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Issue 02: Spatial Strategy

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3. Relevant Council's Supporting Documents

CD06: CaSPlan Monitoring Statement
CD10: Housing Need and Demand Assessment, Nov 2015
CD12: Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, Nov 2016
CD18: Highland-wide Local Development Plan, Apr 2012

Issue 2	SPATIAL STRATEGY	
Development plan reference:	Spatial Strategy (MPP pages 2 – 5)	Reporter:
Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (including reference number):		
Amelia Walker (931321) Ardgay & District Community Council (951607) Balnagown Castle Properties (968666) Crofting Commission (955042) David Doohan (980228) Gills Harbour Ltd (962325) Jacqueline Ridgley (930800) Kenneth Nicol (977530) Scottish Water (953627) Scrabster Harbour Trust (980302) SSE Plc (983775)		
Provision of the development plan to which the issue relates:	Spatial Strategy text and Strategy Map	
Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):		
<p>Strategy General <u>David Doohan (980228), Amelia Walker (931321)</u> Due diligence is required for projects and to improve the outcomes.</p> <p><u>Crofting Commission (955042)</u> Generally supportive of the main spatial elements identified in the strategy. Restricting specific site locations to the main settlements is an improvement from previous Plans that have sought to identify potential development sites in smaller settlements. The social, economic and cultural significance of crofting should continue to be recognised.</p> <p><u>SSE Plc (983775)</u> Renewable energy development is a very important economic industry for the area and should be reflected in the plan. The policy approach for marine renewables is specifically supported; however when the plan is read as a whole it does not provide adequate encouragement and support for appropriately sited renewable energy development. The 'Area for Energy Business Expansion' is a positive start to enhancing the policy position of support for renewable energy and related developments within a strategically defined geographical area. However it is unclear exactly what form of development would be supported within this area. Paragraph 52 states that marine renewables development within the Area for Energy Business Expansion is likely to be considered acceptable in principle; however, this is not recognised by the definition of the Area for Energy Business Expansion in the glossary or at paragraph 11. Nowhere within the plan is there direct support for onshore renewable energy development within the Area for Energy Business Expansion. Further clarity on the intentions of the Area for Energy Business Expansion is required. The plan should clearly align with the emerging Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. The Strategy Map needs to be clear what form of development is envisaged for</p>		

the grey area. There are also settlements within this area and the Strategy map does not appear to envisage development within or adjacent to these settlements. Additional explanatory text is required.

Paragraph 6

Scrabster Harbour Trust (980302)

There should be a specific reference to the ports.

Paragraph 7

Kenneth Nicol (977530), Jacqueline Ridgley (930800)

Implies that new homes are needed, however any development should take account of demand. If an area is showing a declining population then additional major housing will not be required.

Paragraph 11 - Employment

Scrabster Harbour Trust (980302)

Supports the acknowledgements of the important part that ports can play and that the major growth area is energy related.

Strategy Map

Balnagown Castle Properties (968666)

Supports the identification of Ardgay and Edderton as settlement development areas and Rosehall as a growing settlement on the map.

Ardgay & District Community Council (951607)

Supports the reference to the unique tourism potential that Central Sutherland has to offer. National Cycle Route NC1 is shown as a purple line but it could be enhanced with shading to designate it as a sustainable/green travel tourism route.

Gills Harbour Ltd (962325)

The 'offshore renewables' caption off the North Sutherland coast on the 'Strategy Map' represents wishful thinking and should be deleted and re-sited in the Pentland Firth to the East of the 'median' line of the 2 kms wide Merry Men of Mey tide-race, as this is where all four of the Crown Estate tidal-stream seabed leases in the Pentland Firth proper are sited. The 'Offshore Renewables' caption off East Caithness is justified by the strong interest in offshore wind-farms there.

Paragraph 10 Growing Communities

Scottish Water (953627)

Welcomes the approach, however, Scottish Water appreciates that sustainable development and natural growth are essential within the rural setting and is willing to work with both rural and urban developers to explore how Scottish Water can assist such development within Scottish Water's remit and funding structure.

Paragraph 13 Environment and Heritage

Kenneth Nicol (977530), Jacqueline Ridgley (930800)

Consideration should be given to other aspects of promoting tourism other than historic e.g. natural environment and adventure sports tourism.

Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**Strategy General**

SSE Plc (983775)

The importance of renewable energy should be reflected in the plan.

Clarify the intentions of the “Area for Energy Business Expansion”.

Clear alignment with the emerging Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance.

Clarify what is envisaged for the “grey” area on the map.

Paragraph 6

Scrabster Harbour Trust (980302)

Include a reference to the ports.

Strategy Map

Ardgay & District Community Council (951607)

Add shading to NCR1 line and designate as a sustainable/green travel tourism route.

Gills Harbour Ltd (962325)

Move the “offshore renewables” caption off the North Sutherland coast and re-site in the Pentland Firth to the east of the “median” line of the 2kn wide Merry Men of Mey tide-race.

Paragraph 13 Environment and Heritage

Kenneth Nicol (977530), Jacqueline Ridgley (930800)

Include natural environment and adventure sports tourism.

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

The comment on due diligence is noted.

The support from the Crofting Commission is noted. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (CD18) contains policies relevant to crofting and these will be updated in partnership with the Crofting Commission through the on-going Highland-wide Local Development Plan review.

The “Area for Energy Business Expansion” is not intended to be used as a land use allocation for energy developments. It is not intended to show where renewables devices would be acceptable on the ground, but rather it is intended to show where the Council would be particularly supportive of the necessary supporting terrestrial infrastructure, including associated business and industrial developments. It is also intended to promote the energy sector within the area and help to generate local jobs. Paragraph 11 bullet point two states that the plan seeks to maximise opportunities arising from the energy

sector. The role of this plan is not to identify specific opportunities for wind energy developments. Any proposals would be considered on their merits through planning applications and pre-application advice, with reference to the Development Plan as a whole. However, to provide further clarity of what the Area for Business Expansion is intended for, if the Reporter is so minded the Council would be agreeable to the following change being made to paragraph 11 bullet point 2: remove “the energy sector” and replace with “offshore renewables and oil and gas”.

The purpose of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (CD12) is to set out the Spatial Framework and other guidance against which all onshore wind developments will be assessed. This is set against Highland-wide Local Development Plan (CD18) Policy 67 Renewable Energy Developments. It is not intended for CaSPlan to include the Spatial Framework for onshore wind developments, but to be used alongside it, both as part of the Development Plan. Each is prepared having regard to other parts of the Development Plan (LDPs and Supplementary Guidance).

The “grey” area on the map is part of the wider countryside as explained within the Growing Communities section. Any proposals for development within this area would be assessed against the policies within the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (CD18). Many aspects of the Spatial Strategy in paragraphs 10-13 cover the whole, or at least wider “grey” areas. The map only identifies SDA and Growing Settlements. Any other settlements are considered as part of the wider countryside. This is explained in the three tiered approach to managing development in the Growing Communities section of the plan.

Paragraph 6

The final sentence of paragraph 6 refers to Census data, set out in the Monitoring Statement (CD06) which accompanies the Plan, which outlines the main sectors of employment that people in Caithness and Sutherland work in. Harbours are specifically mentioned in paragraph 10 bullet point two. No modification is proposed by the Council to paragraph 6.

Paragraph 7

The housing supply target for Caithness and Sutherland is informed by the Council’s Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (CD10) which indicates how much housing is required over the next twenty years. The issue of housing supply is covered in more detail in the Schedule 4 for Growing Communities. No modification is proposed by the Council to paragraph 7.

Paragraph 11 - Employment

Support from Scrabster Harbour Trust is noted.

Strategy Map

The support for identifying Ardgay and Edderton as settlement development areas and Rosehall as a growing settlement on the strategy map is noted.

The support for the reference to the tourism potential of Central Sutherland on the strategy

map is noted.

The National Cycle Route was added to the strategy map following comments received to the Main Issues Report. The final bullet point of paragraph 11 refers to promoting and supporting tourism and specifically mentions the National Cycle Network and the Council feels that this is sufficient without the need to shade the route and designate as a sustainable/green travel tourism route. No modification is proposed by the Council.

The “offshore renewables” caption along the north Sutherland coast is there to reflect the aspiration for offshore renewable energy developments, over the next twenty years. It is recognised that current activity is further to the east but the strategy map is not just reflecting what is happening at present. If the Reporter is so minded however, the Council would be agreeable to an additional “offshore renewables” caption being added to the map north of Gills Harbour.

Paragraph 10 - Growing Communities

The support of Scottish Water is noted.

Paragraph 13 Environment and Heritage

The outcome for Employment mentions various kinds of tourism that are important to Caithness and Sutherland. Each outcome (and part of the strategy) should not be read in isolation, they are intended to be read as a whole, together with the rest of the plan. No modification is proposed by the Council.

Reporter’s conclusions:

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Reporter’s recommendations:

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