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## Issue 23: Lairg

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2. Representations

Alasdair Marshall (966589)

Lairg and District Community Initiatives (979792)

Lairg Community Council (979971)

SNH (909933)

3. Relevant Council's Supporting Documents

CD07: CaSPlan Revised Environmental Report, Jan 2016

CD09: Habitat Regulations Appraisal Record, Aug 2016

CD43: Sutherland core paths plan review - consultative report, Nov 2014

CD44: Sutherland Core Paths Plan - Map 22 Invershin and Lairg, Sept 2011

<b>Issue 23</b>	<b>LAIRG</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	Lairg pages 97 - 101	<b>Reporter:</b>
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (including reference number):</b>		
<p>Alasdair Marshall (966589)  Lairg and District Community Initiatives (979792)  Lairg Community Council (979971)  SNH (909933)</p>		
<b>Provision of the development plan to which the issue relates:</b>	Lairg settlement text and site allocation LA03	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><b>Lairg General</b>  <u>Alasdair Marshall (966589)</u>  Objects to the placemaking priorities mentioning the River Oykel as it is the River Shin which runs from Lairg.</p> <p>Objects to the considerable emphasis placed upon flooding within Lairg. Would like to know how this is determined as the loch is man made. Questioning if information used to inform the development plan has been out of date or not investigated properly. Notes there was flooding previously due to a surge wave breaching the large dam, however SSE completed engineering works to prevent this happening again. Any flooding would only come from rain or snow melt and would be mitigated by the diversion dam.</p> <p><u>SNH (909933)</u>  Due to the distance (~9km) and man-made barriers between Lairg and the River Oykel SAC, it is extremely unlikely that it would be affected by the proposed allocations. Reference to the SAC can therefore be removed from the general text about Lairg.</p> <p><u>Lairg and District Community Initiatives (979792) and Lairg Community Council (979971)</u></p> <p>Lairg and District Community Initiatives and the Community Council view the Former Sutherland Transport and Trading Company site on the corner of Main Street and the A836 (referred to in paragraph 168) as a focal point of the village and object to it just being allocated for environmental improvement. There has been discussion within the community as to possible future uses. Would anticipate a modest but aesthetically interesting development providing some car parking but not just a car park per se. Local feedback for the following suggested uses has been positive and supportive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some form of development on the site which would be of practical use to the village and surrounding area whilst also addressing the environmental improvement issue.</li> <li>• A tourist information and local craft type/hub development with a focus on linking the north, east, south and west.</li> <li>• Picnic area and children's play area.</li> </ul>		

There have been recent improvements to the adjacent Church Hill wooded path which introduces visitors to spectacular views to the west, and improvement work here is ongoing. Would like any new development to link with and complement this path and help consolidate the village centre as an area of high amenity for the benefit of locals and tourists.

Lairg and District Community Initiatives (979792)

The A836 public footpath is well used by locals and visitors, not just as a section of the principal pedestrian route linking the village with the railway station but also as part of a circular path alongside the river with access across the lower dam to the Invershin road on the west side, returning to the village. In order to help with future project funding applications we would like to see this route identified formally as part of the Core Footpath Network.

**LA03 Former Sutherland Arms Site**

Lairg Community Council (979971)

The Community Council has canvassed the community over the last three years and the local community would like to see this site used for the development of a care home.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

**Lairg General**

Alasdair Marshall (966589)

Placemaking priorities should refer to River Shin and not River Oykel.

Removal of reference to flood risk (assumed).

SNH (909933)

Remove reference to River Oykel SAC.

Lairg and District Community Initiatives (979792) and Lairg Community Council (979971)

Allocate the Former Sutherland Transport and Trading Company site referred to in paragraph 168 for community uses (assumed).

Lairg and District Community Initiatives (979792)

Identify the A836 public footpath as a Core Path.

**LA03 Former Sutherland Arms Site**

Lairg Community Council (979971)

Include additional use of care home.

**Summary of responses (including reasons) by planning authority:**

**Lairg General**

The reference in the placemaking priorities is to the River Oykel SAC, not the River Oykel per se. Connectivity to the River Oykel SAC was identified through the Strategic

Environmental Assessment (SEA) (CD07) work for the plan. However whilst preparing the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) (CD09) for the plan, all the allocations in Lairg were screened out. The Council accepts the opinion expressed by SNH that due to the distance and man-made barriers between Lairg and the SAC, it is extremely unlikely that it would be affected by the allocations. If the Reporter is so minded the Council is content for the reference to the River Oykel SAC to be removed from the placemaking priorities.

The Council takes advice on flood risk from SEPA and uses SEPA's Flood Maps which show where there are certain levels of risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and surface water. Based on this advice Flood Risk Assessments are listed as developer requirements for sites LA01, LA02, LA04 and LA05. Not all potential flooding is from Little Loch Shin, there is also potential flood risk from watercourses within sites. By requiring Flood Risk Assessment the Council is enabling better planning decisions to avoid unnecessary development in flood risk areas. The Council does not therefore believe that there is unnecessary emphasis placed upon flooding within Lairg and therefore does not propose any modifications to the developer requirements of sites LA01, LA02, LA04 and LA05.

The Former Sutherland Transport and Trading Company site is not an allocated site within the Plan but it sits within the SDA and is mentioned in the settlement text at paragraph 168 in terms of welcoming environmental improvements. Two of the placemaking priorities for Lairg are to assist and promote economic development and to support additional tourist facilities. The Council agrees that it is a focal point for the village, but considers that the existing text in the plan is sufficient to allow for a wide range of additional enhancing uses that the community may wish to pursue. However if the Reporter is so minded the Council would be agreeable to additional wording being added to paragraph 168: "The area is a key focal point for Lairg and the local community is keen to enhance the range of facilities on the site for both the community and tourists. Some car parking should be retained, but there may be potential to provide picnic tables, children's play area, tourist information point/interpretation and a local craft hub. The opportunity should be taken to link into the recently improved Church Hill wooded path."

The request to include the A836 Public Footpath in the Core Path Plan has been forwarded to the Access Officer in the Council to be considered in the continuing review of the Core Path Plan (CD43). The existing Core Path Plan (CD44) was adopted by the Council in September 2011 after the plan had been through the statutory consultation process. The review of the Core Paths is being carried out as a separate process with a separate consultation to the Local Development Plan. No modification to the Local Development Plan is proposed by the Council.

### **LA03 Former Sutherland Arms Site**

This is a key entrance site into Lairg which has been vacant for a considerable time. The mixed use allocation in the Plan allows for housing, community, tourism and retail. The community use would cover a potential care home development, so there is no need to add care home to the range of uses covered under the mixed use allocation. No modification is proposed by the Council.

### **Reporter's conclusions:**

**Reporter's recommendations:**