HIGHLAND COUNCIL CANDIDATE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS RESPONSE FORMS:

Refined Submission – September 2020

Contents

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND01) Rail Infrastructure Improvements**
Brief description of proposed national development	Rail infrastructure improvements for both passenger and freight transport. Including the development of additional stations/rail halts, dual lining, electrification and additional freight sidings/connectivity where required.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Highland Main Line (HML), Inverness to Aberdeen Line (A2I), North Highland Lines & West Highland Line. Including but not limited to: a) Inverness Airport Station realisation b) Morayhill Freight terminal, c) 'Lentran Long Loop' between Clachnaharry and Clunes d) New Evanton Station including a new loop between Dingwall and Invergordon. e) Additional double tracking on Highland Mainline. f) Electrification of Highland Mainline. g) Re-signalling of North Highland Lines to Dingwall. h) Potential electrification of Inverness commuter routes. i) Potential electrification of other routes connected to sub-regional centres. j) Potential rail halt at Tomatin.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Construction of a railway, erection of a railway station/halt, level crossings, level crossings and railway bridges. Consequential works involving level crossings.
When would the development be complete or operational?	Ongoing for the life of NPF4 and beyond. However, the early realisation of these projects will aid in the Scottish Government and Highland Council meeting their climate change agendas.

Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Rail Network upgrades to the HML & A2I identified as part of the 2004 STRP have been in the most part delivered. HwLDP; IMFLDP; CaSPlan and WestPlan all note improvements to the rail infrastructure are integral to the delivery of improved sustainable transport links. Transport Scotland are already considering further infrastructure improvements to the A2I line to support an hourly service between Aberdeen and Inverness, with an average journey time of around 2 hours. The exact scope and timing of these works are still to be determined. Planning permission previously granted for Dalcross Rail Halt. Highland Main Line: Unfazed (SYSTRA for HITRANS, 2020) identified that electrification of the HML route would provide the most direct opportunity to reduce carbon impacts of both passenger and freight services and reduce journey times through the improved performance of electric trains.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change: Improving rail capacity (including double lining sections), efficiency of services and integration of active travel and other transport connections/interchanges (e.g. bus, airport, park and ride and freight terminals) will encourage and facilitate a move away from motor vehicle modal travel for passenger and freight thereby helping to deliver of the Scottish Government Climate Change agenda. Electrification and other measures towards decarbonisation of rail would further enhance this contribution.

People: Furthering the integration of rail within the transport network will encourage active travel (as part of journeys) and reduce air pollution through less vehicle movement. Rail should be seen as a key element of a multi-modal integrated transport network which will give people choice. This will also help the wider Highlands and Islands Region and will go some way to addressing the fragility and isolation of the area by improving the physical connections within and beyond.

Inclusive Growth: Timetabling improvements associated with relatively short double tracking interventions allows for considerable improvements in the frequency of services in both directions (including peak time commuter services) and allow for more intermediate stops at local services.

Additionally, the ability for trains to pass at an increased number of double track locations significantly reduces delays to the service, resulting in faster, more reliable services, that would be further enhanced through electrification. A need specially

required on the HML, to ensure that rail remains competitive with road for local and strategic journeys and one that will support the wider Highlands and Islands Region and address fragility by having good connections to wider Scotland.

Moreover, a cost effective and reliable rail network provides a more attractive alternative means of transport for tourists, which will aid the growth of a sustainable tourism industry, providing high-quality year-round employment opportunities.

Place: Improving rail connectivity will reduce the number of vehicles on the roads and in urban areas which can lead to a greater sense of place and greater opportunity to reclaim public spaces for people rather than vehicles. Given that Scotland and the Highland's main selling points are the wildness and quality of the environment. Modal shift to an integrated network including a fast, reliable and low carbon rail service will contribute towards maintaining the sense of wildness and quality of place rather than more generic roads from a vantage point that can be enjoyed in more relaxing manner.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND02) Trunk and Other Strategic Road Improvements**
Brief description of proposed national development	Completion of the previously committed Trunk Road A9 (Inverness – Perth) and A96 (Inverness – Aberdeen) dualling programmes; but with greater integration of park & ride schemes, active travel, Electric Vehicle (EV) charging provision and public transport infrastructure and interchanges. Delivery of the A9-A96 Inshes to Smithton junction improvement works and the A9-A82 Longman junction grade separation funding through the Inverness City Region Deal (ICRD). Strategic safety interventions and localised trunk road improvements to the A9 north of Inverness. Trunk Road improvements to the A82 particularly in and around Fort William and others identified in the FW2040 document, as well as known accident hot spots, the onward link to vital lifeline links such as Corran Ferry (Corran Narrows Crossing) and the fragile lifeline A890 route (Stromeferry Bypass).
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	**Trunk Road Dualling Programme**: • A9 (Inverness – Perth) • A96 (Inverness – Aberdeen) **ICRD Improvements:** • A9-A96 Inshes to Smithton junction (Inverness) • A9-A82 Longman roundabout removal (Inverness) **A9 & A82 safety interventions and localised improvements:** - Munlochy junction improvement (Munlochy)

	- Tomich junction improvement (Invergordon) - Berriedale junction improvement (Berriedale) - A82 Fort William town and surrounding area (FW2040) and lifeline links to Corran Ferry **Other Strategic Roads** - Corran Narrows Crossing - Stromeferry Bypass
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Road Orders and CPO requirement, process completed and ongoing for several of the schemes.
When would the development be complete or operational?	**Trunk Road Dualling Programme:** • A9 (Inverness – Perth) - 2025 • A96 (Inverness – Aberdeen) - 2030 **ICRD Improvements:** • A9-A96 Inshes to Smithton junction by 2027 • A9-A82 Longman roundabout removal by 2027 **A9 & A82 safety interventions and localised improvements:** Short term improvements and STAG work to identify medium and longer term interventions. Ongoing for the life of NPF4 and beyond
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	The dualling development has been committed in NPF3 (as well as recognised in HwLDP, IMFLDP and STPR) with early phases of the A9(T) either under construction or complete and ground investigations and draft orders for phases of the A96(T) having been progressed. HwLDP; IMFLDP; CaSPlan and WestPlan all note improvements to the Trunk Road infrastructure are integral to the delivery of improved sustainable transport links. With regards to FW2040, a STAG appraisal has already been undertaken based around the 'place principle' agenda, which has supported the proposed infrastructure interventions. Corran Narrows Crossing Study has been prepared and submitted to the STPR Team.

	For Stromeferry Bypass a Revised Stage 2 STAG appraisal was submitted to Transport Scotland in 2017. Since then trhe Council's working group has reviewed the report and recommended that the Glen Udalain to Attadale option progress to public consultation.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change: Our vision for the future shows how physical and digital connectivity is very important for realisation of our vision for net zero carbon and that includes strategic infrastructure projects such as the Trunk Road Network Projects that have already been committed to by Transport Scotland. Whilst overall a modal shift away from road based travel is preferred, improving the existing road network, and in particular dualling the A9(T) and A96(T) will result in more efficient and economical driving styles and ease congestion currently seen on some of the single carriageway sections. This development will also provide the opportunity to better integrate public transport, park and ride opportunities and electric vehicle charging points. All contributing to lowering carbon emissions. The Stromeferry Bypass proposal seeks to respond to the effects of climate change on the lifeline A890 where increased sustained rainfall events could increase the frequency of landslips which block the existing route.

People: Improved travel connections and safety on these lifeline roads will help to reduce road traffic accidents and fatalities at known locations. Moreover, the improved physical connectivity brought about by these projects will help to address the fragility and isolation of our communities as well as showing that we are a valued part of the Scottish community.

Having a Trunk and Strategic Road network which is easy to travel and one that seamlessly interconnects with active travel and public transport links will provide a high quality place to live and work as well as allow Scotland to be marketed to the tourist Sector as one which is easy to travel around and visit.

Inclusive Growth: Improved connections both locally and with elsewhere in Scotland will help business to grow and will reduce travel time. The A9(T) in its current form is a barrier to economic growth of the Highlands. A recent Ministerial letter has confirmed that the dualling of the A9 (Inverness – Perth) and A96 (Inverness – Aberdeen) projects are ongoing and has given central government commitment to these schemes. Delivering on improved travel connections will also help to attract and retain highly skilled employees within the Highland and Islands Region.

Active Travel must be at the forefront of the design of all new and improved road developments and include greater integration of park & ride schemes, active travel, Electric Vehicle (EV) charging provision and public transport infrastructure/exchanges.

Place: The benefits of delivering dual-carriageway by-passes with appropriate linkages into our key towns, will remove heavy polluting congestion from our town

centre, thus allowing them to develop into high-quality attractive places but with excellent sustainable transport links to the wider locale.

The design of all new and improved transport routes should be done to reflect and respect the local character in which they are located, including tunnelling where appropriate and other similar interventions.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND03) National Grid Improvements**
Brief description of proposed national development	Completion of the High Voltage electricity grid reinforcement and modernisation program including installation of interconnectors with islands, coupled with the development of "smart grids".
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Pan Scotland The location of specific elements of the development should be informed amongst other things by strategic consideration of connections required for planned and anticipated future renewable energy generation sites, including connectors required between regions.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Installation of infrastructure including but not limited to: overhead lines; underground or subsea cables; sub-stations; converter stations. Could also include the enhancement/upgrade of existing infrastructure e.g. adding new wire to existing pylons.
When would the development be complete or operational?	Ongoing.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Yes. The need for grid improvements, particularly in rural areas is highlighted throughout NPF3 and the High Voltage Transmission Network is already a National Development. We think that this should be expanded to include the optimisation of the supply network as a whole through the development of 'smart grids'.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change: The grid will be better able to accommodate energy generated from renewable sources, particularly private or community owned renewable sources and the large generating capacities from off-shore renewables, thereby enabling decarbonisation of energy. Upgrades will enable the grid to become less wasteful thereby reducing amount of energy requiring to be generated in the first instance or better facilitate a shift to entirely renewable sources. This coupled with 'smart grids' will enable greater control and connection between generation and use thereby reducing the environmental footprint of the whole system. This should take into account and can in turn help accommodate significant future increases in electric vehicle (EV) ownership.

People: This will result in a more efficient and reliable grid which could ultimately result in the lowering of energy prices and reducing fuel poverty, especially where community generated electricity can be fed into the grid and used locally.

Inclusive Growth: A more reliable grid will, alongside digital network connections, help businesses to grow and develop, particularly in more fragile and remote areas. Greater control and optimisation of the system and a shift towards community owned generation will help to improve reliability and reduce the costs of energy which in some rural areas can be a barrier to development.

Place: Where practicable this should include the removal of redundant infrastructure as well as greater consideration and innovation to help reduce the impact of powerlines both over and underground. Although it is anticipated the Highland and Islands Region will continue to play a key role in renewable energy generation and supply at a national level – a national move towards supplementing this with local generation and consumption will hopefully result in a reduced impact.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND04) Regionally Important Facilities**
Brief description of proposed national development	New, replaced and improved regionally important strategic healthcare, justice and educational facilities to strengthen the regional role of Inverness a and the wider Highlands, Moray Firth and Islands region.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Inverness, with scope to include key facility 'hubs' elsewhere in Highland where there is an identified need. This approach could be replicated across other regionally important areas across Scotland.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	New, replaced and expansion of physical infrastructure will require formal approvals on an individual basis.
When would the development be complete or operational?	Continual on-going programme for the life of NPF4. Including the following committed projects: • Inverness Justice Centre – in construction, planned opening 2020 • HMP Highland – delayed until 2023. • NHS Highland Elective Care Centre – yet to start construction, but planned opening date 2022
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	The need for education, health and other community facilities is set out in the LDP Delivery Programme with land allocated where a specific need has been identified in the IMFLDP, CaSPlan and WestPlan. However, this National Development concept reflects a more considered and strategic approach to developing a network of key facilities and 'hubs'. HMP Inverness has received planning permission and the Inverness Justice Centre has recently opened.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Having a more strategic approach to the provision of key facilities across regional, sub-regional and neighbouring regional scales can enable these to be provided in a more targeted and efficient way. This can help to ensure that communities have the facilities that they need in a way that is more sustainable to deliver across Local Authorities and other public sector bodies. For example, upgraded healthcare facilities in Caithness could be shared with Orkney, HMP Highland could also serve Moray (if fit will not already). The Inverness Justice Centre brings a number of justice related bodies under the same shared facility.

Climate Change: The development of state of the art Regionally Important Facilities within key well-connected urban locations will help to address the climate change agenda by:

- Reducing or negating the need to travel outwith the region to access specific services. This will also help to address 'travel poverty'.
- Creating state of the art modern facilities are more energy efficient in terms of day-today operations and often result in facilities being co-located, thereby resulting in less travel between facilities and 'land-take' in providing the facility/service.
- The creation of regionally important 'digital hub' facilities which can then service 'local hubs and/or 'satellite' facilities also help to sustain rural community facilities and keep services local.

People: Will safeguard and grow locally resilient and self-supporting communities. It will also help to attract and retain people (particularly young people, families and professionals) to the Highlands. This could also help to deliver the Scottish Government aim of repopulating 'Highland glens' as this can only be done where there are fit for purpose facilities and amenities to support these new communities.

Inclusive Growth: Will help to attract and retain people (professionals, young families etc.) in rural areas which in turn helps to sustain jobs and businesses. Inverness can serve as an anchor point for key facilities as well as smaller more flexible facilities across the region.

Place: Inverness already operates as a regional hub for all the major facilities, healthcare, justice and educational, across Highlands, the Isles and parts of Moray. In doing so it acts as a focal point for the more remote communities where people can meet. Inverness Campus is a good example where health and education facilities that serve people across the region and beyond are located nearby but there is also a high-quality public realm that enhances biodiversity and serves as a place for the wider community to meet and enjoy. The regional and local hubs approach also provides a strong framework for cultural and recreational provision across the region.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND05) Local Resilient Networks**
Brief description of proposed national development	Local resilient networks for the production, added value processing, distribution and consumption of resources including local food, renewable energy generation and consumption, active travel, waste management and healthcare.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Pan Highland although this approach can also be replicated across Scotland.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Erection of facilities and installation of infrastructure where required.
When would the development be complete or operational?	Continual on-going programme for the life of NPF4.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	This National Development is considered to be a national strategic approach to the delivery and utilisation of locally produced assets at a local level and beyond. As such, some allocations within current LDPs cover aspects of this cND but these are fragmented and lack local, regional and national collaboration.
Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria: **Climate Change:** Developing resilient local networks for the production, added value, and consumption of food will reduce food miles. Similarly, for other locally produced assets (including waste) being able to produce and process these locally will reduce their carbon footprint throughout their supply chain/lifespan. Active travel networks will reduce the dependency on car based travel and should connect in with places where people need to go and public transport for longer journeys. Being able to produce and retain renewable energy locally will have clear benefits for reducing emissions. Furthermore processing waste locally by means of energy from waste could also supply local district heating networks. **People:** Robust and reliable networks that provide both urban and rural communities with the security of supply of key products and services such as locally grown and/or sourced food, high-quality locally provided healthcare and waste	

management solutions that support a healthy, growing and self-sufficient community.

Healthcare, active travel and healthy local food should be seen as part of a wider network/system to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of communities. Community Fridges such as the one in Muir Of Ord help to reduce food waste and provide food to those in need by bringing the community together. Furthermore we believe that locally produced and sourced food and the generation of cost-effective renewable energy via local energy networks will help to address both food and fuel poverty.

Inclusive Growth: Local networks for the production, added value and consumption of local resources will support and grow local businesses, generate a more sustainable income, improve and secure the supply chain and ensure businesses and communities are more resilient and self supporting. This is particularly important for the security of food and energy supplies in our more fragile areas.

Place: Producing locally distinctive and high quality, high value and specialist products will enhance the sense of place and generate pride in communities, this can also attract people to live and work in an area and add to the tourism offer and the 'Highland brand'.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND06) Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network**
Brief description of proposed national development	Maintenance, development and promotion of national long-distance cycling and walking networks, directly linking to local active travel corridors and public transport connections which contain suitable transport carrying capacity. Closing gaps in the current networks to enhance visitor experiences and provide better access to the outdoors for people. Maintenance, development and promotion of new tourist cycle and walking routes across Scotland.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	National Cycle Network routes, the Great Glen Way, West Highland Way, Speyside Way, Lands End to John O'Groats route, and the establishment of a 'Route to the Isles' connecting NCN78 up the Great Glen and NCN780 in the Western Isles, Pan Scotland
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Some route extensions may require permission if new paths require construction
When would the development be complete or operational?	Continual on-going programme for the life of NPF4.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Existing national development in NPF3, but in advancement to NPF4 the function, development and expansion should be more explicit.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria :

Climate Change: Encourages visitors and local people to switch to active travel where routes are joined up and connect places where people want/need to go, especially where these routes are viewed as a better alternative to car travel. Particular opportunities will arise for active travel provision as part of or in association with other projects, such as non-motorised user (NMU) provision along the dualling of the A9.

People: Physical and mental health benefits are obvious. Walking and cycling are the most cost effective means of travel and by having better connected networks this will allow for people living near these routes to give up their car and walk or cycle for work and other services, helping to reduce poverty and isolation.

Inclusive Growth: Maintaining and promoting long distance routes and improving their connections with local active travel and public transport networks will encourage more people to use these routes and potentially stay for longer or visit nearby places, thereby supporting local businesses. Especially if these routes are promoted at a similar scale as the NC500 road route which supports and promotes a number of local businesses along the route.

Place: Scotland and the Highlands are renowned for the high-quality environment and outdoor pursuits. This will enhance the offer for walkers and cyclists whilst also making the many communities along these routes better connected and more liveable. Added benefits may be delivered by connecting the long distance network to local networks and through effective cross-boundary thinking where routes cross between access authority areas or networks within different areas could be joined.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND07) High Quality Housing**
Brief description of proposed national development	Deliver on the national commitment to provide high quality housing to meet needs, particularly affordable and adaptive housing.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Pan Scotland.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Erection of homes and associated infrastructure.
When would the development be complete or operational?	Ongoing; however this is considered to be a high priority, therefore delivery of affordable and adaptive housing should begin at the earliest possible opportunity.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Not a single development but rather an ongoing commitment to delivering high quality housing that is affordable and adaptive to people's needs. This is supported in national and local policy.
Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria: **Climate Change:** High quality energy efficient housing will lower carbon emissions. Also having housing that is flexible and adaptive to people's needs, especially the needs of the elderly or people with disabilities, will ensure that people can stay in their own homes for longer and reduce the number of specialist homes required. **People:** High quality housing that is safe, light, warm and well ventilated is beneficial to both physical and mental health. Having homes that are flexible and adaptive throughout their lifespan will also enable people to stay in their homes and close to their networks (e.g. schools, jobs) throughout their lives, should they wish to do so. **Inclusive Growth:** Housebuilding contributes to the economy, however housing should also be affordable in order to prevent or reduce poverty and inequality. Inverness has a buoyant private housing market with high rental figures and in more remote rural areas holiday and second homes can price local people out of their	

area. Increasing the number of affordable homes in rural areas will also help accommodate growth and strengthen rural communities.

Place: High quality housing, where it is well designed and integrated into its surroundings, can create high quality places for people to live. Where open space within developments is considered as part of the overall design, this can help support increased biodiversity.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND08) Sea Ports**
Brief description of proposed national development	Sea Port development and investment (including potential Freeport status), resulting in nationally significant employment, strengthened lifeline ferry links, renewables technology handling and development, oil and gas (decommissioning), fishing, leisure boats and cruise ship visits.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Pan Scotland Potential locations in Highland include the Cromarty Firth (Port of Cromarty Firth, Nigg & Highland Deephaven), Corpach, Ardersier, Gills Bay, Inverness, Kishorn, Scrabster, Ullapool, Uig, Mallaig and Wick. As well as a network of smaller leisure and fishing harbours.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Erection of facilities and installation of infrastructure (or upgrade of existing) including: piers/quays, deep-water berthing, lay-down areas, sheds for assembly operations, operation maintenance bases etc. Also implications for wider infrastructure e.g. local road network
When would the development be complete or operational?	Various/ongoing - based on individual projects/development programmes
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Within NPF3, Ardersier, Nigg and Kishorn are already identified as NRIP Sites with Highland Deephaven, Scrabster and Wick identified as potential NRIP Sites. Nigg and Scrabster are also Enterprise Areas, and Port of Cromarty Firth (Invergordon) is recognised as a key port in the sub-region. The upgrade and development of the identified ports is broadly supported within the LDPs with Uig Development Brief agreed by the Skye and Raasay Area Committee in June 2019.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change: Cromarty Firth, Kishorn, Wick, Scrabster and Gills Bay are already recognised as key sites for the renewables sector in terms of manufacturing/assembly/supply, research and development, operations and maintenance and/or support services. Further investment in these areas could result in greater development/deployment of more efficient and effective renewable energy generation that has less impact on the environment. Kishorn and the Cromarty Firth can, and do, also play a key role in refit/decommissioning of oil infrastructure.

Given the Highland's extensive coastline, a network of smaller scale ports, harbours and marinas exist which are seen as key in the delivery of high-quality sustainable marine tourism. With the Scottish Government already noting it as a key sector with significant potential growth over the next 10 years (Awaking the Giant).

People: Investment in these ports, particularly those outwith the Inner Moray Firth Area, will help to sustain fragile communities and secure service provision, including vital lifeline ferry services, across the wider Highlands and Islands region.

Inclusive Growth: Investment in these ports will help to provide significant numbers of jobs across a number of sectors, thereby attracting skilled and unskilled workers and their families. This will have a knock-on impact on the local economy e.g. shops, accommodation etc. as well as directly through the creation of new business or the expansion/diversification of existing business. Tourism/leisure and fishing are key sectors of the economy that can be developed at smaller ports/harbours that are not listed above but can contribute significantly to their local economy. They should not be lost amongst aspirations for larger scale industrial or cruise ship related development.

Ullapool, Uig and Scrabster harbours provide key lifeline ferry routes to Eilean Siar and Orkney – with Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) there will be increased traffic, both tourist and commercial. Affordable ferry travel will help to support business development, access to services and make our more remote communities more liveable. Road infrastructure connecting these ferry routes must be able to cope.

Place: Development of these ports, particularly should Freeport status be granted to the Cromarty Firth, could also result in further investment in improving the quality of the local area. Particularly at Invergordon which is the arrival point for thousands of tourists per year as well as Ullapool, Scrabster, Mallaig, Gills Bay and Uig as ferry ports. Furthermore with the potential investment and job creation this could help drive delivery of significant new housing development and wider infrastructure investment in the local area to support and attract workers.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND09) Strategic Airport & Service Enhancements**
Brief description of proposed national development	Supporting the main airports as gateways and recognising the importance of lifeline air links. Strategic Airport Enhancements (including investment in air traffic control technology) at Inverness, Skye & Wick John O'Groats and innovation in new sustainable aircraft design as part of Scottish Governments commitment to making the Highlands and Islands the world's first net zero aviation region by 2040.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Main national airports: Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Prestwick. HIAL Airports particularly Inverness & Wick John O'Groats. Broadford Airstrip on Skye which has the potential for airport development.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Some works to airports/airfields (including the potential upgrades at Broadford) will fall under permitted development. However larger upgrades elsewhere may require planning permission. There may also be requirements to consult on airspace changes resulting from upgrades.
When would the development be complete or operational?	Various/ongoing - based on individual projects/development programmes. For Wick a PSO would need to be approved should there be support for this as a mechanism for flights to Edinburgh etc
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Existing National Development from NPF3; however we propose that this is expanded upon to include investment in Air Traffic Control and innovation/investment in making air travel/aircraft more sustainable.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change: Innovation and investment in making aircraft and air travel more sustainable will help to reduce the carbon emissions while still retaining air as a key means available for travel, especially to enable certain trip types. This is a key opportunity to address Scottish Government's commitment to net-zero aviation in Highlands and Islands by 2040 on shorter air routes. The likelihood for electric aircraft to be in operation within a few years could provide a 'stepchange' to the carbon footprint of aviation as a form of transport thereby making air travel more attractive (and arguably sustainable for longer journeys) than car travel.

People: This will improve connections and airport capacity at Inverness as a key travel 'hub' for the Highlands as well as improving connectivity with our more remote areas such as Caithness and Skye. It could also contribute to more innovative ways of providing services, particularly more specialist services such as improving access to Consultant doctors by allowing them to fly to Broadford Hospital or Caithness General for appointments with patients.

Inclusive Growth: Frequency, capacity, resilience and reliability of service to main economic centres (chiefly Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen as well as further afield such as to London or to elsewhere in Europe) are key to businesses in remote areas. This will also improve connectivity for business growth and development including renewables in the North Sea and Pentland Firth and local business and tourism on Skye. There is already a positive business case for upgrading Broadford Airstrip and additionally Skye & Lochalsh is the only population centre in Scotland where it is not possible to make a return day trip to either Glasgow or Edinburgh. The recent loss of key service to Wick is likely to have a major negative economic impact on Caithness and efforts are underway to get a Public Service Obligation (PSO) to operate out of Wick, which would help support businesses. It could also make it easier for longer distance commuting e.g. Inverness to London which, although not necessarily sustainable long term, unless substantially de-carbonised, could widen the job market for some workers.

Place: Airports are key gateways and often the first impressions of a place or area for visitors; as such, high quality and efficient airports will contribute towards an enhanced experience of the place.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND10) Digital Network**
Brief description of proposed national development	Continual delivery and modernisation of the virtual digital network with strategic funding to ensure comprehensive national coverage
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Pan Scotland. It should be noted that there are still a number of locations within Highland that are not covered by the digital fibre network. In other areas reliability and performance are still an issue which requires to be addressed.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Installation of infrastructure
When would the development be complete or operational?	While we understand that the roll out of the digital fibre network is classed as 'complete' there are still a number of 'notspots' in Highland that should be addressed as soon as practicable. Suggested target of 2025 intended to drive transformation and ensure that inequality in access is addressed as a high priority.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Digital Fibre Network is a National Development set out in NPF3, a Subject Policy in SPP and digital network connections forms part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal, the Reaching 100% programme and the Local Full Fibre Network project.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change: While physical connections are a key part of our vision, these should be supplemented with enhanced digital connectivity and the virtual digital network. This will have benefits in terms of reducing the need to physically travel and supporting a green circular economy. Virtual digital networks can also help to advance scientific modelling and remote monitoring of climate change impacts and mitigation measures. Integrating digital technology into the built environment (Smart Cities) can also allow for heat mapping, traffic modelling and interventions to ease congestion etc.

People: Particularly in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, a fast and reliable virtual digital network can have benefits for facilitating social activity virtually, as a means of disseminating information and allowing for work and education to be undertaken remotely. Digital networks can also be integrated into the home to (remotely) monitor health and social care as well as the home environment and security. Digital networks and data gathering can also be used more widely to improve service delivery, and to ensure the long term viability and vibrancy of more rural, isolated and fragile communities.

Inclusive Growth: Digital and virtual networks can help to broaden the reach of small local businesses through a virtual marketplace as well as facilitating the important knowledge economy. They can also help to attract new markets and visitors related to tourism. Fast and reliable digital networks can allow businesses to expand in rural areas through an increased use of digital technology or more widely through the ability to work from home. This in turn could allow more flexibility in the workplace and allow more people to either remain in employment or progress their careers.

Place: Alongside physical connectivity, we regard digital connectivity to be equally vital to our vision for the future and also to economic recovery from COVID-19. By collecting and analysing (digital) data on how people use places this can improve decision and plan making and target investment to create better, more intuitive, places.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND11) Emerging Space industry funding, support and development**
Brief description of proposed national development	A joint venture between the UK Space Agency, HIE and the private sector to develop an international space hub with a vertical launching pad for the delivery of low earth observational commercial satellites.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Melness, Sutherland Grid Ref. E: 254056 N. 962645
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Construction of vertical launch space port with launch operations control centre, site integration facility, launch pad complex, antenna park, access road, fencing, services and associated infrastructure
When would the development be complete or operational?	The proposal has been to start construction during 2020, subject to planning permission and other consents. However, it is understood that this needs to be reviewed following the COVID-19 outbreak. It is understood that construction could last around 15 months
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Planning Permission issued 05 August 2020 (Council 20/00616/FUL refers).

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change: This cND proposes the development of a space hub principally for the delivery of low earth observational commercial satellites to monitor vegetation, weather, cloud cover and ice cover to monitor and understand climate change. Thereby bringing increased understanding, awareness and monitoring of Scotland's, the UK's, Europe's and the worldwide approach to addressing Climate Change.

People: The repopulation of the rural Highlands is outlined as one of the Scottish Government's key objectives. This will only be achieved if high-quality well-paid employment is available within these localities. HIE economic assessment published in February 2020 estimates that the development of the Space Hub will result in 61 highly skilled jobs within Caithness and Sutherland and 250 jobs within the wider regional area (https://www.hie.co.uk/our-region/regional-projects/space-hub-sutherland/space-hub-sutherland-faqs/) and consequently it is asserted that bringing these jobs to the local economy will significantly aid the Scottish Government in satisfying one of its key objectives.

Inclusive Growth: Rural highlands' economy primarily relies on agriculture, forestry and tourism, all of which are considered to be seasonal, lower skilled employment opportunities. Therefore, the development of a Space Port and the diversification this will bring in terms of high quality, permanent employment is judged to bring sustainable economic growth, helping to reduce poverty and inequality locally, regionally and across Scotland.

Place: The siting of the Space Hub within Sutherland is locationally specific for the following reasons:

- A flight trajectory that does not overfly populated areas;
- Appropriate weather for scheduled launches;
- Access to key orbits;
- Both polar and sun-synchronous orbits can be achieved from North Scotland – these currently account for 95% of future orbital requirements.

Furthermore, detailed EIA will address, mitigate and seek improvements to natural and bio-diversity assets.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND12) Sustainable Tourism Development Infrastructure Plan**
Brief description of proposed national development	Investment in the transport, interpretation, digital communications and waste management networks that ensure tourists enjoy a high quality of experience, whilst achieving the Scottish Government ambition for a net zero Scotland by 2045.
Location of proposed national development	Scotland wide; however, Highlands already offers considerable cultural, built and natural heritage tourism assets.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	No specific high-level aspect will require formal permission. However, an overall co-ordinated plan would require consultation and individual developments to achieve the plan would require permissions.
When would the development be complete or operational?	Tourism is already well established across Scotland and future growth requires to be undertaken in a sustainable manner to aid transition of the sector to make its contribution to a net-zero Scotland by 2045.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	SPP (2014) along with the majority of Scottish LDPs contain general advice and policies on tourist related developments. Nevertheless, the focus of this advice and policy framework is on the acceptability of individual projects at site specific locations, rather than achieving sustainable tourist development and/or the wider cumulative infrastructure and servicing provisions.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change, People, Inclusive Growth and Place

In 2018 the Highlands tourism industry accounted for over 15% of total employment (https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers-2/regional-factsheets/highland-factsheet-2018v2.pdf) an increase of 3% on the previous year and injected over £316.5M into our regional economy. Along with many other areas across Scotland the growth of tourism has brought many benefits and investment into the area. However, it has also highlighted numerous infrastructural and servicing constraints, including across Highlands infrastructure issues along the NC500, Skye affordable housing accommodation shortages, Inverness airport capacity issues, Fort William road

network capacity, the loss of Visit Scotland Tourism Visitor/information centres and air pollution from the Harry Potter steam train experience.

Furthermore, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has shown how fragile this industry can be and at the time of writing the long-term impact of this pandemic on Scotland's tourist industry is not yet able to be quantified.

Nevertheless, this current pause in the industry resulting from the pandemic offers Scotland a real opportunity to reposition our focus of the industry to achieve continual growth, but in a sustainable method, whilst providing high-quality year-round employment opportunities. This in turn can help to address certain concerns about negative effects of tourism, expressed by communities who otherwise embrace the industry.

This change in position should focus on the overall visitor experience from the moment they arrive at one of our ports of entry, to the way they travel around the area be it my private or public means, to the places they eat, sleep and visit, right up to the point of departure. All of which requires to be done in a joined-up way to ensure that each trip is as sustainable as possible, does not overwhelm any specific community and results in a low or preferably zero carbon trip. The key gateways into Highland are important to the arrival experience for people entering the region. They can provide opportunities to focus and enhance the sense of arrival, to raise the profile of the Highland brand and particularly to promote its growing sustainability values.

In order to achieve this, it is Highland's view that a Scotland-wide approach is required to the resolution of specific identified infrastructure and servicing issues, by way of a targeted central funding pot to resolve and enhance existing shortcomings in the national infrastructure – be it transport, interpretation, digital communications or waste management networks. This could build on and complement existing regional efforts (for example, the current preparation of a Highland Tourism Infrastructure Plan) and Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, within a development plan-led approach.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND13) World Heritage Site for the Flow Country**
Brief description of proposed national development	Supporting the adoption and sustainable management of the Flow Country proposed World Heritage Site.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	The Flow Country in Caithness and Sutherland. [See map within Technical Evaluation submitted to DCMS in December 2019 – providing a draft/proposed boundary for the WHS, which may be refined further.]
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	Peatland restoration proposals may possibly require consent (this needs to be clarified and it is noted that Scottish Government is currently considering the possibility of introducing some permitted development rights for peatland restoration). Also, WHS status will not prevent access and activity but is expected to lead to opportunities for tourism, recreation, education, research and enterprise, with an emphasis on that being managed, sustainable, net-zero carbon and compatible with preserving the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. This may include activities within the WHS or within the wider area associated with it – and may include changes of use of land and/or the building of facilities requiring planning permission.
When would the development be complete or operational?	The 'bid' process for the Flow Country to be accorded World Heritage status is ongoing. The aim is for nomination to UNESCO in 2023. If the Flow Country 'bid' subsequently succeeds, thereafter the WHS status would trigger a requirement for appropriate ongoing management and for WHS considerations to be embedded into policies and assessments. Outcomes sought are expected to include preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS and further peatland restoration to complement the existing areas of OUV.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a	The Flow Country is already on the Tentative List for World Heritage. National Planning Framework 3 (paragraph 4.32) refers to the site being included on

development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	the tentative list of sites for nomination and describes it as an important asset. The Peatlands Partnership (of which The Highland Council is a member) is progressing the bid for the Flow Country to be inscribed on the list of World Heritage Sites and this is included as an action in the Delivery Programme for the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan). A Technical Evaluation was submitted to DCMS in December 2019. Following consideration of that by DCMS, it has been announced that the 'bid' should proceed to being worked up as a formal nomination by the UK to UNESCO.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria:

Climate Change: The Flow Country offers unparalleled peatland resource. By preserving this habitat, this hugely important carbon store will be safeguarded, thereby (in the national interest) avoiding carbon release. It will provide a focus for peatland restoration, thereby locking in further carbon. Management planning and policies will support activities that are compatible with preservation of the OUV of the WHS, with a particular emphasis on net-zero carbon.

People: A key strand of the case for a Flow Country WHS is an acknowledgement and understanding of the relationship that people have to the area, including those who live in, work in or visit it. Furthermore, communities are being engaged with as part of the 'bid' process. Through safeguarding this natural resource, Highland's and Scotland's population will benefit.

Inclusive Growth: A key aspect of the 'bid' for a Flow Country WHS is that it can bring opportunities for tourism, recreation, education, research and enterprise, with an emphasis on that being sustainable, net-zero carbon and compatible with preserving the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS.

Place: World Heritage Site status for the Flow Country would lead to renewed acknowledgement of the value of peatlands in Caithness and Sutherland and of the need to safeguard this resource, adding to it also through peatland restoration. Key habitats and supported species are part of the basis for the bid. The Flow Country should be regarded as being vital blue and green content of the nation's infrastructure assets set. Engagement with communities in the 'bid' process is laying the foundation for the potential to work more collaboratively with communities in a place planning approach to management of the Flow Country.

National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a Respondent Information Form and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	**(cND14) The land management, protection and restoration of our natural and bio-diversity assets, including our peatland areas and reforestation of Scotland.**
Brief description of proposed national development	The use of resources for the delivery of carbon reduction in support of wider national interests. Including the protection and restoration of our peatland resource, and the reforestation of Scotland.
Location of proposed national development	Scotland wide; however, given Highland's geographical size it offers unparalleled resources.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	National overarching land-use strategy establishing a collaborative approach across Scotland and setting priorities for each areas/regions which feed into the overall strategy. Individual specific development may require local permissions.
When would the development be complete or operational?	In line with Scottish Government target to reducing emissions to net zero by 2045.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	The commitment to reduce emissions to net zero by 2045 is set in statute in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019. However, the realisation of this commitment must transect and impact on all parts of legislation, with the planning function being one of the principal methods to deliver fundamental change in Scotland's approach to the use of our natural and bio-diversity resource.
Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria: **Climate Change**: The Highland area is considered to contain most of the country's peatland resource and by establishing long term protection of this unparalleled habitat, we will prevent the carbon release of this hugely important national carbon store. Moreover, a national plan and effective policies for its restoration will ensure locked in carbon will remain in perpetuity. With a current national target of tree planting 10,000 ha per year, rising to 15,000 ha a year from 2024/25, the geographical area of Highlands is judged to be of paramount importance to achieve Scottish Government climate change commitments. However,	

achieving such sustained significant reforestation requires to be done in a national development plan-led approach.

The strategy for peatland restoration and for reforestation needs to take account of the vital agricultural sector, which will have its own role to play and contribution to make to sustainability and addressing climate change issues.

Going further, these and other opportunities could form the basis for a national carbon and ecological 'mitigation bank' (in which the Highland area could be anticipated to play a major part, given its area and range of relevant assets, resources and opportunities).

People: A national development plan-led approach to the protection and restoration of Scotland's natural and bio-diversity assets, will significantly aid the wellbeing, sustainability and quality of life of Scotland's current and future generations, providing them a location and habitat in which to thrive and continue to attract worldwide visitors. This could take account of statutorily designated assets and those that are acknowledged for their value without statutory designation for planning, such as the Wester Ross Biosphere.

Inclusive Growth: The protection and restoration of damaged peatlands has been identified to significantly contribute to lowering existing emissions in the land use sector as Peatlands in good condition actively form peat, removing CO2 from the atmosphere and storing carbon in the soil. Peatland restoration has many other benefits including providing an internationally important habitat, improving water quality and reducing flood risk.

Achieving the Scottish Government targets of reforestation, in the longer-term will work to reduce the current 70% deficit in our annual national timber requirements. Thereby resulting in substantial additional employment in forestry management and complementary sectors, whilst simultaneously achieving the Government climate change commitments and increasing bio-diversity habitat across the whole of Scotland. Reforestation therefore needs to include commercial forestry in appropriate locations but also recreational and amenity woodland using native species, which will bring particular biodiversity benefits.

Place: Scotland holds 13% of the world's blanket bog, with the Flow Country and the Lewis Peatlands considered likely to represent the largest contiguous areas globally, therefore Scotland and especially Highlands plays an unparalleled role in providing the protection and restoration of Peatlands.

Historically, Scotland was largely wooded however due to deforestation during the 18th century, by 1900 only about 5% of Scotland's land area was still wooded. Large-scale afforestation in the early 21st century has increased this figure to about 17%. But this is still much lower woodland cover than other countries in Europe and to address this shortfall the Scottish Government's Draft Climate Change Plan, has proposed the woodland expansion increases to 21% by 2032.

Highlands land area coupled with sparse population will play an important role in this ambitious plan. Nonetheless achieving it will require a national development plan-led approach.

Blue and green assets can form a vital infrastructure type with a valuable contribution made to Place.

Keep In Touch
For more information and other resources


http://www.transformingplanning.scot


https://blogs.gov.scot/planning-architecture/


@ScotGovPlanning


scotplan@gov.scot