Alternatives considered within the Environmental Report 2016
Consultation timescales • Timescale for Consultation Authorities • Timescale for public consultation	Outlined within the Scoping Report submitted in March 2015 (revised for Environmental Report 2016)
Notification/publicity action	At time of publication of Main Issues Report

The Plan

Outline and objectives of the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan

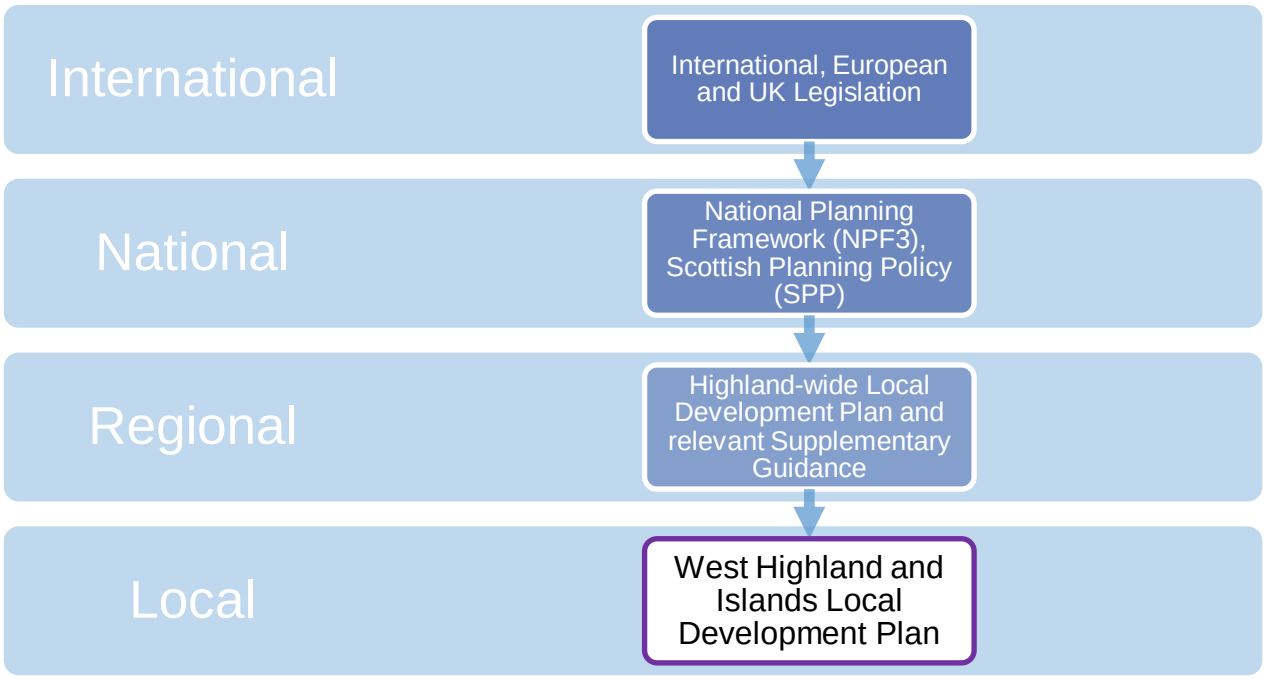
The Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) sets the strategic planning policy context for the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WHILDP). Based on the HwLDP strategy and the work which has occurred since its adoption the West Highland & Islands Local Development Plan sets a vision and spatial strategy for achieving the outcomes below:

- Establish a strong and diverse economy
- Better designed places with better access to facilities
- Resources better managed to conserve the environment and promote the built and cultural heritage
- Create a network of successful, sustainable and socially inclusive communities

Once adopted the WHILDP will replace parts of the Wester Ross Local Plan (2006), West Highland and Islands Local Plan (2010) and Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (2007) that for the time being are continued in force by The Town and Country Planning (Continuation in force of Local Plans) (Highland) (Scotland) Order 2012.

Relationship with other PPS and environmental protection objectives

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes an outline of the PPS relationships with other relevant PPS, and how environmental protection objectives have been taken into account in the PPS preparation. This section covers these issues and describes the policy context within which the PPS operates, and the constraints and targets that this context imposes on the PPS.



The key **environmental objectives** to be considered in the assessment and preparation of the WHILDP as identified in Appendix 2, include:

- **Biodiversity, flora and fauna**: Highland Council has a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.
- **Population and human health:** The Council must plan for changing demographics including forecasts of a declining and ageing population.
- **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.
- **Material assets:** Delivering sufficient numbers of houses together with sustainable waste management and appropriate infrastructure.
- **Water**: The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act provides a statutory framework for delivering a sustainable and risk-based approach to managing flooding. Highland Council 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.
- **Air**: The Air Quality Progress Report (2013) identified the air quality within the plan area as good. New development allocations must seek to safeguard air quality.
- **Soil:** Protecting and supporting the enhancement of carbon rich soils and good agricultural land such together with respecting designations such as North West Highland European Geopark and the Lochaber Geopark.
- **Cultural heritage**: National and regional policy sets out the principles which must be followed in order to care for, protect and enhance our historic environment.

- **Landscape**: The landscape is a defining feature of the area and the Council has a duty to have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural heritage of Scotland under the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967.

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.

Legislation, Plans, Programmes or Strategies	Summary of relevant Environmental Objectives to be reflected in West Plan
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity (2013) ⇓ Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat) ⇓ EU Birds Directive & EU Habitats Directive ⇓ Habitat Regulations ⇓ Sound of Arisaig SAC Management Scheme ⇓ Draft SAC Management Schemes for Sunart and Lochs Duich, Long and Alsh.	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. To maintain the favourable condition of the Sound of Arisaig European marine site.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 Protection of Badgers Act 1992	WHILDP will further conservation of biodiversity consistent with the proper exercise of its functions and protect and 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) ⇓ Highland Biodiversity Action Plan ⇓	Conserve species and habitats in the West Highland and Islands that are considered vulnerable or threatened on a local 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.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans	
Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006 Control of Woodland Removal Policy ⇩ Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy	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.
Scottish Planning Policy ⇩ Highland wide LDP ⇩ Green Networks Supplementary Guidance	WHILDP will deliver green networks, consisting of green spaces and green corridors within and around settlements, linking out to the wider countryside.
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.
Let's Make Scotland More Active' (2003) ⇩ THC Local Transport Strategy ⇩ Active Travel Masterplans	The LTS guides policy and investment on transport within Highland in partnership with other agencies. The LTS acknowledges Fort William has high volumes of traffic along with delays and congestion during commuter periods. This needs to be considered to remove barriers to development. To promote active travel THC in partnership with The Highlands and Islands Strategic Transport Partnership (HITRANS), a series of Active travel audits and masterplans have been prepared which will inform the WHILDP.
Soil	
Scottish Soil Framework (2009) Scotland's National Peat Plan (2014) ⇩ North West Highlands Geopark Lochaber Geopark	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. WHILDP will recognise the

	importance of these sites.
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. WHILDP will safeguard the water environment though the site assessment process, and where necessary by safeguarding specific water environments associated with land allocations.
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)  Marine (Scotland) Act 2010  Draft Scottish National Marine Plan  Regional Marine Plans	Aims to achieve good environmental status of the EU's marine waters by 2020 and to protect the resource base 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.
Air	
EU Air Quality Directive  The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2007)  THC Air Quality Progress Report (2013)	Air quality targets have been set at the European and UK levels. The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland sets objectives for Particulate Matter (PM), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), sulphur dioxide (SO2) and ozone (O3) amongst others. The Air Quality Progress Report suggests that while air quality is still good in this area some aspects are potentially declining and it identifies a small number of biomass developments in Fort William which may impact on air quality. Sites particularly recognised were the area at the "Alcan" facility, Strath Viach a rural site in a remote glen five miles from the nearest road and

	the BSW Timber Sawmill, Phase 3 at Corpach. WHILDP will ensure new development allocations could not result in additional air discharges and additional traffic congestion.
Climatic Factors	
Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 ⬇ Land Use Strategy : Getting the best from our land Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 & Draft Scottish National Marine Plan ⬇ Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change in Highland (2012) ⬇ Regional Marine Plans	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 per cent 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.
Material Assets	
Scotland's Zero Waste Plan ⬇ Scottish Waste Sites and Capacity Tool ⬇ Highland Council & Moray 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. Assessment should consider potential impact of new sites on the generation of waste and how the generation of waste will be prevented and waste diverted from landfill. This will be considered with the ZWP and its associated targets and policies.
Highland Council Local Transport Strategy Highland Council Core Paths Plan (2011) Active Travel Masterplan	The local transport strategy guides policy and investment on transport and aims to promote more sustainable forms of travel. The Core Paths Plan and Active Travel Masterplan provides a system of path in Highland which, as a whole, gives the public reasonable, diverse and sustainable access/connections throughout the plan area.
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

Our Place in Time. The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland (2014).	from the historic environment; and that the people of Scotland and visitors to our country value, understand and enjoy the historic environment.
Landscape	
European Landscape Convention European Landscape Convention 2004 Scotland's Scenic Heritage (1978) The Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas (2010) ⇩ Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011) Ross and Cromarty Landscape Character Assessment (1999) Skye and Lochalsh Landscape Character Assessment (1996) Lochaber Landscape Character Assessment (1998) Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Area Management Strategy	To promote the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, including natural, managed, urban and peri-urban areas, and special, everyday and also degraded landscape.
Wildness in Scotland's Countryside Policy Statement 02/03 Wildness Qualities Mapping Wild Land Areas (2014)	To protect the elemental qualities of some of Scotland's most remote mountain and coastal areas which many people derive psychological and spiritual benefits.
Scottish Planning Policy ⇩ Highland Coastal Development Strategy	Sets a vision for the sustainable use and development of the coast of Highland. Areas of unspoiled coast identified in the coastal classification within the Strategy has statutory development plans protection under the HwLDP policy. WHILDP will seek to protect and safeguard important coastal features including the 4 Nature Conservation Marine Protection Areas within the area.
Other Relevant PPS	
National Planning Framework 3 (2014)	The National Planning Framework 3 aims to guide Scotland's development over the next 20-30 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 (SPP) (including Circulars and PANs)	The 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.
Single Outcome Agreement 3 (SOA3)	Single Outcome Agreement 3 delivers a partnership approach to tackling issues which affect Highland. As part of this there are a number of National and Local Outcomes which have fed into the preparation of the four outcomes which make up the vision of the WHILDP.
Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) ⇓ Supplementary Guidance	To continue to provide a strong platform for economic growth, together with adequate levels of housing and community facilities while also protecting and conserving the built and natural environment. Green Networks Supplementary Guidance references that provision will be identified in each plan area. WHILDP will provide spatial mapping to identify and enhance the provision of green networks with the West Highland and Islands area.
Programme for the Highland Council 2012 – 2017: Working Together for the Highlands	The Council sets out 128 bold and ambitious actions across seven main themes: the economy; children and young people; caring communities; better infrastructure; better housing; empowering communities; and strong and safe communities. 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 outcome for the people of the Highlands.

By carrying out this analysis and the more general site analysis as part of the plan making process it has facilitated the development of a Local Development Plan which gives due consideration of the necessary plans, policies and strategies which may affect and those which may be affected by the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan.

Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

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". This section aims to describe the environmental context within which the PPS operates and the constraints and targets that this context imposes on the PPS.

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.

General

The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan covers an area of 1,148,571 sq km. This is 14.6% of Scotland.

This section of the Environmental Report is split by SEA Topic as defined by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. A table and maps showing baseline data can be found in Appendix 2.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Natural heritage designations cover a range of habitats in the West Highland and Islands. A break-down of the designations which lie within and/or intersect with the area are outlined in the table below. This reflects the range and scope of natural heritage designations across the region and highlights the characteristics of low intensity development and high quality marine and land natural resources, of which key habitats are seen to include mountain areas, low intensity agricultural land, native woodlands and marine and coastal zones.

Designation	Number of Sites	Area Covered (Ha)	Percentage of WHILDP area
Ramsar	3	3, 743	0.33
Special Protection Area	19	292,821	25.49
Special Area of Conservation	45	213,735	18.61
Site of Special Scientific Interest	142	250,211	21.78
National Nature Reserve	14	40,788	3.55
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland	3184	35, 123	3.06
Native Woodland and Nearly Native Woodland	9561	39, 352	3.43
Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites	726	7,635	0.66
Tree Preservation Order	21	146	0.01
Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas	4	218,045	18.98

The following habitats occur in Highland (many of which in the area covered by the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan) and are priority habitats in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK):

- Ancient and/or species rich hedgerows
- Blanket bog
- Blue mussel beds
- Calaminarian grasslands
- Maerl beds
- Martime cliffs and slopes
- Mesotrophic lakes
- Mountain heaths and willow scrub

- 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
- Mud habitats in deep water
- Mudflats
- Native pinewood
- Oligotrophic and dystrophic lochs
- Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land (brownfield sites)
- Ponds
- Purple moor grass and rush pasture
- Reedbeds
- Rivers
- Saline lagoons
- Seagrass beds
- Seamount communities
- Sheltered muddy gravels
- Tidal rapids
- Traditional orchards
- Upland calcareous grassland
- Upland flushes, fens and swamps
- Upland hay meadows
- Upland heathland
- Upland mixed ashwoods
- Upland oakwood
- Wet woodland

The protected species known to be found in Highland are listed in Appendix 2 of the Statutorily Protected Species Supplementary Guidance.

Many of the West Highland and Islands area's coastline is important for its marine environment; with much of it designated by areas of unspoiled coast, special protection areas, special landscape areas and four marine protected areas. WHILDP has sensitivity managed growth which respects, preserves and enhances these special characteristics.

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 West Highland and the Islands.

Green networks help to create natural, resilient places which function to create connections for both people and wildlife, enhancing accessibility, well-being and rural identity, to achieve high quality places. Green networks should be a facilitating feature which enables the delivery of high quality development which integrates with the natural features of the site to aid the protection and enhancement to a corridor connection to other spaces and to the wider countryside. Detailed mapping of green networks have been identified in the WHILDP at settlement scale and priorities identified at the lower growing settlement scale. This will enable better integration of this network to create environments more in balance for sustainable growth, to enhance the sense of place and the character of the area.

Population and Human Health

The population of the plan area in 2013 was 39,201. Its population density of 3.9 people per sq. km is significantly lower than the Highland and Scotland averages of 8.7 and 67.4 respectively. The area has witnessed steady growth over the past 30 years. However levels of growth differ throughout the Plan area – populations have grown in Lochaber and Skye whilst they have

remained fairly stagnant in Wester Ross. The population is projected to increase by 5% between 2012 and 2037. The percentage of people aged under 65 projected to continue to fall and there are likely to be notable increases in the 65 to 74 and 75 plus age groups of 33% and 132% respectively.

The area's overall population structure and density both present important challenges to address. An older population than the Highlands and Islands average with a rather skewed demographic presents a 'missing generation' of young people and an accelerating need for care of the elderly. With low and widely dispersed populations, many in remote scattered communities puts stress upon additional costs in the requirement and reinforcement of additional services and facilities; such as the provision of affordable housing, education and business sectors. In turn, this leads to detrimental effects upon community confidence, service sustainability and the promotion of quality living environments suited to a younger more diverse and balanced population profile.

To alleviate such challenges it will be important to manage future growth by building upon a structured pattern of organic growth through a settlement hierarchy, which bolsters sustainable economic growth and service provision in larger principal settlements. This will allow smaller settlements to have greater self containment safeguarding their unique rural identities yet allowing them to obtain better connections to nearby principle settlement facilities to serve a quality, diverse and sustainable lifestyle.

Health statistics from the 2011 Census show that the Plan area has a similar health profile to Scotland. Key findings were:

- On perception of general health, 83.3 per cent of the plan's population stated that their health was 'very good' or 'good'; and
- Some 19.2 per cent of the plan's population reported a limiting long-term illness or health problem that affected their day-to-day activities (Highland 18.6%, Scotland 19.6%).

To contribute positively to human health it will be important to consider care for the elderly and ensure day-to-day activities promote healthy lifestyles through influencing infrastructure, transport and design provision to establish well connected walking and cycling networks and proper provision/access of quality usable green spaces and networks to allow promotion of increased physical activity and active travel to tackle health issues.

Through various projects the plan aims to fully share in and contribute towards Highland prosperity, by encouraging in-migration and investment through promoting the area as an internationally renowned destination that provides a high end market for food and accommodation, aquaculture and more recently creative industries and the film industry. It is recognised that the advantages of the areas landscape is an essential draw for these activities, however these are often located in fragile areas which may be promoted and forced to grow, with the potential to lose these important characteristics and become more fragile. This highlights the plans key considerations to help ensure that human health and wellbeing are integral to the plan through the requirement to safeguard yet recognise opportunities in which development will be sensitive enough establish economic gain through the use of enjoyment of the areas natural resources and historic environment to inform and educate both locals and visitors to promote and safeguard the unique character and heritage of the region.

Soil

Given the scale of the Plan area and the diversity of its landscape and uses there are a wide range of soil types. Large parts of the plan area, particularly Skye and Wester Ross comprise of nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitats, Geological SSSIs and in addition un-notified Geological Review (GCR) sites, all of which are either likely to be of high conservation value or potentially high conservation value and have restoration potential. Two of

Scotland's three UNESCO European Geoparks lie within the Plan area. These are the Lochaber Geopark and a southern part of the North West Highlands Geopark.

A large proportion of the Plan area is characterised by Podzol soils which are generally at the lower end the land capability range, mostly ranging between class 5 and 6. There are no areas of prime agricultural land within the plan area. These soils are generally infertile and principally used for forestry, recreation, grass production and stock rearing. Severe climates also contribute to inhibiting agricultural capability, although with mechanical intervention it can be possible to allow seeding, rotavation or ploughing. Crofting is common place in the Plan area, much of the area is characterised by crofting townships and individual crofts.

Other soil types generally located closer to coastal areas comprise of a mixture of Gleys soils, Brown Earths and some areas of Blanket Peats. Some areas of Regosols soils are present, particularly in the mountainous areas of the Isle of Skye.

No areas of land within the Plan area have been identified as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. However potentially contaminated sites are expected to be found clustered near areas such as Ballachulish, Fort William, Kyle of Lochalsh, Portree, Kinlochleven and Ullapool where there would more likely be a historical legacy of industrial use, for example pulp mills, timber yards, smelters and landfills. In the wider predominately rural and mountainous areas of the Plan there are unlikely to be potentially contaminative sources given the difficult terrain for a historical industrial use to exist.

Water

The Plan area is dominated by rough, mountainous terrain and an abundance of marine and fresh waters which have dictated human settlement and activity. A high quality water environment is therefore central to supporting and sustaining the economic growth of the area as well as to providing general amenity and diverse opportunities for recreation including: sea fishing, fish farming, shellfish growing and angling, while some of the larger freshwater systems support salmon and trout fisheries. The area also has several large-scale hydropower schemes: Kerry, Storr Lochs, Skye, Giosla, Chilostair and schemes that serve the Alcan works, taking in Lochs Treig, Eilde Mor and the Blackwater Reservoir plus growing numbers of smaller, 'run of river' schemes and some recently installed onshore wind farms.

The quality of the water environment is generally good in the Plan area. River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) Area Management Plans provide valuable baseline information on the quality of water in Highland. The Plan area falls within the North Highland and Argyll advisory groups areas (2013 revised boundaries). The condition of surface waters reported in the Area Management Plans (original boundaries) that include the plan area found significant proportions to be of good or better status, particularly in West Highland. Achmelvich, the only designated bathing water in the Plan area, was classified as guideline (pass of Directive's Guidelines Standards) in 2014.

SEPA has identified ten 'potentially vulnerable areas' within the Plan area where the potential impact from flooding is sufficient to justify further assessment and appraisal of Flood Risk Management. These are concentrated largely in coastal areas, including north Skye, Ardamurchan, Fort William and Appin. These areas are particularly vulnerable to coastal as well as fluvial flooding and in some areas surface water flooding.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) will be implemented as an integral part of development proposals, as a more natural drainage method to avoid the problems associated with conventional drainage practice.

The strong historical links between the people, land and water in West Highland continues today. There is clear recognition that the high quality of life depends on high environmental quality, of which water is an integral part. The careful husbandry between the structure of vegetation cover to

form buffer zones along the banks of rivers and challenges of extreme weather events and flooding and coastal erosion issues will be important considerations whilst taking account of the locational requirements of different types of development and regeneration and brownfield priorities. This can be a challenge in that the majority of development in the plan area is concentrated on coastal zones, where fragile communities with many natural heritage designations exist. Planning for sustainable water use in this area requires considering the needs of communities at a time when they are under increasing economic pressure whilst, at the same time, preventing degradation of- and where opportunities arise improving- the environment on which they depend.

Air

The air quality in the West Highland and Islands is generally very good. There are no air quality management areas within the plan area and no known candidate sites. There are few major industrial developments within the plan area, with the exception of an aluminium smelter in Fort William and several ports and harbours. The plan is unlikely to allocate very large scale industrial developments that would have a significant negative effect on air quality.

In the most recent Air Quality Progress Report 2013, many Fort William sites were recognised as automatic monitoring sites. Such as the Alcan facility mentioned, a suburban site in a mixed residential and recreational area. In the next round of updating and screening assessment the BSW Timber Sawmill Phase 3 development at Corpach will also be reviewed. Fort William is also a recognised priority due to its traffic congestion at peak times.

3.18. Highland-wide LDP policies should be considered to determine the relationship between planning and air quality. However, a priority for WHILDP will be to consider the assessment of development sites to ensure no new business/industrial allocations could result in additional air discharges and significant mixed use and housing allocations which could result in additional traffic congestion problems.

Climatic Factors

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 that are thought to accelerate the Earth’s natural warming. Warming 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.

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). Forms of renewable energy may include provision of 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 potential for negative effects on natural and built heritage. 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.

Material Assets

For the purposes of the Environmental Report waste, access 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. In terms of access and transport site selection is determined by existing access and ability to tie into existing active travel connections listed in the table below, as well as new routes identified through active travel audits.

In terms of access and transport, core paths, long distance routes and national cycle networks must be considered alongside active travel masterplans to inform the most suitable location for development.

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (under Policy 70- Waste Management Facilities) sets out our commitment to the Government's Zero Waste Plan, Scottish Planning Policy and the Council's Municipal Waste Strategy. To meet the Zero Waste Plan additional operational waste Management Infrastructure Capacity required includes:

- 160,000 tonnes of additional capacity is needed;
- 80,000 tonnes of additional capacity to manage source segregated recyclables;
- 70,000 tonnes of additional capacity to manage unsorted waste; and
- 2,000,000 tonnes required to meet the 10 year landfill capacity.

In terms of access to the outdoor 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 the table below:

Access Resource	Distance (km)	%
Core Paths	890.53	2.95
Long Distance Routes	130.54	0.43
National Cycle Network	72.69	0.24
Rights of Way	3,362	11.2
Promoted	3,959	13.1
Other Paths	8,331	28
Roads	13,401	45
Total	30,147	100

Note: This information is Highland-wide

3.1. 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.

Cultural Heritage

West Highland and Islands has a distinctive cultural history. Settlement pattern, house designs and building materials are often unique to the area- emerging from a blend of Viking and Gaelic heritage that influenced the area over many centuries. Many landscapes have been significantly characterised by past settlement patterns including high numbers of inhabitants in-by land prior to the Highland Clearances of the 18th-19th century. Safeguarding and promoting crofting is a crucial element in preserving and enhancing the area's heritage. The Plan will not support projects which will impact negatively on cultural heritage in the region; this will include relation to loss, damage or changes in setting. A break down of cultural and built heritage features will be important considerations in the Plan area are shown in the table below.

Designation	Number of Sites	Area Covered (Ha)	Percentage of WHILDP Area
Listed Building	860	N/A	N/A
Scheduled Monument	274	473	0.04
Conservation Area	5	49	0.00
Inventory of Historic Battlefield	5	2, 347	0.20
Gardens and Designed Landscape	18	869	0.08
Historic Environment Record Site	30,874	8,643	0.75

Landscape

The plan area contains many of Scotland's finest landscapes. Much of it is dominated by rugged mountains, remote glens and long steep straths bordered by a coastline of sea lochs, with sections of unspoiled coast, combined these landscape features offer outstanding scenery. This is evidenced by the proportion of landscape designations within the Plan area – it contains over a quarter of Scotland's National Scenic Areas; almost 40% of Scotland's Wild Land Areas and over half of Highland's Special Landscape Areas. Three Landscape Character Assessments cover the Plan area – Ross and Cromarty; Skye and Lochalsh and Lochaber.

Many of Scotland's most iconic mountains, including Ben Nevis, Five Sisters of Kintail, the Cullins Hills, Liathach, Beinn Eighe and An Teanllanch, rise steeply from a patchwork of rocky moorland and indented coastline. Many of these mountains are reflected in the deep lochs that characterise the area. The coastal edge is highly varied, with an intricate mix of beaches, sea lochs, islands, headlands, inlets, woodlands and crofting settlements of traditional character. Some of the most important coastal features include its distinct views overlooking the Inner Hebrides chain, stretching from Mull through to Skye. The area also embraces mainland Britain's highest and westernmost extremities, Ben Nevis and Ardnamurchan Point. It includes such celebrated landscapes as Glencoe, Glen Nevis, Knoydart and the Small Isles.

The physical qualities, visual and landscape qualities and cultural heritage of the area result in a very diverse landscape which holds great significance to the regions unique identity and sense of place. This is a unique resource for both residents and visitors. Any development therefore has the potential to significantly affect these landscapes. This 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. The Plan has the potential for cumulative impacts at the landscape level, and this must be considered carefully in plan-making. A break down of the landscape features in the Plan area is shown in the table below.

Designation	Number of Sites	Area Covered (Ha)	Percentage of WHILDP Area
National Scenic Area	11	480,700	41.85
Wild Land Area	16	553, 085	48.15
Special Landscape Area	15	302, 503	26.34

Gaps/Unreliability of Baseline Data

Much data and information was available through the Consultation Authorities, the Scottish Government and there was a wealth of information on offer to the Highland Council to inform the baseline data for this Environmental Report. However, there are a number of 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;

- Collation of data has predominantly been gathered at a Highland wide basis, therefore it has proved difficult to disaggregate these to information that covers just the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan area; 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 the printed form in reports, books or even on websites.

Environmental problems

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 will affect or be affected by the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan and whether the PPS is likely to aggravate, reduce or otherwise affect existing environmental problems.

Environmental problems that affect the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan are similar to those which affect the Highlands as a whole. These environmental problems are identified in the table below. The environmental problems have been identified using the baseline data available in Appendix 2 and refined following consultation authorities responses at scoping stage.

The negative trends highlighted in this table are likely to continue if there are no planning policies to help guide development to appropriate locations subject to suitable planning conditions.

Table 3: Environmental Problems Relevant to West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan

SEA Issue	Potential Environmental Impact resulting from West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan	Implications for West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	Stress on biodiversity and loss of habitat resulting from development. 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 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 environments. The local development plan will identify areas of native woodland and ensure that the impact on these areas is fully considered in development proposals.
Population and human health	Potential for development 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 mat also put different pressures on services in more rural areas.	The local development plan will identify mitigation measures for each allocation and its alternative (where appropriate) to ensure key infrastructure provision as detailed does not impact on the natural environment to a negative extent. The local development plan will look at accommodation where a higher level of assistance is sought to be located close to local services.
Soil	Erosion. Potential contamination from waste storage. Impact of loss of good quality soils (including those identified	The local development plan will seek to deliver development in line with the policy approaches as set out in SPP and

	as prime agricultural and/or carbon rich) through development. Generation of waste soils.	the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.
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 to new and existing development. Reduced quality of watercourses and the coastal environment.	The local development plan will promote the development of sites which will lead to the sustainable use of use of resources, including water and the inshore environment. It will seek not to allocate sites which substantial sections of the site are at a medium to high flood risk and where sites are allocated to put in place mitigation.
Air	Potential for development to have a significant negative effect on air quality, particularly within the Fort William area.	The local development plan needs to appropriately assess the effects of each business and industrial site within the plan to ensure no additional air discharges or ensure mixed use and residential developments do not contribute to additional traffic congestion.
Climatic factors	Lack of sustainable design. Impact of sea level rising. Movement of species in the face of climate change.	The local development plan should seek to allocate sites which will aid the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through development of mixed use sites, and better active travel connections, where appropriate, will be identified as a requirement of development on sites. Ensure allocations avoid sites at risk from sea level rising or which might prejudice coastline management measures to respond to sea level rising.
Material assets	Increase travel/energy needs. The challenge of managing access to the natural environment.	The local development plan will allocate sites which link well with active travel opportunities. Ensure protection of paths and safeguarding of access rights. The local development plan will identify sites for the provision of waste management facilities within existing business and industrial areas. Land allocations will, where appropriate, contain requirements for the provision of recycling facilities.
Cultural heritage	Stress on the historical environment resulting from development.	The Local Development Plan will protect the historic environment through the application of the policy framework in the Highland wide Local Development Plan and avoid development which may have an adverse impact on historic environment features.
Landscape	Wind farm developments affecting scenery and wildlife/ impact on landscape character and cumulative impacts. Development of new housing and infrastructure. Poor siting and design eroding the quality of both townscapes and landscapes. Negative	The local development plan should encourage responsible development of all landscapes (as per the European Landscape Convention). Development should be sited and designed to fit with the landscape character, whilst local distinctiveness and identify are retained

	impact of development on traditional crofting settlement character. Loss of local landscape character. Attrition of wild land and wildness qualities. Impact of development on isolated coast.	and/or enhanced as detailed within the relevant Landscape Character Assessment. In crofting areas, developments should respect the character of the crofting settlements, particularly with regard to siting, scale and design.

Expected Environmental Implications without WHILDP

The WHILDP will provide a planning framework which will guide decisions on where development should and should not go for up to the next 20 years (but will be reviewed every five years). The existing West Highland and Islands Local Plan, Wester Ross Local Plan and Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan are now around five, eight and seven years old respectively and many of the proposals within it do not fit within the current context of the area nor were subject to the same level of environmental assessment. 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. In addition, the lack of a Local Development Plan would mean that the area may not benefit from the positive impacts, environmental and development opportunities, arising from an up-to-date planning framework of policies and land use allocations.

Assessment Approach and Methodology

Assessment of Environmental Effects

The baseline information from the previous sections is applied to consider whether the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects (positive and negative).

Alternatives

As part of the production of a Local Development Plan, a Main Issues Report must be produced detailing the different areas which will be covered by the Local Development Plan. The Main Issues Report sets out our preferred and non- preferred choices asking the question if any alternative sites wish to be considered.

For the purpose of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Council will not look at the alternative of not producing a West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan. It may be suggested that the already adopted Plan poses a reasonable policy alternative in each case will be not to change from the current position however, this is not considered a reasonable alternative. This has already been covered to an extent in the previous section; 'Expected Environmental Implications without the Plan.'

Vision and Spatial Strategy

The Vision and Spatial Strategy for the WHILDP has been developed following discussions with a wide range of partners and we think it supports both the Council's Programme and the Single Outcome Agreement 3. A reasonable alternative of favouring the pursuit of one or more outcomes ahead of the others, or to amend the wording of the outcomes, to suggest additional outcomes which are realistic and likely to be supported by others. This allows people to shape the future priorities for their area.

Preferred Approaches to the Main Issues

While general policies are contained within the Highland-wide Local Development Plan the following approaches are taken in assessing the main issues within the West Highland and Islands Local Development. A preferred approach has been suggested for the following approaches:

Settlement Hierarchy

This preferred approach supports the majority of new development within existing settlements and town centre locations. There are three main tiers in this settlement hierarchy defined as main settlements, growing settlements and other potential community plan settlements. This preferred policy approach would support development of the main and smaller settlement, protecting other areas from future growth and sustainable development. We assessed which settlements would fit into each tier based on the extent to which they:

- Have developed in recent years, i.e. the amount of development pressure from 2000-2014, assessed through planning applications and completions;
- Take account of the issues and placemaking priorities and development factors;
- Are likely to help sustain facilities in that settlement;
- Are compatible in terms of use, spacing, character and density with development within that settlement;
- Can utilise spare, existing capacity in the infrastructure network (education, roads, other transport, water, sewerage etc.) within that settlements or new/improved infrastructure could be provided in a cost efficient manner;
- Avoid a net loss of amenity/recreational areas significant to the local community; and
- Would not result in an adverse impact on any other locally important heritage feature (which may include a war memorial, burial ground, important public viewpoint/vista or open space).

Development proposals that are contained within main settlements are assessed as land use allocations defining the development use and officers initial preferences on whether the site is preferred or non-preferred for future development. Development proposals within growing settlements and potential community plans are assessed through a list of development issues and guiding placemaking priorities.

The alternative approach to this would be to less rigid and direct development to different locations. However, this approach would be unsustainable.

Economic Development Area's

This preferred approach supports all other strategic opportunities for business, tourism and industrial development outwith the main settlements. The plan identifies four economic development areas of Kishorn Yard, Ashaig Airstrip, Nevis Forest Mountain Resort and Inverlochy Castle Estate. We assessed these areas in the same manner of individual sites through the site assessment matrix.

Supplementary Guidance and Community Plan Requests

Following approval at Lochaber Area Committee on 25th August 2015 the Isle of Rum Community Land Use Plan and The Nevis Forest and Mountain Resort Masterplan became Interim Supplementary Guidance, pending full adoption alongside the WHILDP. The Nevis Forest Masterplan, an economic development area, was assessed against the site assessment matrix similar to all individual sites. The Rum Community Land Use Plan alongside other community plan requests were assessed through identification of the key environmental issues and future guiding placemaking priorities determining how and where future development should happen. The main issues report sets out which communities recorded an interest in producing their own community plan during the Call for Sites stage. WHILDP allows for further community plans to be carried forward as Supplementary Guidance using these issues and placemaking priority principles. More detailed environmental assessment of these proposals cannot be made at this stage because these communities, at present, have an undefined settlement boundary and unknown site-specific proposals. However, the communities are relatively small and any development proposals likely to be proportionate in scale.

Housing Requirements

This preferred approach seeks to earmark an appropriate amount of land for future housing development. The housing requirement of 2,177 houses over the longer term 20 year plan period and 1,331 houses within 10 years. This figure was derived by using calculations from the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2015, applying the high end of the nationally derived growth forecast limit in order to encourage inward migration and proposing an extra 20% allowance and then a 50% reduction to reflect the proportion of houses which may be built outwith earmarked sites. This overall lowered requirement meant a thorough assessment of sites was undertaken to ensure an appropriate selection of housing sites which cause no adverse detrimental effects on environmental impacts or the vitality or viability of the settlements.

Transport

This preferred approach seeks to concentrate development and active travel links within existing settlements as well as improvement to broadband which helps to reduce the need to travel. This approach is accompanied by a Transport Background Paper which suggests a number of strategic transport improvements for the new Plan.

Special Landscape Areas

The policy framework for Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) is set out within the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. What is up for debate here is the refining of the boundaries of these Special Landscape Areas. The most recent prepared local plans for the Plan area have already completed most of the fine tuning required. Therefore, the preferred approach is not to undertake any policy driven changes to the existing SLA boundaries. Instead, it is proposed only to eliminate any outstanding anomalies between existing National Scenic Area (NSA) and SLA boundaries. An alternative option is to leave the existing SLA boundaries completely unchanged.

Fort William Hinterland Boundary

This preferred approach seeks to protect areas of countryside close to the large center of Fort William. The principle of this approach was set out in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan which states that the boundaries will be reviewed through the Area Local Development Plans. The preferred option is to retain the hinterland boundary with unaltered boundaries.

Assessed Sites

Over 250 sites for either development or protection and approximately 60 comments in relation to the future vision for the area were submitted to us when a WHILDP “Call for Sites and Ideas” which was carried out in early 2015. In addition to this we considered all existing adopted local plan sites to determine whether they should be brought forward into the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan.

The sites which are identified as preferred and non-preferred in the Main Issues Report have been assessed as part of the SEA process. We have had wide ranging and early input to these assessments from a variety of sources such as Access Officers, Transport Planners, Contaminated Land Unit, Flood Team and from the Consultation Authorities.

Analysis of Preferred Sites

The table below shows a break down of the number and total areas of the preferred sites within the Main Issues Report.

Preferred site use	Number of sites	Across this number of settlements	Preferred sites total area by use (ha)
Housing	53	20	410.69
Business	23	12	244.84
Industry	12	9	89.75

Community	13	5	91.45
Mixed Use	56	19	326.46
Long Term Development	10	9	71.04

Assessment methodology

The preferred options above have been assessed against the range of environmental issues set out in Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Comments from the Consultation Authorities (SNH, SEPA and The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) have been taken into account regarding the methods, scope and level of detail in this Environmental Report.

As described in the Scoping Report for the West Highland and Islands LDP we are using an assessment matrix for the assessment of the preferred options for the strategy and vision and policy approaches. To assess the sites we used a specific detailed Site Assessment Matrix. The matrices also identify appropriate mitigation measures for each of the sites. Following the publication of the Scoping Report we were asked to trial a pilot site assessment matrix developed by the Consultation Authorities. Following discussions with the Consultation Authorities, some amendments were made to the pilot matrix and we agreed on an adapted matrix that would be used.

Detailed matrices can be found in Appendix 3 (Vision and Spatial Strategy) and Appendix 5 (Site Assessments). The site assessment matrix and checklist is shown in Appendix 6. Each site assessment contains a map showing the location of the site which has been assessed. In some instances the extent of land assessed is greater than the land shown on the map. This may be due for example to mitigation which removes some land from the site in order to minimise negative effects.

SEA Objectives

A number of objectives were identified at scoping stage and have been refined following comment from the consultation authorities.

As air quality within the West Highland and Islands is very good it was originally scoped out of assessment however, following responses from the Consultation Authorities on the Scoping Report it was scoped in.

SEA Topic	SEA Objectives
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	To conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity and accord to the protection of valued nature conservation habitats and species
Population and Human Health	To improve the living environment for all communities and promote improved health of the human population
Soil	Safeguard the soil quality, geodiversity and improve contaminated land
Water	Manage and reduce flood risk and protect the water environment
Air	Safeguard the air quality; ensure development could not result in additional air discharges and additional traffic congestion.
Climatic Factors	Reduce greenhouse gases and contribute to the adaptation of the area to climate change
Material Assets	Manage, maintain and promote sustainable use of material assets

Cultural Heritage	Protect and enhance, where appropriate, the area's rich historic environment
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape

The Vision and Spatial Strategy and policy approaches have been considered against a range of key considerations which are set out in Appendix 3.

In the site assessments (Appendix 5) a series of questions were answered. For clarity the table `below sets out which question relates to which SEA objective:

SEA Objective	Site Assessment Consideration Question
1	5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f
2	10a, 10b, 10c
3	9d, 11b, 12a, 12b
4	1a, 1b, 1c, 3a, 3b, 4, 9b, 9c
5	2a, 7a
6	2a, 2b 4, 6, 7a, 11a, 11d, 13a, 13b, 13c
7	5c, 5d, 5f, 8, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, 10a, 10b, 10c, 11c
8	5c, 16a, 16b, 16c, 16d, 16e,16f,16g,16h
9	4,5a, 5b, 5c,5e,5f, 10b, 14, 15a, 15b, 15c

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Appraisal
When undertaking this Strategic Environmental Assessment, The Council has been conscious of the overlap in work between the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Habitats Regulations Appraisal work which is required to be undertaken. With this in mind SEA objective 1 and the site assessment work will be used to inform an initial screening to help identify which elements of the plan may have an effect on a European designated site either alone or in-combination.

A Habitats Regulations Appraisal Record will be produced through partnership working with Scottish Natural Heritage and other relevant agencies, and published with the West Highland and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan.

Assessment of the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan
The vision, spatial strategy, main issues and approaches contained within West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan have been assessed using the framework and methodology described earlier in this Environmental Report. A summary of the assessment findings are shown below, the full findings are shown in Appendix 3 for the Vision/Spatial Strategy and Appendix 5 for the individual sites. During the drafting of the vision and policy approach options, assessments were carried out against the SEA Objectives, to show where potential improvements could be made to the preferred approaches.

West Highland and Islands Vision and Spatial Strategy – The Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+	+	+	+	**+**
2	=	+	++	++	**++**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
6	+	+	++	+	**+**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	**+**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
9	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**

The vision is based on four outcomes linked to National priorities and Single Outcome Agreement 3. Economic growth 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 2 and 6.

West Highland and Islands Vision and Spatial Strategy- An Alternative Approach- To favour the pursuit of one or more outcomes ahead of others, to amend the wording of the outcomes, or to suggest additional outcomes which are realistic and likely to be supported by others. To direct development to different locations or to suggest different types of development.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	??	**??**
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	??	**??**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	??	**??**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	??	**??**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	??	**??**
6	+/-	+/-	+/-	??	**??**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	??	**??**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	??	**??**
9	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**??**	**??**

This approach is only an alternative as we believe the plan outcomes and spatial strategy should be co-ordinated to provide a comprehensive approach to delivering sustainable growth, alongside the promotion and safeguarding of the area's identity and resources. These outcomes should work in tandem to provide the best planning solutions i.e. economic development delivered with a developer

contribution to enhance the wildlife corridor and connections. Favouring the pursuit of only certain outcomes has no potential to contribute to any significant positive change.

Settlement Hierarchy- The Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+	+	+	++	**++**
2	+	++	++	++	**=**
3	=	=	=	=	**=**
4	+	+	+	+	**+**
5	=	=	=	=	**=**
6	+	++	++	++	**+**
7	=	=	=	=	**=**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
9	**=**	**=**	**=**	**=**	**=**

This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objectives 1, 2 and 6. It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Housing Requirements- The Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
2	+	+	+	+	**+**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
6	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
9	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**

This policy approach is likely to have significant positive environmental effects on SEA Objectives 2. It is not anticipated that there will be any negative environmental effects from this policy approach.

Housing Requirements- An Alternative Approach – To apply a lower growth forecast within the nationally derived range of scenarios.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
6	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
8	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**

Given the nature of this issue and that it will be applicable across the whole area and is very much dependant on the individual circumstances of the settlement and the developer requirements for each site it is possible that there will be positive effects however at this high level they can not be determined. These will be identified through the site assessments and included in the main issues report as headlines and in the proposed plan as requirements.

Transport- The Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	=	=	=	**=**
2	+	+	+	++	**++**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	**+**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
6	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
9	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**

This approach is likely to have positive environmental effect in relation to SEA Objective 2, in terms of accessibility and access to facilities. Due to the nature of the issues there are many SEA Objectives where the impact is currently unknown and dependant upon specific settlements and sites. However, the application of this issue against plan outcomes and spatial strategy and with the general policies of the Highland wide Local Development Plan, it is unlikely that there would be any significant negative effects.

Transport- An Alternative Approach- favour the pursuit of one or more transport improvement ahead of others; suggest a different, more efficient way of tackling transport issues; suggest additional transport issues and solutions which are realistic and likely to be supported by others.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
6	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**=**
9	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**=**	**=**

Given the nature of this approach it is very much dependent upon the individual circumstances of the alternative approach. It is anticipated that all proposals should be assessed against general policies of HwLDP.

Special Landscape Areas-The Preferred Approach- Carry forward the existing SLA boundaries with one minor change to the Ardgour SLA.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	=	=	=	**=**
2	=	=	=	=	**=**
3	=	=	=	=	**=**
4	=	=	=	=	**=**
5	=	=	=	=	**=**
6	=	=	=	=	**=**
7	=	=	=	=	**=**
8	=	=	=	=	**=**
9	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**

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.

Special Landscape Areas– An Alternative Approach - Carry forward all the SLAs unchanged from the HwLDP.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	=	=	=	=
2	=	=	=	=	=
3	=	=	=	=	=
4	=	=	=	=	=
5	=	=	=	=	=
6	=	=	=	=	=
7	=	=	=	=	=
8	=	=	=	=	=
9	=	=	=	=	=

It is unlikely that this approach will have an effect on any of the SEA Objectives as there will be no changes to any of the boundaries. The protective policy approach from the Highland wide Local Development Plan will be applied to the same area as present.

Fort William Hinterland Boundary- The Preferred Approach- Outlined in Spatial Strategy.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	=	=	=	=
2	=	=	=	=	=
3	=	=	=	=	=
4	=	=	=	=	=
5	=	=	=	=	=
6	=	=	=	=	=
7	=	=	=	=	=
8	=	=	=	=	=
9	=	=	=	=	=

Given that the hinterland boundary sets the boundary for where and when a particular policy approach will be applied then it is unlikely that this preferred approach – as it is the same as which is currently used – will have any effect on the SEA objectives without the application of the policy of the Highland-wide Local Development. It maybe that contractions or expansions of the area may have an environmental effect however this will be assessed as reasonable alternatives.

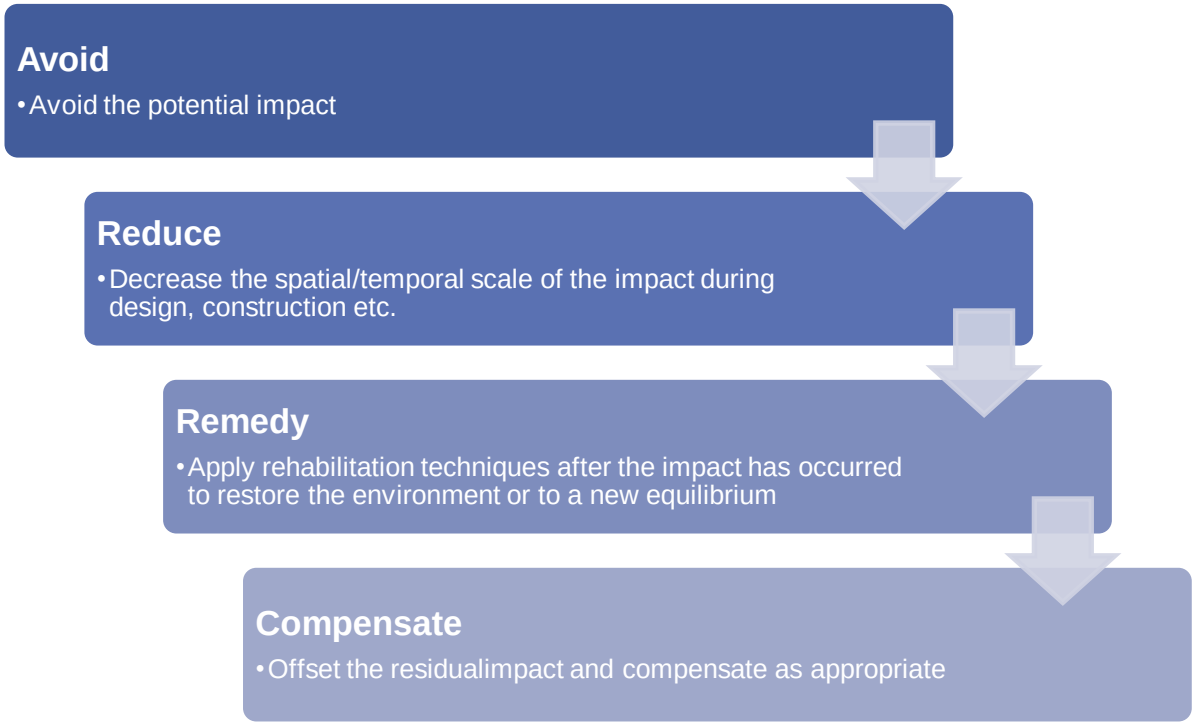
Fort William Hinterland Boundary- An Alternative Approach- To suggest minor amendments to the boundary.

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
2	=	=	=	=	**=**
3	=	=	=	=	**=**
4	=	=	=	=	**=**
5	=	=	=	=	**=**
6	=	=	=	=	**=**
7	=	=	=	=	**=**
8	=	=	=	=	**=**
9	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**

The effect on any of the SEA objectives is currently unknown, with potential for both positive and negative effects for many of the SEA objectives including biodiversity and landscape character. All proposals will be assessed against the policies within the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and therefore there is likely to be any significant negative effects.

Mitigation Measures

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:



In the first instance the Plan 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 particular uses on a site or not preferring the site as a development opportunity. Where this is has not been achieved, the provision of the Plan 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 a detailed site assessment for each of the site options outlined in the Plan, we have been able to identify mitigation measures required for each specific site.

Some of the most common mitigation measures identified through this SEA are highlighted below. The Site Assessments have been beneficial in highlighting mitigation measures such as:

- Undertaking flood risk assessments and avoiding areas at risk of flooding
- Undertaking of protected species surveys for sites where protected species are known to be present
- Undertaking of archaeological survey work where sites are known to have archaeological interest
- Compensatory planting where a site involves loss of trees
- Maximising of active travel links to reduce reliance on car use
- Minimising waste, both during construction and operational phases
- Sensitive design and layout to avoid negative impact on the settings of Listed Buildings
- Appropriate buffers/setbacks to maintain the integrity of natural heritage designations
- Design to take advantage of passive solar gain
- Setting requirements for development setbacks from particular features or constraints.

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 developer requirements. In all cases standard mitigation which is set out in general policies of Highland-wide Local Development Plan and will be secured to ensure that the negative environmental effects can be minimised and the positive environmental effects can be maximised.

The overall Plan impact, mitigation measures and how the mitigation will be actioned may be subject to change and could be further updated in the revised environmental report which will accompany the proposed plan.

Assessment of cumulative and synergistic effects

In this section the Council have sought to assess the cumulative effect of the plan as a whole. This would take into consideration the realisation of the vision and spatial strategy in combination with a level of development commensurate with the preferred sites contained within the Main Issues Report.

Cumulative impacts may be seen where all or some of the local development plan sites are brought forward therefore we have carried out three cumulative assessments which consider different level of development being brought forward. These assessments will be undertaken using the same methodology as used for the assessment of the vision/spatial strategy and policy approaches.

The cumulative assessments will consider the vision/spatial strategy in combination with the application of the policies and policy approaches of the plan and a high (100% of all preferred development sites), medium (60% of all preferred development sites) and low (30% of all preferred development sites) level of development which may be brought forward.

The results of these assessments can be found in Appendix 4 – Cumulative Assessments and are summarised below:

Cumulative Assessment 1 – 100% of all preferred development sites built out

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
2	+/-	+	+	+	**+**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
6	+	+	+	+	**+**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
9	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**

It is anticipated that by considering the vision/spatial strategy along side the general policy approach and all of the preferred sites being built out, there will be some positive effects on the environment in terms of delivery of green infrastructure and reducing the need to travel. However there may also be negative effects in relation to landscape impact but this could be mitigated on a site by site basis.

Cumulative Assessment 2 – 60% of all preferred development sites built out

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
2	+/-	+	+	+	**+**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
6	+	+	+	+	**+**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
9	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**

It is anticipated that by considering the vision/spatial strategy along side the general policy approach and a medium level of development of the preferred sites, there will be some positive effects on the environment in terms of delivery of green infrastructure and reducing the need to travel. However there may also be negative effects in relation to landscape impact but this could be mitigated on a site by site basis. These positive and negative effects may not be as significant given the lower level of development which may come forward.

Cumulative Assessment 3 – 30% of all preferred development sites built out

SEA Objective	Timescale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
2	+/-	+/-	+	+	**+/-**
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
6	+	+	+	+	**+**
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
8	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	**+/-**
9	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**

It is anticipated that by considering the vision/spatial strategy along side the general policy approach and a low level of development of the preferred sites, there will be some positive effects on the environment in terms of delivery of green infrastructure and reducing the need to travel. However there may also be negative effects in relation to landscape impact but this could be mitigated on a site by site basis. These positive and negative effects may not be as significant given the lower level of development which may come forward.

Summary of Site Assessment Findings

This section summarises the key findings from the assessment of site options in the Main Issues Report. The full assessments can be found in Appendix 5.

Sites with Significant Effects

The table below sets out the sites which have been identified as having a significant effect (either positive or negative) on the environment. Also included is the relevant SEA question(s) which is significantly effected:

Settlement	MIR Site Reference	SEA Question(s)	Significant Positive Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Positive Effect Post-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Post-mitigation
Ullapool	UPH1	2a; 15b; 15c;		x		x
Ullapool	UPH2	2a; 11a; 15b	x		x	
Ullapool	UPH3; UPH6	5c; 8; 9d; 11c; 15a; 15c	x	x		x
Ullapool	UPM1	10c	x			
Ullapool	UPM2	2a; 3a; 10c;	x	x		
Ullapool	UPB1	5c; 10c	x	x		
Ullapool	UPI1	2a; 5c		x		x
Ullapool	UPI2	10c	x			
Ullapool	UPLT1	2a; 5c; 11c; 15b; 15c		x		x
Ullapool	UPH4	2a; 9d		x		
Ullapool	UPH5	2a;		x		
Ullapool	UPM3	2a; 6		x		x
Gairloch	GLH1	2a; 12a		x		
Gairloch	GLH2	2a; 12a		x		
Gairloch	GLM1	2a	x			
Gairloch	GLM2	11a	x			
Gairloch	GLM3	2a; 14	x	x		
Gairloch	GLH3	5f; 11c; 14; 15b; 15c		x		x
Gairloch	GLH4	2a; 9d	x			x
Gairloch	GLH5	2a; 6, 11c; 12a; 14; 15b; 15c		x		x
Poolewe	PEH1					
Poolewe	PEH2					
Poolewe	PEH3					
Poolewe	PEI1	13a; 15b;		x		x
Poolewe	PEH4	10a; 14; 15a		x		x
Lochcarron	LCH1	5c; 5f; 8	x	x		x
Lochcarron	LCH2	8	x			
Lochcarron	LCH3	8	x			

Settlement	MIR Site Reference	SEA Question(s)	Significant Positive Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Positive Effect Post-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Post-mitigation
Lochcarron	LCM1	8; 10a; 10b	x			
Lochcarron	LCM2	8; 11c; 15b; 15c	x	x		x
Lochcarron	LCLT1	8; 9d; 11c; 15a	x	x		x
Lochcarron	LCH4	2b; 8; 12b	x	x		x
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLH1; KLLT1					
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLH2	14		x		
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLH3	5c		x		
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLM1					
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLM2	2a; 15b	x			
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLM3	5d		x		
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLM4	2a	x			
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLI1	3a		x		
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLH4	5c		x		x
Kyle of Lochalsh	KLC1	1b; 2a; 3a; 5b; 5c; 5f; 9d; 14	x	x		x
Mallaig	MAH1 & MAH4	11c; 12b; 15c		x		
Mallaig	MAH2, MAH3, MAH6, MAH7	11c; 12a		x		
Mallaig	MAH5	9a; 10a; 11c; 12b; 15c		x		
Mallaig	MAM1	3a; 6; 13a		x		
Mallaig	MAM1	7a; 9e; 10c; 11a; 15b; 16h	x			
Spean Bridge	SBH1	5e; 13a; 15a		x		
Spean Bridge	SBH1	15b			x	
Spean Bridge	SBH2, SBH3 & SBLT	5e; 11c; 13a		x		

Settlement	MIR Site Reference	SEA Question(s)	Significant Positive Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Positive Effect Post-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Post-mitigation
Spean Bridge	SBH2, SBH3 & SBLT	15b			x	
Roy Bridge	SBH4	5e; 15a		x		
Roy Bridge	SBH4	15b			x	
Spean Bridge	SBM1	2a	x			
Spean Bridge	SBM1	5c; 5e; 11c; 13a		x		
Spean Bridge	SBM1	15b			x	
Roy Bridge	SBM2	2a; 15b	x			
Spean Bridge	SBH5	2a; 15b	x			x
Roy Bridge	SBH6	5e; 15c		x		
Roy Bridge	SBH6	13a; 15a	x			
Roy Bridge	SBH6	15b			x	
Spean Bridge	SBM3	5c; 5f; 11c; 13a		x		
Roy Bridge	SBB2	5c;5e; 15a;15b		x		
Fort William	FWH1	2b	x		x	
Fort William	FWH1	11c		x		
Fort William	FWH3	11c; 12b		x		
Fort William	FWH5 & FWLT2	10c	x			
Fort William	FWH5 & FWLT2	11c		x		
Fort William	FWH7	11c		x		
Fort William	FWM1	9e	x			
Fort William	FWM1	11c; 12a		x		
Fort William	FWM2	11c		x		
Fort William	FWM3	2a; 9e; 10c; 11a	x			
Fort William	FWM4, FWM5 & FWM6	2a; 10c; 15b	x			
Fort William	FWB1	3a		x		
Fort William	FWB1	16H	x			
Fort William	FWB2	3a		x		x
Fort William	FWB2	9a		x		
Fort William	FWB3	9a; 11c; 12a; 14		x		

Settlement	MIR Site Reference	SEA Question(s)	Significant Positive Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Positive Effect Post-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Post-mitigation
Fort William	FWB3	9e	x			
Fort William	FWB4	3a		x		
Fort William	FWB5	10c		x		
Fort William	FWI1 & FWB6	2b; 9e; 13c	x			
Fort William	FWI1 & FWB6	5c; 9a		x		x
Fort William	FWI1 & FWB6	9d; 11b; 11c; 13a;	x			
Fort William	FWI2	9e	x			
Fort William	FWI2	11c; 12a		x		
Fort William	FWC1	9a		x		
Fort William	FWC1	10a; 11c	x			
Fort William	FWC2	3a		x		
Fort William	FWC3	6; 9d	x			
Fort William	FWLT	2b	x		x	
Fort William	FWLT	9a; 11c	x			
Fort William	FWLT	9d		x		x
Fort William	FWH8	2b	x		x	
Fort William	FWH8	9b		x		x
Fort William	FWH8	11c		x		
Fort William	FWM7	3a		x		x
Fort William	FWM7	9d; 16a; 16c		x		
Fort William	FWM8	7b; 9a; 9d		x		
Fort William	FWM9	3a		x		
Fort William	FWM9	9d		X		x
Strontian	SRH1; SRB1; SRC1	2a			x	
Strontian	SRH1; SRB1; SRC1	7a; 8; 10c; 15b;16h	x			
Strontian	SRH1; SRB1; SRC1	11c		x		
Strontian	SRH1; SRB1; SRC1	2a			x	
Strontian	SRB2; SRH2	2a; 8; 10c; 15b	x			
Strontian	SRB2; SRH2	5c		x		
Strontian	SRH3	2a;11c; 15b		x		

Settlement	MIR Site Reference	SEA Question(s)	Significant Positive Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Positive Effect Post-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Post-mitigation
Strontian	SRH3	8	x			
Kinlochleven	KNH1	2a; 15b	x			
Kinlochleven	KNH2; KNM1	2a; 2b; 9e; 10c; 11a; 13c; 15b	x			
Kinlochleven	KNH2; KNM1	15b		x		
Kinlochleven	KNB1; KNM2	3a; 5c; 5f; 9d; 13d; 14		x		
Kinlochleven	KNLT	5c; 5f; 11c		x		
Kinlochleven	KNLT	10c			x	
Kinlochleven	KNH3	2a	x			
Kinlochleven	KNH3	3a; 10a		x		
North Ballachulish	BHH1 & BHH4	6	x			
North Ballachulish	BHH1 & BHH4	11c		x		
North Ballachulish	BHB1	2a; 15b	x			
Glenachulish	BHM1 & BHM2	11c; 14		x		
Glenachulish	BHH5	5c		x		
Glencoe	GCH1 &GCB2	15b			x	
Glencoe	GCH2; GCH3 & GCB1	15b			x	
South Ballachulish	BHH2	9d; 15b	x			
South Ballachulish	BHH3	3a; 5f		x		
South Ballachulish	BHH3	10a			x	
South Ballachulish	BHH3	10b; 10c	x			
South Ballachulish	BHH3	15b			x	
South Ballachulish	BHB2 & BHB3	2a			x	
South Ballachulish	BHB2 & BHB3	11c; 14		x		
Staffin	SFH1	8	x			
Staffin	SFH2	8	x			
Staffin	SFH3	2a; 8	x			

Settlement	MIR Site Reference	SEA Question(s)	Significant Positive Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Positive Effect Post-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Post-mitigation
Staffin	SFH4	2a; 8	x			
Staffin	SFH4	3a		x		
Staffin	SFM1	8	x			
Staffin	SFM2	3a; 14		x		
Staffin	SFM3	8	x			
Dunvegan	DVH2	8	x			
Dunvegan	DVH2	11c		x		
Dunvegan	DVH3 & DVM1	5c; 11c; 14		x		
Dunvegan	DVH3 & DVM1	8; 10c	x			
Dunvegan	DVM2	2a; 6; 8; 10c; 15b	x			
Dunvegan	DVM2	5c; 11c		x		
Dunvegan	DVM3 & DVM4	2a	x		x	
Dunvegan	DVM3 & DVM4	6; 10a			x	
Dunvegan	DVM3 & DVM4	8; 9e; 15b	x			
Dunvegan	DVM3 & DVM4	11c; 14		x		
Dunvegan	DVM5	2a; 13a		x		
Dunvegan	DVM5	9e; 11a	x			
Dunvegan	DVB1	2a; 11c; 13a; 15b; 15c		x		
Dunvegan	DVB1	9e	x			
Dunvegan	DVM6	9e; 15c	x			
Dunvegan	DVM7	15b		x		
Dunvegan	DVC1	2a	x		x	
Dunvegan	DVC1	6; 9e; 10c	x			
Dunvegan	DVC1	11c		x	x	
Dunvegan	DVM7	15b		x		
Portree	PTM1	12a		x		
Portree	PTM6	6	x		x	
Portree	PTM7	6	x			
Portree	PTM9	3a		x		
Portree	PTI1	12a		x		
Portree	PTI2	12a		x		
Portree	PTLT1& PTH6	11c		x		x
Portree	PTH7	9d		x		x
Portree	PTH8	12a		x		

Settlement	MIR Site Reference	SEA Question(s)	Significant Positive Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Positive Effect Post-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Post-mitigation
Portree	PTM11	3a		x		
Portree	PTM11	9d		x		x
Portree	PTLT2	11c		x		x
Kyleakin	KAH1	15b	x			
Kyleakin	KAB1	3a		x		x
Kyleakin	KAB1	15c	x			
Kyleakin	KAI1 & KAI2	12a		x		x
Kyleakin	KAH3	15b		x		
Kyleakin	KAH3	15c		x		
Kyleakin	KAH4	15c		x		
Kyleakin	KAB2	3a		x		x
Broadford	BFM1	2a; 9d; 15b		x		
Broadford	BFM1	10c	x			
Broadford	BFM2	10a; 10c	x			
Broadford	BFM3	10a; 10c	x			
Broadford	BFM4 & BFC1	9e; 11a	x			
Broadford	BFM6 & BFM8	2a; 15b	x			
Broadford	BFM6 & BFM8	11c		x		
Broadford	BFM7	2a; 15b	x			
Broadford	BFI1	2b; 6; 9e	x			
Broadford	BFI1	11c; 13a		x		
Broadford	BFLT	9d		x		x
Broadford	BFLT	10a; 11c		x		
Broadford	BFH3	9d		x		
Broadford	BFH3	12b		x		x
Sleat	ESH1 & ESH2	6	x			
Sleat	ESH1 & ESH2	15c		x		x
Sleat	ESM2	2a; 6; 15b	x			
Sleat	ESM3 & ESM7	2a	x			
Sleat	ESM3 & ESM7	3a & 5c		x		
Sleat	ESM4	9d; 9e	x			
Sleat	ESM4	13a		x		
Sleat	ESM5 & ESM9	6	x			
Sleat	ESM5 & ESM9	11c		x		

Settlement	MIR Site Reference	SEA Question(s)	Significant Positive Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Pre-mitigation	Significant Positive Effect Post-mitigation	Significant Negative Effect Post-mitigation
Sleat	ESM6	15c		x		
Sleat	ESM6	16h			x	
Sleat	ESH3	6	x			
Sleat	ESH3	7a		x		x
Sleat	ESH3	9d		x		
Sleat	ESM8	5c; 5f; 11c; 16e		x		
Sleat	ESM8	6	x			

Minimising and/or Maximising the Significant Effects

We have been able to minimise and/or maximise significant effects by, where possible, identifying additional mitigation measures and through our site preference approach. Significantly negative impacts may result in listing mitigation measures which will avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate or if these cannot be secured then our non-preference for the site. Significantly positive effects may be maximised through additional enhancement mitigation such as siting and design requirements and identifying environmental features which can be made into positive features within the development.

Influence of SEA on Each Settlement

The SEA process has played a central role in informing the site preferences and overall strategy for each settlement within the Main Issues Report. Below is a summary of the findings and how these have influenced the overall proposals for each main settlement.

Ullapool

Non Flooding SEA Criteria

Like many West Highland main settlements, Ullapool has few unconstrained development site options as it is hemmed in by loch and hill. Accordingly, most site options have been limited to the lower slopes of the surrounding hillsides and poorer agricultural land. The narrow and predominantly linear strip of developable land also makes proximity to facilities and active travel opportunities a challenge. The Council preferences reflect these constraints. Wherever possible we have preferred the sites with least landscape and woodland impact and that are most accessible to facilities. For example, sites UPM3 and UPH6 are non preferred on the basis of distance from facilities and possible woodland / visual impact. Industrial sites UPI1 and UPI2 don't need to be as close to facilities and should be separated from housing. The potential housing site at Lower Braes (UPLT1) has been later phased and would only be appropriate for lower density development given its distance from the village centre. The Council's preferences for housing land at Morefield (UPH1, 4 and 5) have been influenced by land availability issues but discussions with the landowner continue to concentrate short term development on the flatter land which will, other things being equal, have less risk of an adverse visual/landscape impact. The Council believes that the potential adverse visual/landscape impact of sites UPH1 and UPH3 can be mitigated with appropriate siting, design and additional landscaping. Other adverse impacts such as loss of greenfield land cannot be mitigated but can be minimised and with no other suitable, less environmentally constrained, alternative sites then difficult choices require to be made.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment

Ullapool is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Luckily these flood risk areas are concentrated along the principal river corridor and coastal margins which are either incised and/or separated from development by the raised beach feature. Accordingly, the only potential

development site overlapping an area of known flood risk is the Harbour Trust's proposal for enhanced seaborne access on the village waterfront ((UPM2). The Council recognises that only water based uses should be supported within this site's flood risk area. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit any site with steep slope and high rainfall will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Poolewe

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Poolewe has fewer physical constraints to development than other main settlements within the Plan area and therefore development site options are more diverse. However, the presence of the Wester Ross National Scenic Area provides an overlapping and general (if not over-riding) constraint to development. Accordingly, the Council has preferred sites closest to the village centre and its facilities and/or to existing and compatible uses. For example, housing sites PEH1-3 are within the visual envelope of existing development and very close to the village centre and its facilities. Industrial site PEI1 is more distant from the village but simply allows for the possible, minor expansion of existing, established and similar uses at that location. Otherwise, the settlement development area boundary encloses the established in bye croft land and its associated scattered settlement pattern. The one non-preferred site (PEH4) is central but prominent in views across the river and village centre. Its development could have an adverse visual/landscape effect.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Poolewe is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. All the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk. Conversely, the Council has non preferred site PEH4 because of its proximity to the River Ewe and its associated flood risk area.

Gairloch

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Like many West Highland main settlements, Gairloch has few unconstrained development site options as it is hemmed in by loch and hill. Accordingly, most site options have been limited to the lower slopes of the surrounding hillsides and poorer agricultural land. The narrow and predominantly linear strip of developable land also makes proximity to facilities and active travel opportunities a challenge. The presence of the Wester Ross National Scenic Area provides an overlapping and general (if not over-riding) constraint to development. The Council preferences reflect these constraints. Wherever possible we have preferred the sites with least landscape and woodland impact and that are most accessible to facilities. For example, sites GLH3-5 are non preferred on the basis of greater landscape/visual prominence, distance from village facilities and/or woodland loss. Otherwise, the sites lie within the outer visual envelope of the village, round off its form and/or have a locational imperative for being there (i.e. site GLM2 for expanded harbour facilities). Localised loss of deep peat is not seen as a significant adverse residual effect because the sites are limited in size and within the boundaries of the village. The Council believes that other potential adverse effects can be mitigated by suitable developer requirement text at the next Proposed Plan stage.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Gairloch is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk because of significant vertical or horizontal separation from the coast and rivers. Accordingly, the only preferred development site overlapping an area of known flood risk is the proposal for enhanced harbour facilities at the existing pier (GLM2). The Council recognises that only water based uses should be supported within this site's flood risk area. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit any site within such a high rainfall area will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Lochcarron

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Lochcarron is another West Highland main settlement that has few unconstrained development site options as it is hemmed in by loch and hill. Accordingly, most site options have been limited to the lower slopes of the surrounding hillsides and poorer agricultural land. The narrow and predominantly linear strip of developable land also makes proximity to facilities and active travel opportunities a challenge. Unfortunately, the most available (in terms of ownership and crofting control) and serviceable land lies at the northern end of the settlement. This offers reasonable proximity to the village's facilities but most of the land is sloping and relatively prominent on the northern approach to the village. Loss of greenfield land is an inevitable impact as brownfield sites don't exist. Development of site LCH1 will result in a loss of woodland with amenity and natural heritage value but the site benefits from a recent extant planning permission so a preference to the contrary would not, in the short term at least, be enforceable. Site LCH4 is non preferred for reasons of loss of in bye croft land and potential adverse visual / landscape impact. The Council believes that other potential adverse effects can be mitigated by suitable developer requirement text at the next Proposed Plan stage.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Lochcarron is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk because of significant vertical or horizontal separation from the coast and rivers. Overlaps with smaller watercourses can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit any site within such a high rainfall area will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Kyle of Lochalsh

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Kyle of Lochalsh suffers from severe physical development constraints which limit feasible development site options. These options require one or more of the following: redevelopment of a brownfield site requiring relocation of existing uses and/or decontamination; blasting of rock outcrops; removal of pockets of deep peat; reclamation of land below high water mark; negotiation of adequate trunk road access, and/or; mitigation of visual prominence issues. Accordingly, all site options are likely to result in adverse environmental effects only some of which can be mitigated. The two worst (maximum adverse effects post mitigation) sites of KLC1 and KLH4 have been non preferred because of these effects. The latter would result in woodland loss and has other significant access and existing use constraints. The former involves significant seaward reclamation including the direct effects on the water environment that entails. The adverse effects of the preferred sites can be mitigated to a degree for example by minimising the loss of greenspace or compensatory enhancements within the site or closeby. Natural heritage interests affect the coastal site options which will require adequate developer requirement "conditioning" at the next Proposed Plan stage.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Kyle of Lochalsh is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Fortunately, most of the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk because of significant vertical or horizontal separation from the coast and significant watercourses. Overlaps with smaller watercourses can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Three sites, two of which are preferred, are subject to coastal flood risk and will involve either water based uses only (KLI1) or the possibility of reclamation behind a suitable sea defence (part of KLM3 and KLC1). Both of the latter sites have feasibility and environmental challenges but could provide much needed parking and development land close to the village centre with the sustainability advantages that offers. Otherwise flood risk should not be a

significant issue for the growth of the village albeit any site within such a high rainfall area will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Staffin

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Staffin has fewer physical constraints to development than other main settlements within the Plan area and therefore development site options are more diverse. However, the presence of the Trotternish National Scenic Area provides an overlapping and general (if not over-riding) constraint to development. Accordingly, the Council has preferred housing and mixed use sites closest to the village centre and its facilities where that land is known to be free of ownership and crofting constraints. For example, housing sites SFH1-3 are within the visual envelope of existing development and very close to the village centre and its facilities. SFM3 has been non-preferred because of its very poor ground conditions which are likely to involve the removal of an area of deep peat, and its uncertain availability for development. Site SFM2 is preferred due to its lack of crofting tenure restriction, its proximity to the primary school, and because the Council believes that its landscape / visual impact can be mitigated with careful siting and design. Site SFM1 is for harbour enhancement opportunities only given the landscape and road access constraints that affect the site.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Staffin is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. All but one of the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk. Conversely, the Council has non preferred site SFH4 because of its proximity to a watercourse and its associated flood risk area. That part of site SFM1 within the coastal flood risk area is identified only for water based uses / enhancement of harbour facilities.

Dunvegan

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Dunvegan has fewer physical constraints to development than other main settlements within the Plan area and therefore development site options are more diverse. However, it is surrounded and overlapped by many natural heritage designations that provide a restrictive development context. The high quality of the internal in bye croft land and the reluctance of crofters to make that land available provide an important and often insurmountable barrier to which sites can be developed. Accordingly, the Council has preferred housing and mixed use sites closest to the village centre and its facilities where that land is known to be free of ownership and crofting constraints. For example, housing sites DVH1-3 and DVC2 are within the visual envelope of existing development and very close to the village centre and its facilities. However, we have also preferred more peripheral sites (with active travel connection challenges) because of crofting tenure restrictions (i.e. only the common grazings or non crofting tenure land will be made available for comprehensively serviced, larger scale development) or because there is an existing use / locational reason for that site. For example, industrial and business development could reasonably make use of the brownfield quarry site. Pier related employment development needs to be located close to the existing pier. It is sensible to prefer a potential use on a site with the competitive commercial advantage of good loch views. Similarly, expansion of facilities to support the tourism offer of Dunvegan Castle, need to be close to that asset. Sites have been non-preferred for reasons of ownership and marketability (sites DVH4 and DVM7). Sites DVM2, DVM6 and DVB1 raise potential adverse landscape / visual impact issues but the Council believes these can be mitigated with careful siting, landscape and design mitigation.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Dunvegan is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk because of significant vertical or horizontal separation from

the coast and significant watercourses. Other flood risk proximity issues (for sites DVB1, DVH3 and DVH2) can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Similarly, coastal sites DVM3 and DVM4 are for water based harbour uses and/or will have a vertical separation from mean high water springs.

Portree

Non Flooding SEA Criteria

Portree, as a small town covering a larger geographic area, has many development site options despite its physical constraints which include steeper slopes to the west and east, Portree Bay to the south, deeper peatland to the north, and incised, wooded river valleys flowing through the settlement. These factors together with land availability, serviceability, and proximity to existing and planned facilities have driven the Council's site preference / selection decisions. Fortunately a town also has urban, brownfield, infill opportunities, which other things being equal, offer the prospect of fewer adverse environmental effects than peripheral greenfield sites. Accordingly, many of the short term preferred sites are consolidation opportunities within the existing village form. The potential adverse effects of such sites tend to be on contamination or built heritage particularly given the listed building and conservation area issues within the village centre of Portree. For the most part, the Council believes these can be mitigated by suitable developer requirement text at the next Proposed Plan stage. Sites have been non-preferred for various reasons including consideration of environmental effects. For example, PTH6 is non preferred for poor active travel connectivity reasons, PTH8 for woodland loss reasons, PTM10 for disturbance of an excessive area of deep peat, and PTM11 for potential adverse natural heritage impact reasons. However, Portree will require a new expansion area once suitable infill opportunities have been exhausted. The Council suggest two options but prefers the one between Home farm and Achachork because of land availability issues despite the non preferred alternative having a marginally better balance of environmental effects. Loss of greenfield land and some peat disturbance is inevitable given that this is a rural village surrounded by peatland. The potential to utilise heat from any Energy from Waste plant built at the former landfill site is factored in to site preferences.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment

As stated above, Portree's river valleys and coastal edge and their associated flood risk areas provide key physical constraints. The River Leasgeary and its connection with Portree Bay is perhaps the most notable of these. Its flood plain has influenced the decision to non prefer sites along its course. For example sites PTM11, PTH7 and PTM10 have been non preferred despite being adopted local plan alllocations. More positively, significant watercourses have been identified as existing and potential future green networks. A short term concentration on consolidating the settlement on brownfield infill opportunities should also minimise any additional flood risk. Site PTM9 at the harbour is within the coastal flood risk area but is scaled back from that previously allocated and would be for harbour related uses only within the flood risk area.

Kyleakin

Non Flooding SEA Criteria

Kyleakin is another West Highland main settlement that has few unconstrained development site options as it is hemmed in by sea, hill and the A87 trunk road. Accordingly, most site options have been limited to infill opportunities within these limits and the visual envelope of the village. The narrow and predominantly linear strip of developable land also makes proximity to facilities and active travel opportunities a challenge. Fortunately, there are available, serviceable and relatively flat sites within the village form which is why KAH1 and 2 have been preferred for housing. KAH3 and 4 have issues with ground conditions and trunk road prominence and have therefore been non preferred. Altanavaig quarry to the west of the village benefits from an adopted local plan allocation, an extant permission for mineral extraction and is partially developed. It is preferred for continued industrial use because of its strategic economic significance and competitive locational advantages of deep sea access, existing pier, partial visual containment, and trunk road access. Its

development however may pose environmental risks and it will therefore require suitable developer requirement "conditioning" at the next Proposed Plan stage.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Most potential development sites within Kyleakin are free of flood risk. However, it is a coastal village and its coastal inlet the Obbe also presents a flood risk. Accordingly, adopted local plan sites have been cut back to avoid flood risk areas for example KAB2 is non preferred and KAI1 and KAH2 have been shaped to avoid significant flood risk areas. However, challenges remain that the Council believes can be tackled by suitable developer requirement "conditioning" at the next Proposed Plan stage. Site KAB1 is a brownfield village centre site which, visually, would benefit from redevelopment. It lies adjacent to the harbour so could accommodate a use that takes cognisance of coastal flood risk (e.g. storage back up land for the harbour). Similarly, site KAI1 has a fluvial flood risk running through it but much of the watercourse is man made to the extent that the sand and gravel workings have shaped it. It should be possible to develop around this risk and/or to mitigate its impact.

Broadford

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Broadford has fewer physical constraints to development than other main settlements within the Plan area and therefore development site options are more diverse. However, it is overlapped by natural heritage designations and bordered by areas of deep peat and Broadford Bay and these features provide a restrictive development context. Similarly, the quality of the internal in bye croft land and the reluctance of crofters to make that land available provide an important and often insurmountable barrier to which sites can be developed. Accordingly, the Council has preferred housing and mixed use sites closest to the village centre and its facilities where that land is known to be free of ownership and crofting constraints. For example, housing sites BFH1 and 2 are outwith crofting restriction, central and part serviced. Previously allocated sites BFH3 and BFH4 have crofting tenure issues and are therefore non preferred. Longer term village expansion at Campbell's Farm (BFLT1) requires deep peat removal and should only be considered when more suitable alternatives have been exhausted. Most mixed use sites are already allocated within the adopted local plan and are very central to the village and its facilities. Some are brownfield and most are visually self contained. More distant allocations are preferred within the forestry plantation north west of the settlement but these have an established landscape framework to mitigate visual impacts and will be low impact in terms of servicing requirements.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Broadford is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk because of significant vertical or horizontal separation from the coast and significant watercourses. Other flood risk proximity issues (for sites BFM, BFM2 and BFH2) can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage.

Sleat

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
The south eastern coast of Sleat has locational advantages which has fuelled its growth but is still constrained by a myriad of environmental and other factors including its natural heritage value, prominent slopes, limited servicing capacity and crofting activities. The last of these, crofting tenure, is possibly the most important single constraint to comprehensively serviced development. In bye land will not be released for larger developments and therefore alternative sites have to be found. The Council's choice of preferred sites follow this logic. Accordingly, housing and mixed use development are concentrated as close as possible to existing and proposed facilities and employment on land not in crofting tenure. Sites ESM4 and ESM5 take advantage of the hub of existing and likely future facilities and employment at Kilbeg. Site ESH1 takes advantage of the

proposed distillery at Knock. Sites ESM1-3 take advantage of the hub of activity at Armadale ferry terminal. All these sites also benefit from proximity to the improved A851 and the commercial visibility it offers. Sites have been non preferred for sound environmental reasons. Site ESM8 raises potential woodland and built heritage issues. Site ESM7 would involve the loss of important woodland. Site ESM9 has drainage issues. Finally, sites ESH2 and ESH3 have visual / landscape prominence issues which suggest they should not be favoured.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Sleat is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk because of significant vertical or horizontal separation from the coast and significant watercourses. Coastal flood risk affects sites ESM2 and 3 at Armadale but the former can be tackled via development
set-back and the latter is for water based harbour uses (expansion of recreational sailing facilities).

Mallaig

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Like Kyle of Lochalsh, Mallaig suffers from severe physical development constraints which limit feasible development site options. These options require one or more of the following: redevelopment of a brownfield site requiring relocation of existing uses and/or decontamination; blasting of rock outcrops; removal of pockets of deep peat; reclamation of land below high water mark; negotiation of adequate trunk road access, and/or; mitigation of visual prominence issues. Accordingly, all site options are likely to result in adverse environmental effects only some of which can be mitigated. The Council's choice of preferred sites has been largely driven by reducing visual / landscape prominence, serviceability, locational imperative, and minimising the loss of greenfield land and disturbance to peatland. Therefore, housing sites are preferred at the less prominent and more serviceable locations MAH1-3 and non preferred at MAH4-7. Business /tourism land needs to be close to the A830 tourist route so is preferred at Glasnacardoch (sites MAB1-2) save the area which affects woodland (site MAB3). Similarly, harbour expansion needs to be adjoining the existing harbour.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Mallaig is constrained by fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood risks and all of these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped coastal and fluvial flood risk because of significant vertical or horizontal separation from the coast and significant watercourses. Coastal flood risk affects site MAM1at the harbour but the site is for harbour related uses only. Overlaps with smaller watercourses can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit most sites are sloping and lie within such a high rainfall area that they will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Spean Bridge & Roy Bridge

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Spean and Roy Bridge are overlapped by a geological constraint, significant river valleys (and their associated flood risk areas), areas of important broadleaf woodland and trunk road and rail routes. Steeper ground adjoins on all other sides. Accordingly, developable site options are limited. The Council's preferences have been driven by these factors and a desire to direct new development as close as possible to existing village facilities. Many old local plan allocations are still appropriate and are supplemented by sites with an extant planning permission. Hence, housing sites SBH1-4 and mixed use sites SBM1-2 have been preferred. Potential adverse environmental effects have influenced the decision to non prefer SBH6 (loss of greenspace and distance to village facilities),

SBB2 (loss of woodland), SBH5 (possible contamination and flood risk) and SBM3 (loss of woodland, peat disturbance and distance to facilities).

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Spean and Roy Bridge are constrained by fluvial and pluvial flood risks and these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped flood risk because of vertical or horizontal separation but overlaps can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage (e.g. sites SBM1 and SBM2). Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit most sites are sloping and lie within such a high rainfall area that they will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures. Site SBH5 is non preferred for this reason.

Fort William

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Fort William, as Highland's second largest urban area covering a larger geographic area, has many development site options despite its physical constraints which include steeper slopes to the north and east, Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil to the west, and generally deep peatland along the glen floors. These factors together with land availability, serviceability, proximity to existing and planned facilities, and severance / capacity issues caused by the trunk road and rail networks have driven the Council's site preference / selection decisions. Fortunately a town also has urban, brownfield, infill opportunities, which other things being equal, offer the prospect of fewer adverse environmental effects than peripheral greenfield sites. Accordingly, many of the short term preferred sites are consolidation opportunities within the existing village form many of which benefit from adopted local plan allocations and/or permissions. Sites have been non-preferred or later phased for various reasons including consideration of environmental effects. For example, to minimise greenfield peat land loss and/or increase proximity to settlement facilities, expansion sites at Corpach, Blar Mor and Upper Achintore have been curtailed or phased for the longer term. By contrast new, brownfield opportunities have been identified and preferred at the surplus school sites.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Fort William's glens and their associated river flood plains plus the coastal flood risk connected to Lochs Linnhe and Eil have influenced the decision to non prefer sites. For example, the previously allocated major mixed use development at the waterfront (FWM9) has been non-preferred and in its place, water based facilities are promoted (FWB4). This would remove the need for significant reclamation and land raising, and the emphasis will be on improving reception facilities for recreational sailers, cruiseliner visitors, seaplane patrons etc. Similar changes have been made to clarify that the Corpach marina proposal is water based (FWB1 water based and FWM7 non preferred) and that the tailrace (FWB2) is for water based uses only. More positively, significant watercourses have been identified as existing and potential future green networks. A short term concentration on consolidating the settlement on brownfield infill opportunities should also minimise any additional flood risk. Most of the other sites are free of mapped flood risk because of vertical or horizontal separation but overlaps can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the town albeit most sites are sloping and lie within such a high rainfall area that they will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Strontian

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Like many West Highland main settlements, Strontian has few unconstrained development site options as it occupies a small part of the glen floor either side of the Strontian River hemmed in by Loch Sunart to the south and hillslopes elsewhere. Accordingly, most site options have been limited to the undeveloped parts of the glen floor that are serviceable and otherwise unconstrained.

Thankfully, such land is available and central to the community's facilities. One alternative housing site suggestion (SRH3) has been made on the edge of the village overlooking Loch Sunart. The Council have non preferred this option due to its distance from the village centre, visual prominence and potential loss of woodland. Otherwise the preferred sites raise few insurmountable issues other than woodland which will require to be retained in situ or replaced by compensatory provision on site or closeby.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Strontian is constrained by coastal, fluvial and pluvial flood risks and these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped flood risk because of vertical or horizontal separation but overlaps can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit some sites are sloping and lie within such a high rainfall area that they will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Kinlochleven

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
Kinlochleven suffers from several physical development constraints which limit feasible development site options. These options require one or more of the following: redevelopment of a brownfield site requiring relocation of existing uses and/or decontamination; mitigation of fluvial flood risk; resolution of poor ground conditions; reclamation of land below high water mark; and/or; mitigation of visual prominence issues given its location within the Ben Nevis and Glencoe National Scenic Area. Accordingly, the Council's preferences centre on brownfield, infill opportunities within the existing visual envelope of the village. Two sites are non preferred (KNM2 and KNH3) for environmental effects reasons. KNM2 represents a flood risk and compatibility issues with the adjoining sewerage infrastructure. KNH3 would represent the loss of locally important greenspace and woodland.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment
Kinlochleven is constrained by coastal, fluvial and pluvial flood risks and these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are brownfield and free of mapped flood risk because of vertical or horizontal separation from the coast and major watercourses but overlaps can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Site KNM2 has been non preferred for coastal flood risk reasons. Site KNB1 risk area will be for water based use only. Any flood risk effect at site KNH3 is addressed by it not being preferred. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit some sites are sloping and lie within such a high rainfall area that they will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

North Ballachulish & Glenachulish

Non Flooding SEA Criteria
North Ballachulish and Glenachulish suffer from several development constraints which limit feasible development site options. These constraints include: mitigation of visual prominence issues given its location within the Ben Nevis and Glencoe National Scenic Area; removing crofting restrictions on the release of land for development; forming suitable access to the trunk road network, and; resolving sewerage capacity restrictions. Accordingly, the Council's preferences centre on sites that are close to the community's facilities or have a locational imperative for being there. Housing site BHH1 lies close to the primary school, business site BHB1 lies adjacent to the existing industrial estate and BHM1-2 where the presence of a very attractive outlook will aid the commercially competitiveness of the sites for business / tourism operators. Two sites are non preferred (BHH4 and BHH5) for environmental effects reasons. BHH4 represents a reduction in the loss of croft land and green field land. BHH5 would represent the loss of woodland.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment

North Ballachulish and Glenachulish are constrained by coastal, fluvial and pluvial flood risks and these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped flood risk because of vertical or horizontal separation but overlaps can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit some sites are sloping and lie within such a high rainfall area that they will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Glencoe & South Ballachulish

Non Flooding SEA Criteria

South Ballachulish and Glencoe suffer from several development constraints which limit feasible development site options. These constraints include: mitigation of visual prominence issues given its location within the Ben Nevis and Glencoe National Scenic Area; removing crofting restrictions on the release of land for development; forming suitable access to the trunk road network, and; resolving sewerage capacity restrictions. Accordingly, the Council's preferences centre on sites that are close to the community's facilities and/or have a locational imperative for being there. Five sites are non preferred (GCH3-6 and BHB3) for environmental effects reasons. The first four would involve the excessive loss of greenfield land some of which contains woodland. The last of these is very prominent from the A82 and the preferred site boundary has been restricted to that area that balances a commercially attractive outlook with the need to mitigate any adverse visual / landscape impact.

"Strategic" (Settlement-wide) Flood Risk Assessment

South Ballachulish and Glencoe are constrained by coastal, fluvial and pluvial flood risks and these have influenced the Council's settlement wide site preference/ selection choices. Most of the preferred sites are free of mapped flood risk because of vertical or horizontal separation but overlaps can be addressed by suitable developer requirement text requiring development set-back at the next Proposed Plan stage. Site BHH3 at West Laroch has been subject to a detailed developer funded flood risk assessment which has influenced its boundary within the Main Issues Report. SEPA have had sight of this assessment and it appears that the flood risk affecting this site can be addressed. Otherwise flood risk should not be a significant issue for the growth of the village albeit all sites lie within such a high rainfall area that they will require careful consideration of surface water drainage measures.

Monitoring

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

It is considered good practice for monitoring:

- fit a pre-defined purpose, help to solve problems, and address key issues;
- is practical and is customised to the PPS;
- is transparent and readily accessible to the public;
- is seen as a learning process and a cyclical process relating closely to the collation of the environmental baseline.

For this monitoring to be effective it will need to be linked to both the SEA Objectives and the Plan Objectives. The baseline data set out earlier in this report sets the scene for any monitoring which is to take place. Below is a monitoring framework. As part of the Action Programme for the Highland wide Local Development Plan we will publish a fuller framework for monitoring of the plan. However, the table below only considers indicators relevant to the state of the environment.

SEA Topic	What the plan seeks to achieve	Monitoring Indicator	Responsible for Data Collation	Publication of Monitoring	Remedial Action
Biodiversity	Protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland	Number of applications granted which may affect SPA, SAC, Ramsar, NNR, SSSI, Sites of Local Nature Conservation.	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
	Protected Species are not significantly disturbed	Number of applications which require a protected species survey Number of applications granted which also require a license Number of applications granted which require compensatory tree planting Number of applications incorporating green network components through the master planning process.	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
Population and Human Health	Improve accessibility to open space	Provision of open space (m^2)	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
		% of households within 1,200m of open space	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development

					Plan(s).
Soil	Remediation of Contaminated Land and redevelopment of brownfield sites	Number of planning applications granted on brownfield land in the last 12 months	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
	Reduction in the area of prime agricultural land developed	Number of planning applications granted on prime agricultural land (1, 2, 3.1 of the Macaulay Institute Classification (there is no record of Class 1 or 2 in the WHILDP Plan area))	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
Water Quality	Improve Water Quality	Number of designated bathing areas Number of rivers “C” classification or below Number of bathing areas passing bathing water quality % of planning applications granted in last 12 months which connected to public water/sewer	SEPA	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
	Reduce instances of flooding	Number of planning applications granted within medium to high flood risk areas (1 in 200yr probability)	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
		% travelling to	THC (Information	Biennially	Review policy and

		work/study by public transport	and Research)		site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
		% travelling to work/study by active travel	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
Air	Protection of good air quality	Number of site allocations which require monitoring	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review policy and site allocations in the Local Development Plan(s).
Climatic Factors	Reduction in Travel	% travelling to work/study by car	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
		% travelling to work/study by public transport	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
		% travelling to work/study by active travel	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
Material Assets	Improved accessibility to recycling facilities	% of households within 15km of recycling centre	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
		Number of planning applications granted which include provision for recycling point in last 12 months	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
	Reduction in waste going to landfill	% of total residual waste in Highland going to landfill	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development

					Plan(s).
	Protection and enhancement of public access	Number of planning applications granted which affect path identified in the core path plan	THC (Information and Research facilitated by access officers)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
Cultural Heritage	Reduce number of buildings at risk	Number of buildings at risk	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
	Impact on schedule monuments	Number and outcome of planning applications where schedule monuments are significantly affected	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
Landscape	Impact on quality of landscape	Number of planning applications granted within NSA and SLA in last 12 months Quality of design statements, implementation of design plans and quality of landscaping schemes undertaken.	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).

Next Steps

Timescales for the Local Development Plan and SEA Preparation

This Environmental Report will be subject to a 10 week consultation period from April to June 2016, where expressions of opinion on the report will be welcomed. The Environmental Report will be available to view on the Council website and hard copies will be at Development and Infrastructure Service Reception, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX and at Planning & Building Standards office in Inverness. Electronic copies will be sent to the SEA Gateway and to the Consultation Authorities.

Following this consultation the views will be collated and, where appropriate, alterations will be made. A timetable for the next steps is below:

Timescales	WHILDP	SEA/Habitats Regulations Appraisal
Complete (From 2015)	Publication of the updated Development Plan Scheme	Prepare a Scoping Report and send to the Consultation Authorities
Complete (Early 2015)	Call for Sites	Gathering variety of information on sites and more strategic issues.
Complete (2014-2016)	Preparation of Main Issues Report	Identifying key environmental issues and priority outcomes
Complete (2014-2016)	Pre Main Issues Report Engagement	Meetings with key agencies
April 2016	Publish Main Issues Report	Publish Environmental Report and submit to SEA Gateway
10 Weeks	CONSULTATION on MIR and Draft ER	
Summer/Autumn 2016	Consider representations. Prepare Proposed Plan and Action Programme	Consider responses from key agencies. Appraise environmental implications of Proposed Plan and undertake HRA. Make appropriate amendments to Environmental Report
Early 2017	Publish Proposed Plan and Proposed Action Programme	Publish revised Environmental Report and draft HRA and submit revised Environmental Report to SEA Gateway
6 Weeks min.	CONSULTATION on Proposed Plan	
	Consider representations. Prepare Summary of unresolved Issues and Report of Conformity with Participation Strategy.	Consider responses
Late 2017	Submit Proposed Plan, Action Programme and Report of Conformity to Scottish Ministers. Advertise submission of Plan.	Submit HRA record to Ministers
Early 2018	Examination of Proposed Plan.	
Late 2018	West Highland and Islands Local	Publish Post-Adoption SEA

	Development Plan adopted by the Highland Council	Statement and submit to SEA Gateway.
From adoption onwards	Put plan into place and monitor our progress	Publish Post-Adoption Statement and submit to SEA Gateway

Appendix 1– Responses to Scoping Report and THC Response

Appendix 2 – Baseline data information and maps

Appendix 3 – Vision and Spatial Strategy Assessment

Appendix 4 – Cumulative Assessment

Appendix 5 – Site Assessments

Appendix 6 – Sample Site Assessment Matrix

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd