

# ROSS & CROMARTY EAST LOCAL PLAN (As Continuing in Force, July 2015)

PLANA IONADAIL ROS IS CHROMBAIDH AN EAR  
Written Statement



ADOPTED PLAN ▼ FEBRUARY 2007

## How to Read and Use the Plan

This Local Plan (as continuing in force, July 2015) must be read in conjunction with the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP). The HwLDP contains the Spatial Strategy, Vision and all general policy against which development proposals will be assessed.

## Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (as continuing in force, July 2015)

The adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan replaced the Highland Structure Plan (March 2001) (except within the Cairngorms National Park) and updates/supersedes the “general policies” of the existing adopted Local Plans. In order to retain the other elements of the existing adopted Local Plans (including but not limited to; site allocations, settlement development areas not covered by the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and site specific policies) a Parliamentary Order was laid before Scottish Parliament on 16th March 2012 to enable these elements to remain in force to the extent so specified as required by Schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 As Amended. The Order is called The Town and Country Planning (Continuation in force of Local Plans) (Highland) (Scotland) Order 2012 and came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.

The elements of the adopted Local Plans continued in force at that time by the Order are included within the Retention Schedule as contained in Appendix 7 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. These retained elements of local plans remain retained until the time a new area Local Development Plan is prepared covering that area. At that time the retained elements of the local plan will no longer be part of the Development Plan.

In July 2015 the Council adopted the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP). For the area covered by the IMFLDP, reference should be made to the IMFLDP which must be read in conjunction with the HwLDP. Therefore upon adoption of the IMFLDP the majority of the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan has been replaced.

The (still) Retained Elements of the Plan are contained in the following sections of this document, the original Local Plan documents have been redacted to remove or shade out sections of text no longer in force. The continued in force parts of the Plan remain with the HwLDP providing the general policy context for these sections of text and mapping.

## Habitats Regulation Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

For the Order to be passed it had to be clear that the retained elements of the adopted local plans have met the requirements of European Community Law with respect to Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) considers all the policies and proposals of the adopted local plans which are intended to be retained in force. The Plan must be read alongside the HRA.

## Provisions of Local Plan Map(s) as continuing in force, July 2015

The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text, only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by the Parliamentary Order, but also only to the extent detailed in the Retention Schedule – as updated below – as still continuing in force from July 2015 (following adoption of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan).

### Retention Schedule (extract) for:

### Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (Adopted: 8 February 2007)

### As updated to indicate provisions still continuing in force from July 2015

The Retention Schedule (extract) as updated below lists the few still-retained elements to the area Local Plan, which is the content for Achnasheen (and the Settlement Policies and Proposals Maps that give effect to the Achnasheen content).

Provisions of Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan to continue in force	Limitations and exclusions
1. The provisions of the Written Statement contained in—	
Chapter 5 (general policies)	Only to the extent to which it sets out and applies ‘Settlement Policies’
Chapter 7 (Achnasheen)	
Appendix 1	Only to the extent to which it sets out and describes “Settlement Policies”.
2. The provisions of the Proposals Map (including any inset contained in or accompanying it and the policies and proposals shown on such inset) and related notations, referencing and explanatory text	Only to the extent to which those provisions show, illustrate or explain any provision of the local plan which is continued in force by this Order*.

\* but also only to the extent detailed in the above updated Retention Schedule as still continuing in force from July 2015 (following adoption of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan).

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**Chapter 4: Strategy - Ro-innleachd**

pages 21 - 26

- **Strategic Themes**
- **Spatial Elements of the Strategy**
  - Development Corridor
  - Rural Development Area
  - Hinterland
  - Heritage/Natural Zone

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**Chapter 5: General Policies - Poileasaidhean Coitcheann**

pages 27 - 31

- **Background Policies**
- **Settlement Policies**
- **Supporting Policies**

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**Chapter 6: Landward Area - Sgìre an Fhearainn**

pages 33 - 43

- **General**
- **Housing**, including development potential in the small rural settlements of Achterneed, Alcaig, Arabella, Ardross, Balblair, Barbaraville, Blairninch, Cromarty Mains, Croftnacreech, Davidston, Easter Kinkell, Ferintosh, Gorstan, Jemimaville, Kilcoy, Killen, Milton-Redcastle, Mount High, Newhall, Newton of Kinkell, Nigg, Raddery, Rhicullen/Newmore, Rockfeld, Rosehaugh Estate, Scotsburn and Windhill
- **Economic Development**
- **Services & Infrastructure**
- **Environment**

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**Chapters 7 to 34: MAIN SETTLEMENTS -**

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**PRÌOMH THUINNEACHAIDHEAN**

Chapter no. & title	Written Statement page nos.	Map location
<b>7. Achnasheen</b>	44/45	A3 Inset Map booklet
<b>8. Alness</b>	45 - 48	See Inset 8
<b>9. Avoch</b>	49 - 51	See Inset 9
<b>10. Conon Bridge</b>	52 - 55	See Inset 10
<b>11. Contin</b>	55/56	A3 Inset Map booklet
<b>12. Cromarty</b>	57 - 60	A3 Inset Map booklet
<b>13. Culbokie</b>	60 - 62	A3 Inset Map booklet
<b>14. Dingwall</b>	62 - 66	See Inset 14
<b>15. Edderton</b>	66/67	A3 Inset Map booklet
<b>16. Evanton</b>	68 - 72	See Inset 16
<b>17. Fortrose</b>	72 - 76	See Inset 17
<b>18. Rosemarkie</b>	76 - 78	See Inset 18
<b>19. Garve</b>	79	A3 Inset Map booklet
<b>20. Hill of Fearn</b>	80/81	A3 Inset Map booklet
<b>21. Inver</b>	82	A3 Inset Map booklet
<b>22. Invergordon</b>	83 - 86	See Inset 22

23.	<b>Kildary</b>	86/87	A3 Inset Map booklet
24.	<b>Marybank</b>	87/88	A3 Inset Map booklet
25.	<b>Maryburgh</b>	88 – 90	See Inset 25
26.	<b>Milton (of Kildary)</b>	91/92	A3 Inset Map booklet
27.	<b>Muir of Ord</b>	93 – 95	See Inset 27
28.	<b>Munlochy</b>	95 – 97	A3 Inset Map booklet
29.	<b>North Kessock</b>	97 – 99	See Inset 29
30.	<b>Portmahomack</b>	99/100	A3 Inset Map booklet
31.	<b>Seaboard Villages</b>	101/102	A3 Inset Map booklet
32.	<b>Strathpeffer</b>	103 – 106	See Inset 32
33.	<b>Tain</b>	107 – 110	See Inset 33
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**SUPPLEMENTARY CONTENTS:  
SETTLEMENTS AND INSETS BY ORIGINAL LOCAL PLAN AREA**

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**BLACK ISLE**

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**EASTER ROSS**

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**Small Settlements (Chapter 6 Landward)**

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### **Main Settlements**

<b>8. Alness</b>	45 – 48
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### **INVERGORDON**

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### **MID ROSS**

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#### **Small Settlements (Chapter 6 Landward)**

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10. Blairminich	34
16. Gorstan	35
30. Windhill	36

### **Main Settlements**

<b>7. Achnasheen</b>	44/45
<b>10. Conon Bridge</b>	52 – 55
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## Chapter 5: General Policies - Poileasaidhean Coitcheann

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Deriving from the above considerations, the following policies - intended to guide land use change in principle - are shown on the Proposals and Inset Maps. These are:

### Background Policies

**BP1** *The Council will favour development subject to detailed siting, design and servicing factors.*

**BP2** *The Council will permit development unless this would be likely to have a significantly adverse effect on, or be significantly adversely affected by, the features for which the area has been designated. Where it is concluded that any such adverse effects are likely to arise, development will only be permitted where it is considered that these would be outweighed by social or economic benefits.*

**BP3** *The Council will only approve development if there are no significant adverse effects on heritage, amenity, public health and safety interests.*

**BP4** *The Council will not favour development unless there are over-riding environmental or public health and safety grounds or unless there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest including those of a social or economic nature.*

### Settlement Policies

#### Settlement Boundary

*The Council will maintain a strong presumption against sporadic development outwith settlement boundaries in order to protect their landscape setting or avoid adversely affecting their longer-term expansion.*

#### C: Town/Village Centre

*The Council will encourage town centre uses appropriate to the settlement's role in the hierarchy.*

#### H: Housing

*The Council will safeguard the function and character of established residential areas and will encourage appropriate development.*

#### B: Business

*The Council will maintain or promote business/tourism.*

#### I: Industry

*The Council will maintain or promote industrial uses.*

#### S: Special Uses

*The Council will expect other uses mainly of a community, service or tourist related nature to be maintained or developed where stated.*

#### E: Expansion

*The Council will encourage development in accordance with a comprehensive master plan and will presume against piecemeal proposals.*

#### A: Amenity

*The Council will safeguard these areas from development not associated with their purpose and function.*

**N.B. The criteria for designating the Background and Settlement policies are defined in Appendix I.**

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## 7. Achnasheen

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### Background

Achnasheen (pop. 45) is located on the east - west transport routes spanning Ross-Shire, amidst an expansive landscape characterised by renowned glacial and post-glacial features of significant heritage status. The population level has remained generally static and with employment founded in traditional rural activities of sporting estates, sheep farming and forestry there is little prospect for significant growth. Improvement of the strategic road network to the west coast has brought Dingwall within 40 minutes travel time. This together with increased public desire to enjoy the Highland wilderness enhances the potential to attract new development. Scope exists to broaden the range of visitor facilities and could include improved interpretation and overnight accommodation.

The village has a primary school, sub post office, petrol filling station and craft shop/café. The former railway station building now functions as a community hall. A programme of enhancement measures carried out about the village centre are now complete and potential exists to expand this initiative to other parts of the village. The future vitality of Achnasheen will depend on retaining existing population, employment and service levels by encouraging a broader employment base and identifying opportunities for housing.

### Development Factors

Existing service networks have capacity to accommodate foreseeable expansion and provision of visitor accommodation would strengthen Achnasheen's commercial base. Development should avoid affecting open views to the south, low lying land towards the river and ribbon development along the A832.

### Policies, Proposals and Opportunities

C: Village Centre

1. *There is a need to safeguard village centre's function and character and direct compatible social / economic development to the area designated*

H: Housing

2. *Limited opportunity exists for infill housing within the existing village boundary.*

B: Business

3. *An area of land adjacent to the station yard is suitable for small business units, possibly including a rail freight facility.*

4. *Land east of the filling station has potential for the provision of a hostel / bunkhouse.*

S: Special Uses

5. *There is a presumption against further development within 25 metres of the existing septic tank at Bignold Place (BP4).*

E: Expansion.

6. *Future housing needs shall be accommodated on land between the primary school and main body of the village. An overall master plan or layout is required to guide development, which should incorporate structural planting and design consistent with the natural setting.*

A: Amenity

7. *The Council will protect important open spaces, amenity areas and cultural heritage features around the village, including the ' B ' Listed Ledgowan Bridge and also the stone bridge over the 'Allt Achadh na Sine'.*

Action

8. *Scope exists to further enhance the village setting as follows: -*

- *improve poor roadside character by encouraging natural stone walls as replacement for mix of post/wire, wooden fencing*
- *remove unnecessary wirescape.*

## 8. Alness

### Background

Alness (pop. 5186) is the largest settlement in Ross and Cromarty. The town is situated on the banks of the Averon River, the original settlement developing on the western bank. The town developed on a traditional grid pattern. This changed with the major expansion that took place in the 1970s. The arrival of the aluminium smelter at Invergordon and the growth of the oil related development at Nigg saw the development of modern housing estates.

The town is a key employment centre for Easter Ross. This is expected to continue over the next decade. Substantial areas of land to the south of the railway are dedicated to business and industrial development. Strong efforts by HIE Inverness and East Highland to encourage new businesses into the area, particularly technology based, have been successful. This is typified by the new developments at Alness Point. There may also be opportunities to capture further public service jobs with moves towards decentralisation at national and local level. Current land allocations should be sufficient to meet demand over the Plan period. Caplich quarry is an important resource for the local economy, providing jobs as well as construction material. Ongoing restoration will see the ground become available for other uses in the future.

Another success is the community led Alness in Bloom initiative. This has given the town a much higher profile and raised the confidence of the community. The town centre is now vibrant and there is a demand for retail space. Modern supermarkets at Dalmore appear to have retained significant spend in the community. Certain services are still lacking. Scottish Water are still reviewing arrangements for suitable treatment of sewage. The community is keen to see permanent ambulance and fire services within the town, together with surgery facilities for the west end.

Revised figures in light of the 2001 Census show a reduction in projected household growth rates. These indicate a need for between 420 houses (based on past completion trends) and 630 houses (using stock proportion figures). Retaining larger allocations gives greater choice and flexibility in meeting projected demand. There is also a need for more specialist housing, closer to the town centre, although opportunities are restricted.

### Development Factors

Expansion of the town is constrained by several physical factors, including the railway and the A9 to the south and the quarry and forestry to the north. The extensive agricultural land forms a green wedge between the town and the A9. The most suitable opportunities appear to be to on the eastern and western margins around Milnafua and Ballachraggan. The adjacent Primary School, better access to the A9 and poorer quality land suggest that the former is best positioned. Wastewater treatment is through a crude outfall to the firth. Although this will not prevent further development, there is a pressing need to ensure that a new system is provided due to Urban Waste Water Directive requirements. Development and infrastructure, which will impact on archaeological sites will need to be recorded/protected. Sites as identified within the Sites and Monuments Record provide the most current source of information.

### Policies, Proposals and Opportunities

○ Town Centre

1. *Within the defined commercial core area the Council will*
  - *give the highest priority to improving the viability of the shopping centre*