

**Inner Moray Firth  
Proposed Local Development Plan**



# Habitats Regulation Appraisal Record

**May 2014**

**Measadh Riaghailtean  
Àrainnean**

**A' Mhàigh 2014**

**Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh  
Plana Leasachadh Ionadail air a Mholadh airson**

## **Foreword**

This document has been prepared under the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and has applied the requirements set out by Scottish Government Policy in the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended.

It is the Highland Council's responsibility to consider whether the policies and proposals within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) are likely to have any significant effect on Special Protection Areas (including potential SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (including possible and candidate SACs) and Ramsar sites, having regard to the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of those sites.

Where a likely significant effect has been identified, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, appropriate assessment has been undertaken and mitigation measures provided to reduce the likely significant effect and avoid adversely affecting the integrity of the site. This has involved incorporating mitigation and making changes to the IMFLDP where necessary.

During the preparation of this document and the consideration of relevant representations on the IMFLDP The Highland Council has had early engagement and discussions with and input from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) which have helped identify and address any potential effects. In addition, data provided by SNH has been referred to in order to identify the need for and inform the definition of mitigation measures. Mitigation measures and relevant changes have been developed in conjunction with SNH or SEPA where appropriate.

The IMFLDP Proposed Plan was subject to public consultation between 1 November and 13 December 2013. This HRA Record has been revised to reflect comments received by SNH during the consultation period.

## Contents

1. Introduction and Context .....	4
2. Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Vision and Spatial Strategy .....	6
3. Background Information about European Sites .....	8
4. Methodology for Assessment .....	11
5. Screening Process .....	12
6. Appropriate Assessment .....	21
7. Conclusion .....	55
Appendix 1 – Natura Sites within or close to Plan Area Screened Out .....	56

## Tables

Table 1:Natura Sites Potentially Affected by the Plan.....	9
Table 2: Policy tools of the IMFLDP screened out individually as having no, or minimal, effect on Natura sites.....	12
Table 3: Policies of the IMFLDP screened out individually as having no, or minimal, effect on Natura sites.....	13
Table 4: Projects screened out of the IMFLDP because although they are referred to in the plan, they are not proposed by the plan.....	14
Table 5: Proposals with No Effect on Natura sites, and therefore Screened Out Both Alone and In Combination.....	14
Table 6: Sites with Minor Residual Effects only and therefore Screened Out Alone.....	16
Table 7: Sites with likely significant effect which therefore require Appropriate Assessment Alone .....	17
Table 8: Sites within the Plan with likely significant effect which require Appropriate Assessment In-combination .....	18
Table 9: Sites which require further consideration for likely significant effect in-combination with other plans or projects.....	19
Table 10: Other relevant plans that may have in-combination effects with the IMFLDP.....	19

## 1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1. In October 2005 the European Court of Justice<sup>1</sup> ruled that all land use plans in the United Kingdom likely to have a significant effect on European sites (Natura sites), either Special Protection Areas (including proposed SPAs) or Special Areas of Conservation (including possible and candidate SACs), can only be approved after an appropriate assessment of the policies and proposals has been undertaken under the provision of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 1992<sup>2</sup>. The Directive states that 'any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives'. The directive goes on to say that the plan shall only be agreed if there is no adverse effect on the integrity of any European site after mitigation is considered.
- 1.2. Scottish Ministers have extended the requirement for appropriate assessment to Ramsar sites, listed under the International Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands of International Importance, and proposed SPAs and candidate SACs, before they are fully classified. Hereafter in this appraisal, the term 'Natura site' should be taken as not only referring to SPAs and SACs but also to proposed SPAs, candidate SACs and Ramsar sites.
- 1.3. The purpose of this Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) record is to consider whether the policies and proposals within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) are likely to have a significant effect on any Natura site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. For those policies and proposals that would have a likely significant effect, an appropriate assessment has been carried out to ascertain whether the Local Development Plan would not adversely affect the integrity of these sites. Where it is not possible to ascertain that no adverse effects will occur, the plan cannot be adopted except in the most exceptional of circumstances.
- 1.4. The HRA record includes mitigation identified as necessary to include in the plan. The assessment concludes that with appropriate safeguarding and mitigation added to the local development plan, the IMFLDP will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura site. The record also concludes with the identification of any policies or proposals that would have a minor residual effect.
- 1.5. The HRA Record will be placed on the Council's website alongside the Proposed IMFLDP. The accompanying Action Programme for the local development plan's policies and proposals as necessary will include cross-references to requirements in this HRA record.
- 1.6. It must be advised that this HRA Record including appropriate assessment has been compiled using the best available information, and any subsequent planning applications will require further assessment to ensure that the integrity of Natura sites will not be adversely affected. This is a requirement

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<sup>1</sup> Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Case C. 6/04 in the second chamber of the European Court of Justice, judgment 20th October 2005

<sup>2</sup> Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora.

of Policy 57 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan which must be read alongside the IMFLDP and all the relevant supplementary guidance.

## **2. Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Vision and Spatial Strategy**

2.1. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) sets the strategic planning policy context for the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP). The HwLDP contains the main policies for determining planning applications in the Highlands. The IMFLDP is the first of three new area Local Development Plans for 3 sub-areas – the Inner Moray Firth, Caithness and Sutherland and West Highland and Islands. The purpose of the area Local Development Plans is to set out plans and proposals for delivering development reflecting on the unique characteristics and attributes of these three areas.

2.2. The vision for the Inner Moray Firth area is set out in the HwLDP adopted in April 2012. The vision is summarised below:

By 2030, the Inner Moray Firth will:

- have increased the number of jobs, people and facilities;
- have a growing City;
- have safeguarded and enhanced its special places;
- have made it easy for people and wildlife to move about through a green network;
- have more efficient forms of travel;
- have resolved its infrastructure constraints;
- have diversified its economy; and
- be regenerated and renewed.

2.3. The IMFLDP will replace the elements of the Inverness Local Plan (2006), Nairnshire Local Plan (2000), the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (2007) and Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (1997) which have been continued in force by The Town and Country Planning (Continuation in force of Local Plans) (Highland) (Scotland) Order 2012.

2.4. The Plan area extends to 5,128km<sup>2</sup> and is an area of high quality natural environment and diverse historic background. The current population of the plan area is 133,004 (60% of the Highland population) and is expected to grow to around 155,132 by 2031. The current population density is 25.9 people per square kilometer compared to the Highland population density of 8.6 people per square kilometer.

2.5. This Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) considers all the policies, proposals and vision statements set out in the LDP. Where a planning application for development gives rise to likely significant effects on a Natura site beyond the scope of that considered in this HRA, an appropriate assessment will be required to be undertaken as set out in Policy 57 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. This could include development proposals on sites allocated in the LDP (giving rise to potential effects that were not foreseen in this HRA) and development proposals on sites not allocated in the LDP (giving rise to potential effects beyond those considered for the policy framework in this appropriate assessment).

2.6. The over-arching aim of the IMFLDP is for the area to grow its population, compete in the global economy and sustain the highest standard of services

while maintaining and enhancing the outstanding quality of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area.

2.7. IMFLDP can be viewed online at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/developmentplans>.

### 3. Background Information about European Sites

3.1. The IMFLDP area contains or is close to a total of 44 Natura sites that could potentially be affected by the plan. These comprise 19 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 6 of which are also Ramsar sites, and 25 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Each of these Natura sites has been screened to determine the likelihood of being directly or indirectly affected by development sites specifically identified in the plan. The Natura sites shown on the map and listed in the table below are those that may be potentially affected by the plan, along with reasons for their selection. The remaining Natura sites within or close to the plan area which are unlikely to be affected are listed in Appendix 1.

3.2. For more details of Natura sites located within or close to the plan area see SNH's '[Sitelink](#)' web application and [interactive map](#).

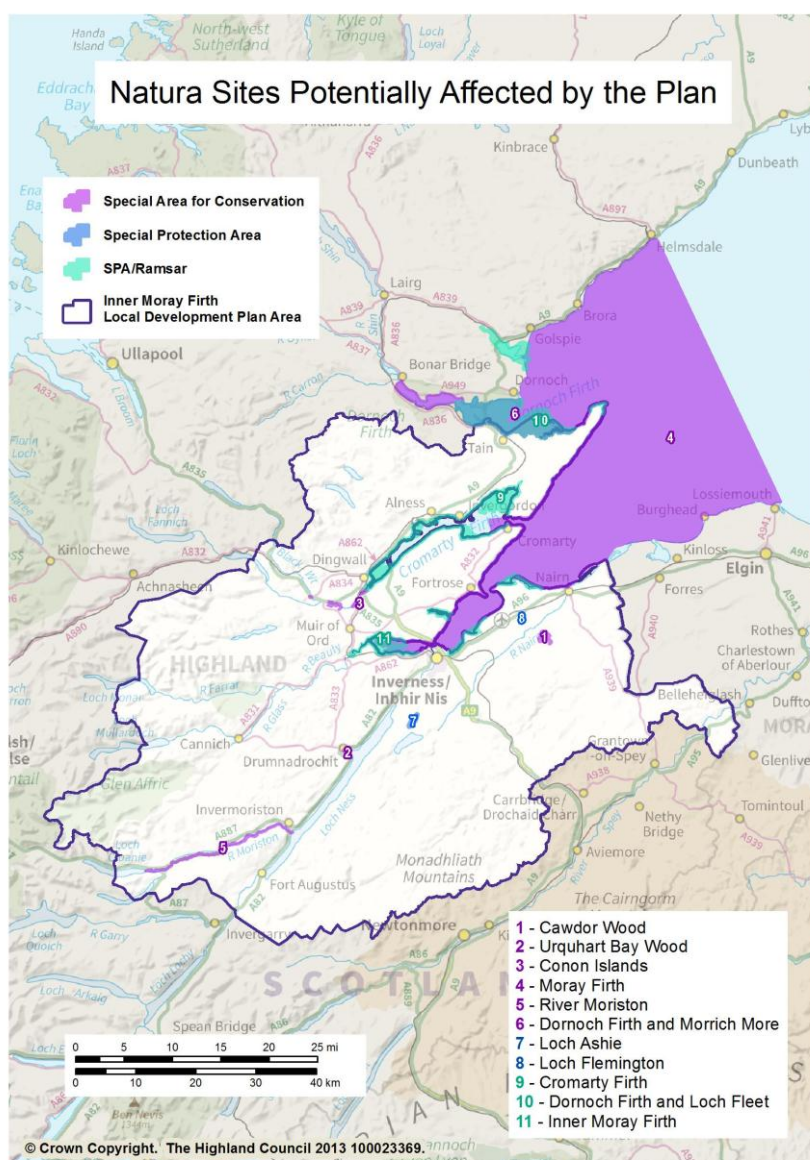


Figure 1: Natura Sites Potentially Affected by the Plan



**Table 1: Natura Sites Potentially Affected by the Plan**

Natura Site	Reasons for Selection
<b>Special Areas of Conservation</b>	
<b>Cawdor Wood</b>	Recreational impacts from the potential creation of new infrastructure or the physical damage of the woodland, with reference to development at Cawdor.
<b>Conon Islands</b>	Potential for impacts upon water quality, hydrology and impacts on the woodland features of the site from increased recreational disturbance due to increased visitor pressure from developments in Conon Bridge and Maryburgh.
<b>Dornoch Firth and Morrich More</b>	Potential impact on qualifying habitats from business and industrial development at Fendom site which gains marine access through the site; potential impact on qualifying species (harbour seal) from port-related developments in the Cromarty Firth, between the SAC and a seal haul-out at Foulis.
<b>Moray Firth</b>	Waste water infrastructure impacts from the A96 Corridor Developments, including Inverness City and Nairn, on water quality; impact from increased marine traffic both commercial and recreational including potential renewables developments at Whiteness and Nigg, and development at Muirtown and South Kessock, and potentially Inverness Harbour, Invergordon, Evanton and Avoch; possible construction and operational impacts (e.g. acoustic vibration, pollution, piling) at sites adjacent to firth, including the former Longman Landfill site.
<b>River Moriston</b>	Water supply infrastructure impacts from the A96 Corridor Developments including Inverness City and Nairn leading to potential drawdown in water levels within the Ness catchment and the River Moriston itself with potential effects on qualifying species; connectivity via River Ness and Loch Ness to proposed development in Inverness, including the planned West Link Crossing.
<b>Urquhart Bay Wood</b>	Water infrastructure impacts from the A96 Corridor Developments including Inverness City and Nairn leading to potential drawdown in water levels within the Ness catchment and at Urquhart Bay Wood itself and resultant change in hydrology effects on qualifying habitat.
<b>Special Protection Areas</b>	
<b>Loch Ashie</b>	Potential for water infrastructure impact upon water level and hence upon qualifying bird species as a result of developments in A96 Corridor, including Inverness City and Nairn.

Natura Site	Reasons for Selection
<b>Loch Flemington</b>	Recreational impacts on qualifying species from increased visitor pressure from potential development at Tornagrain; potential impact on supporting hydrology as well as on water quality from developments in the surrounding area.
<b>Special Protection Areas and Ramsars</b>	
<b>Cromarty Firth</b>	Renewables related development proposed for Nigg may have direct (e.g. habitat loss) and indirect (e.g. disturbance) impacts on qualifying interests of Natura site. There are other proposed developments around the firth including those at Conon Bridge, Maryburgh, Dingwall, Evanton and Invergordon which may introduce additional recreation and/or water quality pressures on qualifying interests.
<b>Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet</b>	Potential for disturbance to qualifying interests due to increased recreational pressures from proposed developments at Tain and off-site feeding habitat loss and/or disturbance from business and industrial operations from proposed developments at Fendom.
<b>Inner Moray Firth</b>	Potential for disturbance to qualifying interests due to increased presence of people including increased recreational pressures and/or off-site feeding habitat loss arising from A96 corridor developments including Inverness City and Nairn and potentially developments in Beauly, Kirkhill, Muir of Ord. Redevelopment of Whiteness Head has the potential to cause the deterioration or complete loss of roost sites and/or feeding habitat within the SPA.

#### **4. Methodology for Assessment**

- 4.1. After consulting the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans – Guidance for Plan-making Bodies in Scotland Version 2 (August 2012) provided by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the following methodology was established.
- 4.2. Highland Council worked closely with SNH to carry out this appraisal, gaining the background information regarding qualifying interests and conservation objectives of Natura sites required to conduct an effective appropriate assessment. SNH have also been consulted regarding the wording of policies and proposals and the mitigation measures for any potential adverse effects on site integrity to ensure that the mitigation measures provided are tailored to the conservation objectives and qualifying interests.
- 4.3. All Natura sites potentially affected by the IMFLDP have been identified and mapped. The mapping is included within the Highland-wide Local Development Plan Proposals Map. All policies and proposals in the plan have been screened both individually and cumulatively to determine the possible effects that may arise due to their implementation. Policies which have been identified as having no effect or are unlikely to have a significant effect have been detailed and reasons for this have been given. Where it was possible to identify straightforward mitigation measures to policies and proposals screened in as likely to have a significant effect, these were applied and then the policy/proposal was screened out. Remaining policies likely to have a significant effect have been identified as requiring an appropriate assessment.
- 4.4. Likely significant effect is defined as any effect that may reasonably be predicted as a consequence of a plan or project that may undermine the conservation objectives of the features for which the site was designated.
- 4.5. Paragraph 136 of the Scottish Planning Policy notes that Ramsar sites are also Natura sites and are therefore protected under the relevant legislation. Ramsar interests have thus been considered alongside their equivalent SPA for the purposes of this assessment and also documented together within this report. As a result, the Ramsar interests should be adequately protected by consideration of the effects on their 'partner' SPA site in line with the advice given in paragraph 1.12 of the "Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans: Guidance for Plan-making Bodies in Scotland Version 2" (2012).

## 5. Screening Process

5.1 Extensive discussions with SNH took place to screen out the elements of the IMFLDP that would not be likely to have a significant effect alone on Natura sites listed in Table 1 (above). As a result, the policy tools (detailed in Table 2); policies (detailed in Table 3); projects referred to in, but not proposed by, the plan (detailed in Table 4) and proposals (detailed in Table 5) screened out are listed below, along with a brief explanation of the reasons for this.

### *Policy Tools and Policies*

**Table 2: Policy tools of the IMFLDP screened out individually as having no, or minimal, effect on Natura sites**

Policy Tool	Reason(s) for 'screening out'
Inner Moray Firth Vision and Spatial Strategy	Too general – this vision does not explain where, when or how the aspect of the plan may be implemented, or where any potential effects may occur, or which European sites, if any, may be affected. Locations are defined later in the plan and therefore are screened in or out at this stage.
Special Landscape Areas	Boundaries of Special Landscape Areas have been contracted, where relevant, to reflect the boundaries of the Highland Council area. A small expansion to the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area is also shown in the plan. Therefore as the only boundary change within the Highland Council area is an expansion of a Special Landscape Area and this is a protective policy which is intended to protect the natural environment, there will therefore be no impact on the likelihood of development affecting a Natura Site. Furthermore all proposals must accord with other general policies in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, including Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage.
Hinterland Boundaries	In comparison to the Highland-wide Local Development Plan there have been minor contractions and expansions to the hinterland boundary. There was concern that any contractions of the hinterland may result in an increased likelihood of effects on Natura Sites given the more permissible policy position towards housing development in the countryside. However proposals for housing outwith the hinterland will be assessed against Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policy 36 which includes that proposals must accord with other general policies in the plan which includes Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage. Furthermore areas that are now 'Wider Countryside' rather than hinterland will not be promoted as such for development – they

Policy Tool	Reason(s) for 'screening out'
	are not seen as 'growth areas'.
Inverness to Nairn Growth Area Vision	Too general – this vision does not explain where, when or how the aspect of the plan may be implemented, or where any potential effects may occur, or which Natura sites, if any, may be affected. Locations are defined later in the plan and therefore are screened in or out at this stage.
Inverness to Nairn Growth Area Strategy	Whilst this strategy does make reference to various locations more details on these are provided later in the plan. This strategy can therefore be screened out at this stage.
Ross-shire Growth Area Vision	Too general – whilst this vision does make reference to various locations more details on these are provided later in the plan. This vision can therefore be screened out at this stage.
Ross-shire Growth Area Strategy	Whilst this strategy does make reference to various locations more details on these are provided later in the plan. This strategy can therefore be screened out at this stage.

**Table 3: Policies of the IMFLDP screened out individually as having no, or minimal, effect on Natura sites**

Policy	Policy	Reason(s) for 'screening out'
1	Promoting and Protecting City and Town Centres	Too general – it is not known where, when or how the aspects of the policy may be implemented, or where any potential affects may occur, or which Natura sites, if any, may be affected.
2	Delivering Development	Too general and qualitative in nature
3	Other Settlements	The plan makes clear that although this policy does not include specific reference to the protection of Natura Sites the policy, policy tools and settlement details must all be read alongside the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and accordance with the development plan will be judged on the basis of both the IMFLDP and the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.
4	Water and Waste Water Infrastructure in the Inverness to Nairn Growth Area	Intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity
5	Development Within the Water Catchment of Loch Flemington	Intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity

***Projects referred to in, but not proposed by, the Plan***

5.1. The IMFLDP makes reference to a number of specific proposals for projects referred to in, but not proposed by the plan to enable the plan to take

account of their spatial planning implications. These projects are listed below along with the responsible body for implementing them.

**Table 4: Projects screened out of the IMFLDP because although they are referred to in the plan, they are not proposed by the plan**

Project	Competent Authority Proposer
Dualling of A9	Transport Scotland
Dualling of A96	Transport Scotland
Nairn Bypass	Transport Scotland
Inverness East Link	Transport Scotland
Inverness West Link	The Highland Council (Development and Infrastructure Service)
Inverness – Nairn Coastal Trail	The Highland Council (Development and Infrastructure Service)
Kinnairdie Link Road (Dingwall)	The Highland Council (Development and Infrastructure Service)

- 5.2. In addition the Green Networks Supplementary Guidance includes the proposal for the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail and has been subject to Habitats Regulations Appraisal in the context of development proposed by the HwLDP. However the residual effects of these projects may be relevant and therefore will be checked for in combination effects.

### **Proposals**

- 5.3. The following proposal sites have been screened out for the following reason/s:

*Aspects which make provision for change but which could have no conceivable effect on a European site, because there is no link or pathway between them and the qualifying interests, or any effect would be a positive effect, or would not otherwise undermine the conservation objectives for the site.*

- 5.4. Accordingly these sites are screened out, both alone and in combination, as they have no effect on any European site, with the exception of the large scale issue for the Inverness-Nairn Growth Corridor of water supply and wastewater discharge, which is considered in the appropriate assessment.

**Table 5: Proposals with No Effect on Natura sites, and therefore Screened Out Both Alone and In Combination**

Settlement	Proposal Site
<b>Alness</b>	All sites apart from AL14 and AL19
<b>Ardersier</b>	AR7, AR8
<b>Auldearn</b>	All sites
<b>Avoch</b>	All sites apart from AV6
<b>Beaully</b>	BE4, BE6, BE7
<b>Conon Bridge</b>	CB7
<b>Contin</b>	All sites
<b>Cromarty</b>	All sites
<b>Croy</b>	All sites
<b>Culbokie</b>	All sites
<b>Dingwall</b>	All sites apart from DW7
<b>Dores</b>	All sites

<b>Drumnadrochit</b>	All sites
<b>Evanton</b>	All sites apart from EV5
<b>Fearn Aerodrome</b>	FE1
<b>Fort Augustus</b>	All sites
<b>Fortrose/Rosemarkie</b>	All sites
<b>Inchmore</b>	All sites
<b>Invergordon</b>	All sites apart from IG11 and IG12
<b>Inverness</b>	All sites apart from IN8, IN9, IN13, IN21, IN24*, IN76, IN82, IN83, IN84
<b>Kiltarlity</b>	All sites
<b>Kirkhill</b>	KH1, KH3, KH4
<b>Muir of Ord</b>	All sites apart from MO5
<b>Munlochy</b>	All sites
<b>Nairn</b>	NA7, NA10, NA11, NA12, NA13
<b>North Kessock</b>	All sites
<b>Seaboard Villages</b>	All sites
<b>Strathpeffer</b>	All sites
<b>Tain</b>	All sites apart from TN5 and TN8
<b>Tomatin</b>	All sites
<b>Tore</b>	All sites

*\*Site IN24 is Torvean/Ness-side which has been subject to HRA as a result of the preparation of a Development Brief. This has included mitigation in regard to River Moriston SAC and Moray Firth SAC and therefore this site has been screened out on the basis that the Development Brief includes full mitigation, and this is referred to under the requirements for IN24 in the plan.*

5.5. The following proposal sites have been screened out alone for the following reason/s:

5.6. *Aspects which make provision for change but which could have no significant effect alone on a European site (minor residual effects), because any potential effects would be so restricted that they would not undermine the conservation objectives of the site.*

5.7. Accordingly these sites are screened out alone, but require consideration in-combination, firstly within the plan, and secondly with other plans or projects. In addition those sites in the Inverness – Nairn Growth Corridor must be considered in-combination with all other sites there in terms of possible likely significant effects on Natura sites through water supply and wastewater treatment.

**Table 6: Sites with Minor Residual Effects only and therefore Screened Out Alone**

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Proposal Site</b>
<b>Alness</b>	AL14, AL19
<b>Ardersier</b>	AR1, AR2, AR3, AR4, AR5, AR6
<b>Beauly</b>	BE1, BE2, BE3, BE5, BE8
<b>Cawdor</b>	CD1, CD2, CD11
<b>Conon Bridge</b>	CB1, CB2, CB3, CB4, CB5, CB6
<b>Inverness Airport Business Park</b>	IA1
<b>Kirkhill</b>	KH2, KH5
<b>Maryburgh</b>	MB1, MB2, MB3
<b>Morayhill</b>	MH1
<b>Muir of Ord</b>	MO5
<b>Nairn</b>	NA1, NA2, NA3, NA5
<b>Tain</b>	TN5, TN8

5.8. The following proposal sites are screened in as they are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura site alone, therefore appropriate assessment is required. The table below identifies those sites screened in along with the Natura site/s they are likely to significantly affect.



**Table 7: Sites with likely significant effect which therefore require Appropriate Assessment Alone**

Natura 2000 Designation	Settlement	Avoch	Castle Stuart	Cawdor	Dingwall	Evanton	Fendorn	Invergordon		Inverness								Nairn				Nigg	Tomagrain	Whiteness
	Natura Site/Site Reference	AV6	CS1	CD3-CD10	DW7	EV5	FD1	IG11	IG12	IN8	IN9	IN13	IN21	IN76	IN82	IN83	IN84	NA4	NA6	NA8	NA9	NG1	TG1	WH1
Special Areas of Conservation	Cawdor Wood			✓																				
	Conon Islands																							
	Dornoch Firth and Morrich More						✓																	
	Moray Firth	✓									✓	✓	✓									✓		✓
	River Moriston																							
	Urquhart Bay Woods																							
Special Protection Areas	Loch Ashie																							
	Loch Flemington																						✓	
Special Protection Areas and Ramsars	Cromarty Firth				✓	✓		✓	✓													✓		
	Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet																							
	Inner Moray Firth		✓							✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

5.9. The following proposal sites are screened in as they are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura site in-combination, therefore appropriate assessment is required. The table below identifies those sites screened in in-combination, along with the Natura site/s they are likely to significantly affect.

**Table 8: Sites within the Plan with likely significant effect which require Appropriate Assessment In-combination**

	Settlement	Ardersier	Cawdor	Conon Bridge	Evanton	Fendom	Invergordon	Maryburgh	Nairn	Nigg	Tain	Tornagrain	Inverness to Nairn
Natura 2000 Designation	Natura Site/Site Reference	AR1-6	CD1, CD2, CD11	CB1-6	EV5	FD1	IG11, IG12	MB1 - MB3	NA1, NA2, NA3, NA5	NG1	TN5	TG1	All development sites
Special Areas of Conservation	Cawdor Wood		✓										
	Conon Islands			✓				✓					
	Dornoch Firth and Morrich More				✓		✓			✓			
	Moray Firth				✓		✓						✓
	River Moriston												✓
	Urquhart Bay Woods												✓
Special Protection Areas	Loch Ashie												✓
	Loch Flemington												
Special Protection Areas and Ramsars	Cromarty Firth			✓				✓					
	Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet					✓					✓		
	Inner Moray Firth	✓							✓			✓	

- 5.10. The following proposal sites (from Tables 6 and 8) would have a minor residual effect, screened out alone and in-combination with other aspects of the plan, but require consideration for likely significant effect in-combination with other plans or projects.

**Table 9: Sites which require further consideration for likely significant effect in-combination with other plans or projects**

Settlement	Proposal Site	Natura site on which MRE
Alness	AL14, AL19	Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar (pollution and commercial disturbance)
Beauly	BE1, BE2, BE3, BE5, BE8	Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (goose foraging area)
Inverness Airport Business Park	IA1	Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (disturbance)
Kirkhill	KH2, KH5	Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (goose foraging area)
Morayhill	MH1	Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (disturbance)
Muir of Ord	MO5	Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar (goose foraging area)
Tain	TN8	Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA /Ramsar (pollution and commercial disturbance)

### ***In-Combination Assessment of IMFLDP with other Relevant Plans***

The table below sets out other relevant plans that may have in-combination effects with the IMFLDP.

**Table 10: Other relevant plans that may have in-combination effects with the IMFLDP**

Other Plan/Project	Responsible Authority	LSE in combination with IMFLDP? (Y/N?)	Justification
National Renewables Infrastructure Plan (2010)	Development Industry/The Highland Council	Y	The implications of this Plan in combination with the IMFLDP have been accounted for in the Appropriate Assessment for sites Whiteness/WH1, Nigg/NG1
Inner Moray Firth Ports and Sites Strategy (2006)	Development Industry/The Highland Council	Y	The implications of this Plan in combination with the IMFLDP have been accounted for in the Appropriate Assessment for sites Whiteness/WH1, Nigg/NG1, Invergordon/IG11 and Highland Deephaven

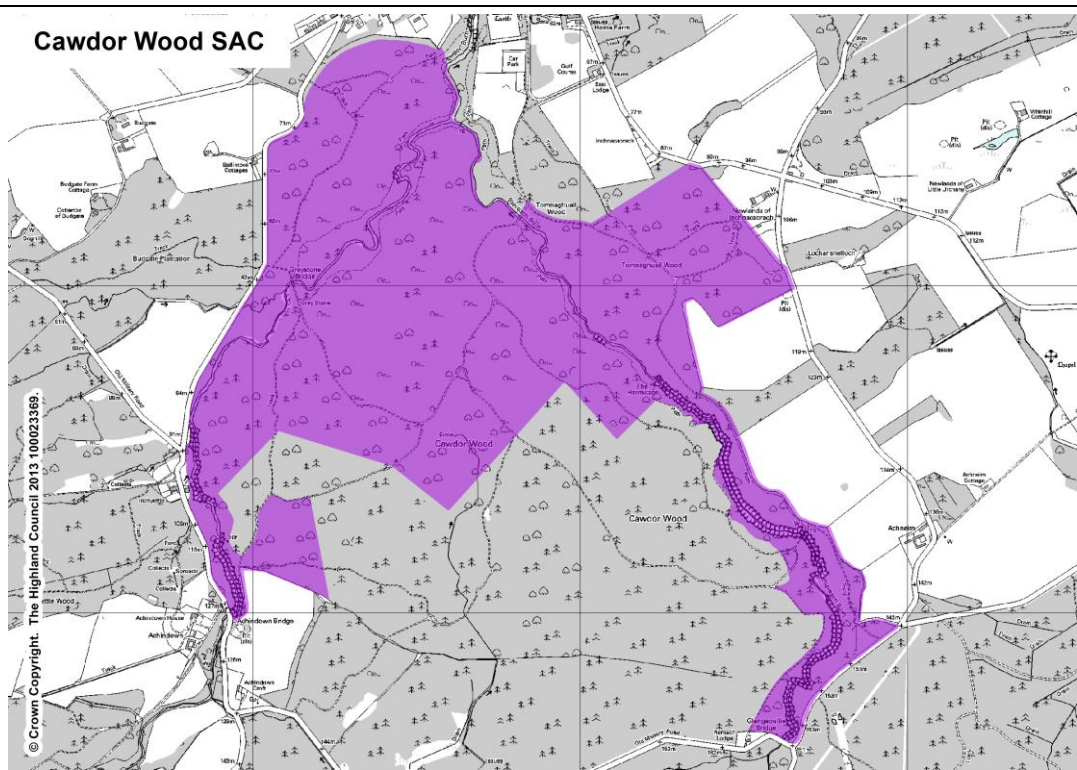
			(Evanton/EV5)
Waste Strategy (2008)	Development Industry/The Highland Council and Moray Council	N	This strategy does not refer to the waste management sites supported in the plan, and therefore there will no cumulative, in-combination effects.
Wind Energy Developments	Development Industry/The Highland Council	N	As stated in Policy 57 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, when dealing with a planning application for a development (which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) where we are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site, the proposal will not be in accordance with the development plan.
Green Networks Supplementary Guidance (2011)	The Highland Council	Y	The implications of this Supplementary Guidance (including the projects proposed therein) in combination with the IMFLDP have been accounted for in the Appropriate Assessment
HwLDP and associated Supplementary Guidance	The Highland Council	Y	The implications of this Plan in combination with the IMFLDP have been accounted for in the Appropriate Assessment

## 6. Appropriate Assessment

6.1. This part of this HRA record sets out the assessment of those elements of the plan screened in from Tables 7 and 8 alone or in combination likely to have a significant effect on those Natura Sites identified as being potentially affected by the plan as shown in Figure 1 and Table 1 in light of their conservation objectives, including consideration of mitigation measures.

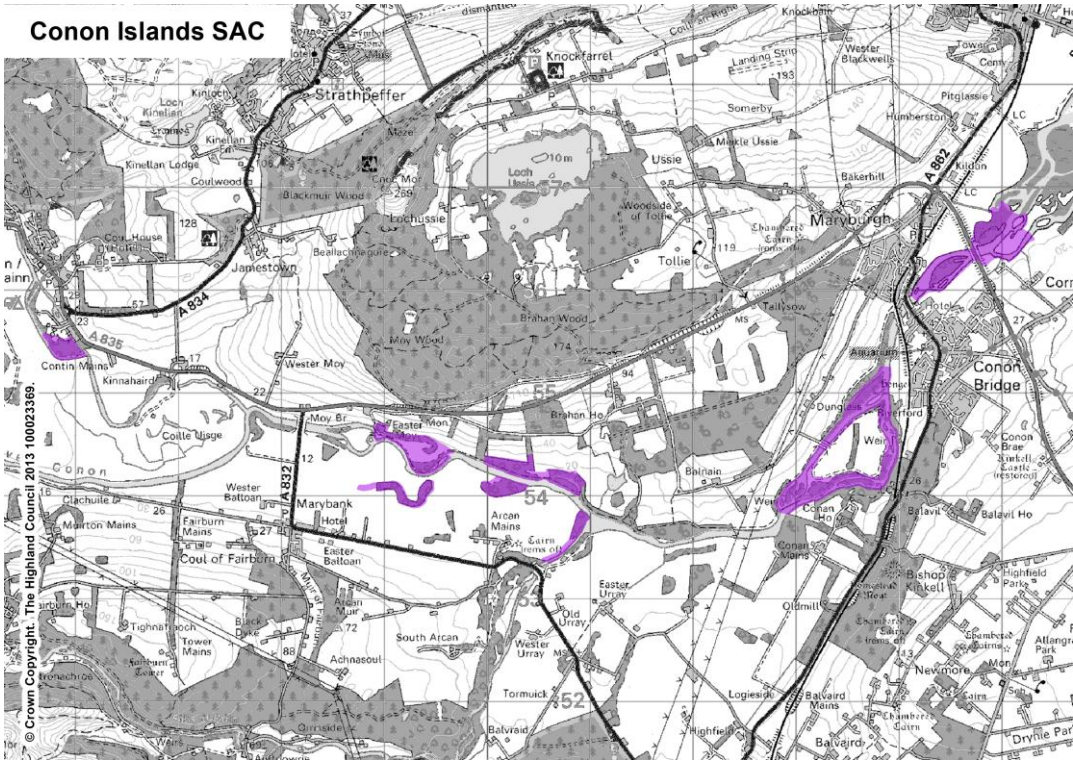
### Special Areas of Conservation

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Cawdor Wood</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SAC</b>
Date of Designation	17 March 2005
Qualifying Interests	Western acidic oak woodland
Conservation Objectives	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying species; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent of the habitat on site;</li> <li>• Distribution of the habitat within site;</li> <li>• Structure and function of the habitat;</li> <li>• Processes supporting the habitat;</li> <li>• Distribution of typical species of the habitat;</li> <li>• Viability of typical species as components of the habitat; and</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of species typical of the habitat.</li> </ul>
Condition of the qualifying interests	Unfavourable, no change
Factors currently influencing the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of non-native trees and shrubs;</li> <li>• Recreational pressures from visitors to Cawdor Castle utilising nature trails;</li> <li>• Presence of roe deer;</li> <li>• Long term cumulative impact of Winter moth outbreak between 2004 and 2007;</li> <li>• Support for opportunities to increase the area of oak woodland outside the site; and</li> <li>• Impact of any felling upon the landscape of the wood as it is contained in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects	Habitat damage and disturbance of species due to the recreational impacts associated with the creation of new large scale housing and mixed use developments in Cawdor.

of the plan	
Extent of Natura Site	
Settlement/Site Reference	<b>Impacts and Mitigation</b>
Cawdor/CD3-CD10	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities due to the development of this large scale site in Cawdor.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational Access Management Plan to be prepared in order that any adverse effects on the integrity of the Cawdor Wood SAC are avoided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
In-combination Cawdor/CD1, CD2, CD11	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities due to the combination of the development of three housing sites in addition to the development of CD3-10.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Avoid any adverse effect on the integrity of Cawdor Wood SAC due to habitat disturbance and/or destruction of species due to increased recreational pressures. If site CD3-10 is developed after these sites are approved, the baseline recreational impact used to inform the preparation of the RAMP for site CD3-10 must include potential recreational impact from these sites CD1, CD2, CD11</p> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

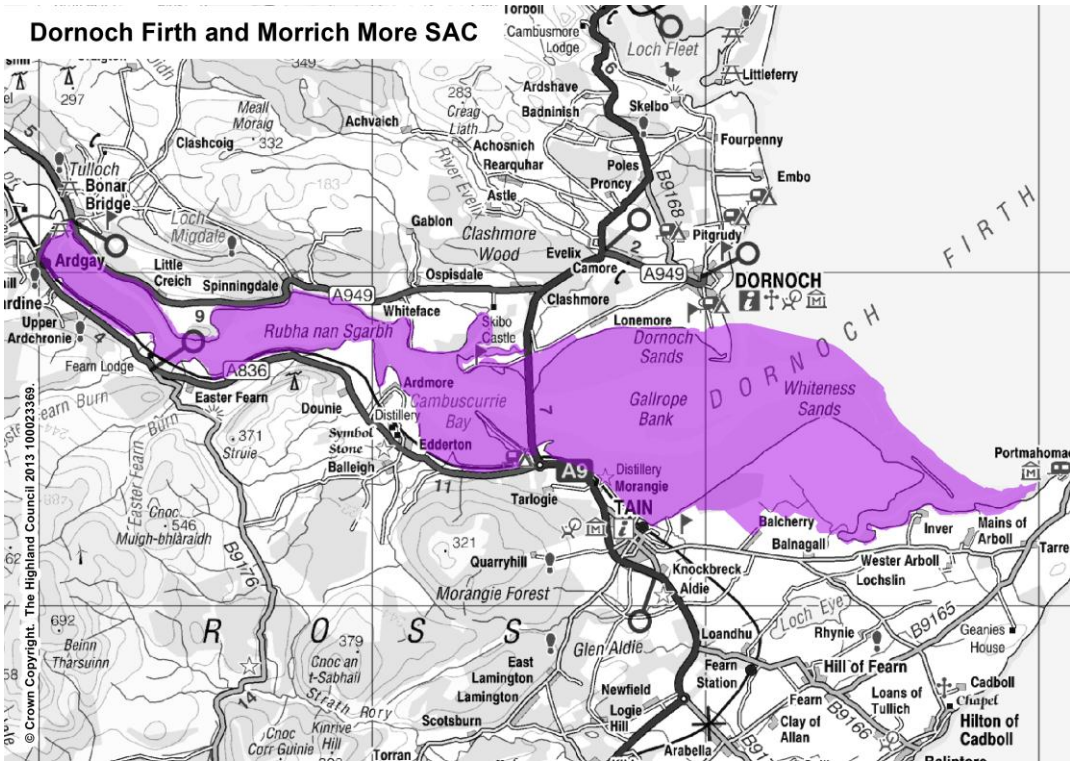
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Conon Islands</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SAC</b>
Date of Designation	17 March 2005
Qualifying Interests	Alder woodland on floodplains
Conservation Objectives	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent of the habitat on site;</li> <li>• Distribution of the habitat within site;</li> <li>• Structure and function of the habitat;</li> <li>• Processes supporting the habitat;</li> <li>• Distribution of typical species of the habitat;</li> <li>• Viability of typical species as components of the habitat; and</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat.</li> </ul>
Condition of the qualifying interests	Unfavourable, no change
Factors currently influencing the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of non native species including sycamore and Himalayan balsam;</li> <li>• Modifications to the hydrology of the river by the installation of hydro-electric power generation in the upper catchment and rising sea levels are likely to affect the extent and distribution of nearby woodland habitats.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	Potential for impacts upon water quality and hydrology and from increased recreational disturbance from developments in Conon Bridge and Maryburgh.



<p>Extent of Natura Site</p>	<p><b>Conon Islands SAC</b></p> 
Settlement/Site Reference	Impacts and Mitigation
<p><b>In-Combination Conon Bridge/CB1-6; Maryburgh/MB1-3</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may impact upon water quality and hydrology and may result in increased recreational disturbance and introduction of invasive non-native species from developments in Conon Bridge and Maryburgh.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirements to be included for site allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive sustainable urban drainage system to deal with surface water run-off to ensure that any adverse effects on the integrity of the Conon Islands SAC are avoided;</li> <li>• Recreational Access Management Plan to be prepared in order that any adverse effects on the integrity of the Conon Islands SAC are avoided;</li> <li>• Minimum 5m buffer strip planted with native species between River Conon and Conon Bridge site CB4.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

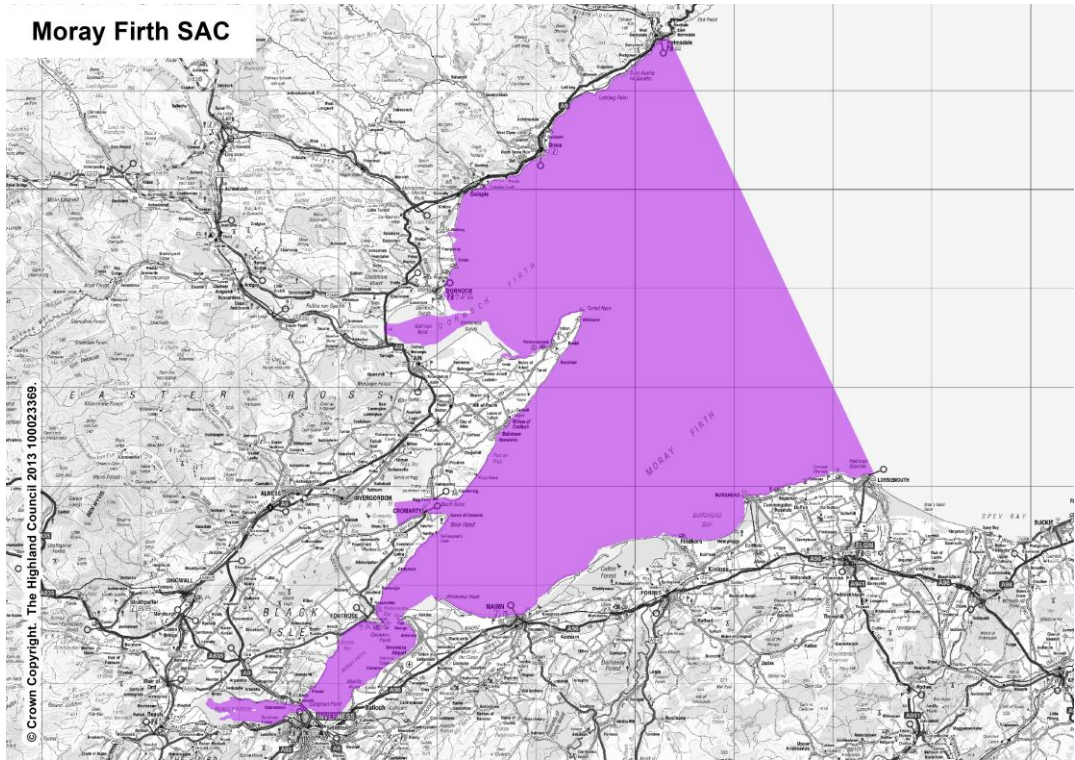


<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Dornoch Firth and Morrich More</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SAC</b>
Date of Designation	17 March 2005
Qualifying Interests	Coastal dune heathland Atlantic salt meadows Dunes with juniper thickets Lime-deficient dune heathland with crowberry Shifting dunes Estuaries Dune grassland Humid dune slacks Otter Intertidal mudflats and sandflats Harbour seal Reefs Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand Subtidal sandbanks Shifting dunes with marram
Conservation Objectives	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent of the habitat on site;</li> <li>• Distribution of the habitat within site;</li> <li>• Structure and function of the habitat;</li> <li>• Processes supporting the habitat;</li> <li>• Distribution of typical species of the habitat;</li> <li>• Viability of typical species as components of the habitat; and</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat.</li> </ul> <p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species a viable component of the site</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species</li> </ul>
Condition of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal dune heathland – Unfavourable No Change</li> </ul>

qualifying interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows – Favourable Maintained</li> <li>• Dunes with juniper thickets – Unfavourable No Change</li> <li>• Lime-deficient dune heathland with crowberry – Unfavourable No Change</li> <li>• Shifting dunes – Favourable Maintained</li> <li>• Estuaries</li> <li>• Dune grassland – Unfavourable No Change</li> <li>• Humid dune slacks – Favourable Maintained</li> <li>• Otter – Favourable Maintained</li> <li>• Intertidal mudflats and sandflats – Favourable Maintained</li> <li>• Harbour seal – Unfavourable Recovering</li> <li>• Reefs – Favourable Maintained</li> <li>• Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand – Favourable Maintained</li> <li>• Subtidal sandbanks – Favourable Maintained</li> <li>• Shifting dunes with marram – Favourable Maintained</li> </ul>
Factors currently influencing the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disturbance by recreation, especially impact of motorised vehicle use to habitats</li> <li>• Coastal erosion</li> <li>• Scrub and tree encroachment of sand dunes</li> <li>• Recreational disturbance to species</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	Potential impact on qualifying habitats from business and industrial development at Fendom site which gains marine access through the site; potential impact on qualifying species (harbour seal) from port-related developments in the Cromarty Firth, between the SAC and a seal haul-out at Foulis.
Extent of Natura Site	 <p>The map shows the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More Special Area of Conservation (SAC) highlighted in purple. The site is located along the coast of the Morich peninsula, extending from the village of Dornoch in the north to the Fendom site in the south. Key features include the Dornoch Firth, Morich Bay, and the Morich Forest. Surrounding roads include the A9, A949, B9168, and B9165. Nearby locations such as Dornoch, Morich, Fendom, and Foulis are marked. The map also shows the coastline, rivers, and various land parcels.</p>
Settlement/Site Reference	<b>Impacts and Mitigation</b>
Fendom/FD1	<b>Potential impact:</b> Development may result in the loss or deterioration of habitat within the SAC between the development site and marine access

	<p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any development at this site (including redevelopment of the site for its former use) will be required to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC or the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA/Ramsar, alone or in combination, including the saltmarsh and sand dune habitat</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
<p><b>In-Combination</b> <b>Nigg</b> <b>NG1/Invergordon</b> <b>IG11 and</b> <b>IG12/Evanton</b> <b>EV5</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may impact upon harbour seal at construction and operational phases (including noise, lighting and ship movements) with potential for injury/mortality from ducted propellers of vessels</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential impact on harbour seals should be addressed as part of the developer requirement for all these allocations for Construction and Operational Environmental Management Plans. Masterplans or development briefs for these allocations should also consider the impact of the proposal on the harbour seals that use the haul out site near Foulis and the potential implications of this for the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC and how any impacts can be mitigated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Moray Firth</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SAC</b>
Date of Designation	17 March 2005
Qualifying Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subtidal Sandbanks</li> <li>• Bottlenose Dolphin</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are established then maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species as a viable component of the site;</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site;</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species;</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species; and</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species.</li> </ul>
Condition of the qualifying interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottlenose Dolphin – favourable, recovered</li> <li>• Subtidal sandbanks – favourable, maintained</li> </ul>
Factors currently influencing the site	<p>Impact of boat traffic on dolphins.</p> <p>Under the auspices of the Moray Firth Partnership, a SAC management group was set up in October 1999 with EC LIFE Project funding. The group has developed management measures to restore and maintain the bottlenose dolphin population at a viable level. The condition of the dolphin population is monitored by the University of Aberdeen under contract to SNH.</p> <p>Revision 2 of the SAC Management Scheme defines a series of actions on the ground that put in place management to deliver the site's conservation objectives for both the qualifying bottlenose dolphin and subtidal sandbank features. Furthermore a computer model is currently being developed by the University of Aberdeen under contract to the public bodies to understand the consequences of disturbance events (from marine traffic in the first instance) to the population of dolphins. See Dolphins and Development report - <a href="http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=1958">http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=1958</a> and any later assessments.</p>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	<p>Waste water infrastructure impacts from the A96 Corridor Developments, including Inverness City and Nairn; impact from increased marine traffic both commercial and recreational including potential renewables developments at Whiteness and Nigg, and development at Muirtown and South Kessock, and potentially Inverness Harbour, Invergordon, Evanton and Avoch; possible construction and operational impacts (e.g. acoustic vibration, pollution and piling) at sites adjacent to firth, including the former Longman Landfill site.</p>

Extent of Natura Site	<p><b>Moray Firth SAC</b></p> 
Settlement/Site Reference	Impacts and Mitigation
All sites in Inverness Nairn Area	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the requirement for additional waste water discharge for developments along the A96 Corridor.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following policy to be included within the Inverness to Nairn Growth Area Strategy in the plan within the 'Safeguarding Our Natural Environment' section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In line with Policy 65 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, all allocated developments in the Inverness to Nairn Corridor will be required to connect to the public sewer (as defined in the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968). Improvements to the strategic waste water infrastructure in the area will be required in order to accommodate the level of development supported in this plan. Such improvements must ensure that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the bottlenose dolphin qualifying interest of the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation in terms of the level of waste water treatment, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>



Inverness/IN9	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in impacts on habitats and species due to the creation of additional noise and physical disturbance from commercial and/or recreational marine activities; also construction and operational impacts (vibration, pollution, piling and vessel movements); also alteration to the tidal currents and tidal processes supporting the distribution of subtidal sandbanks of this part of the firth.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any proposal must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC by the submission with any application of a Piling Method Statement (in accordance with JNCC guidance), a Dredging and Disposal Plan (in accordance with Marine Scotland guidance), satisfactory details of the sourcing of materials for the uplifting of this area, the Report of a Hydro-Dynamic study to assess the impact of altered flows on sediment movement in the firth in relation to subtidal sandbanks (see for baseline information SNH Commissioned Report No 338: Sublittoral Biotope Mapping of the Moray Firth SAC (2009) - <a href="http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=1468">http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=1468</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Inverness/IN13	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in impacts on habitats and species due to the creation of additional noise and physical disturbance from commercial activities; also construction and operational impacts (vibration, noise, pollution, piling)</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any proposal must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC by the submission with any application of a Piling Method Statement (in accordance with JNCC guidance)</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Inverness/IN21	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in disturbance to qualifying species due to the creation of additional noise and disturbance from commercial and/or recreational marine activities.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding and if possible enhancement of navigation, heritage features and public pedestrian access, including the avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC</li> <li>If the development involves access to the water then it should be done in accordance with the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code and the Dolphin Space Programme as well as avoidance of any cumulative impact of boat traffic as assessed according to 'Dolphins and Development' and any later assessments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

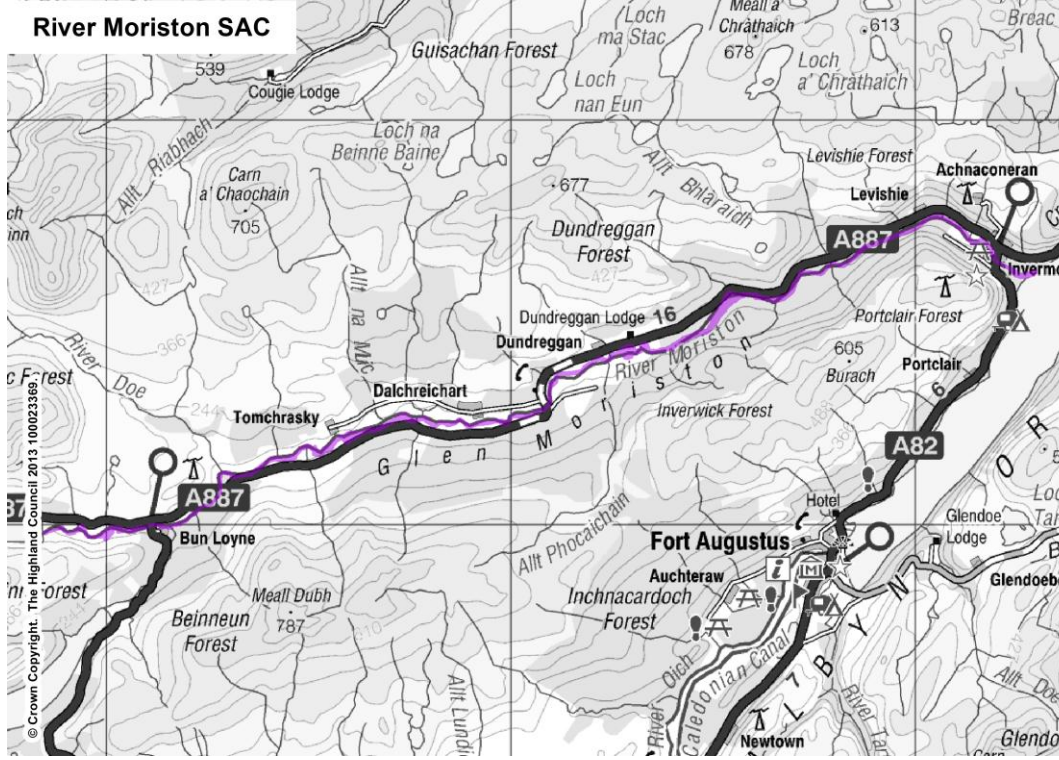
<p><b>Whiteness/WH1</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in impacts on habitats and species due to the creation of additional noise and physical disturbance from commercial and/or recreational marine activities.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Renewables-related developments will be subject to the production of a masterplan which should ensure that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC, alone or in combination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The developer needs to comply with JNCC piling guidance, Marine Scotland dredging and disposal guidance (both for capital and maintenance spoil), vessel movements as assessed through the “Dolphin and Development” model and any later assessments;</li> <li>• Construction Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention);</li> <li>• Operational Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention);</li> <li>• Boat Traffic Management Plan;</li> <li>• Noise and Vibration Mitigation Plan;</li> <li>• Oil Spill Contingency Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
<p><b>Avoch/AV6</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in disturbance to qualifying species as a result of cumulative effect of additional boat movements from commercial and/or recreational marine activities.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirements to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the development involves access to the water then it should be done in accordance with the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code and the Dolphin Space Programme as well as avoidance of any cumulative impact of boat traffic on the Moray Firth SAC as assessed according to ‘Dolphins and Development’ and any later assessments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

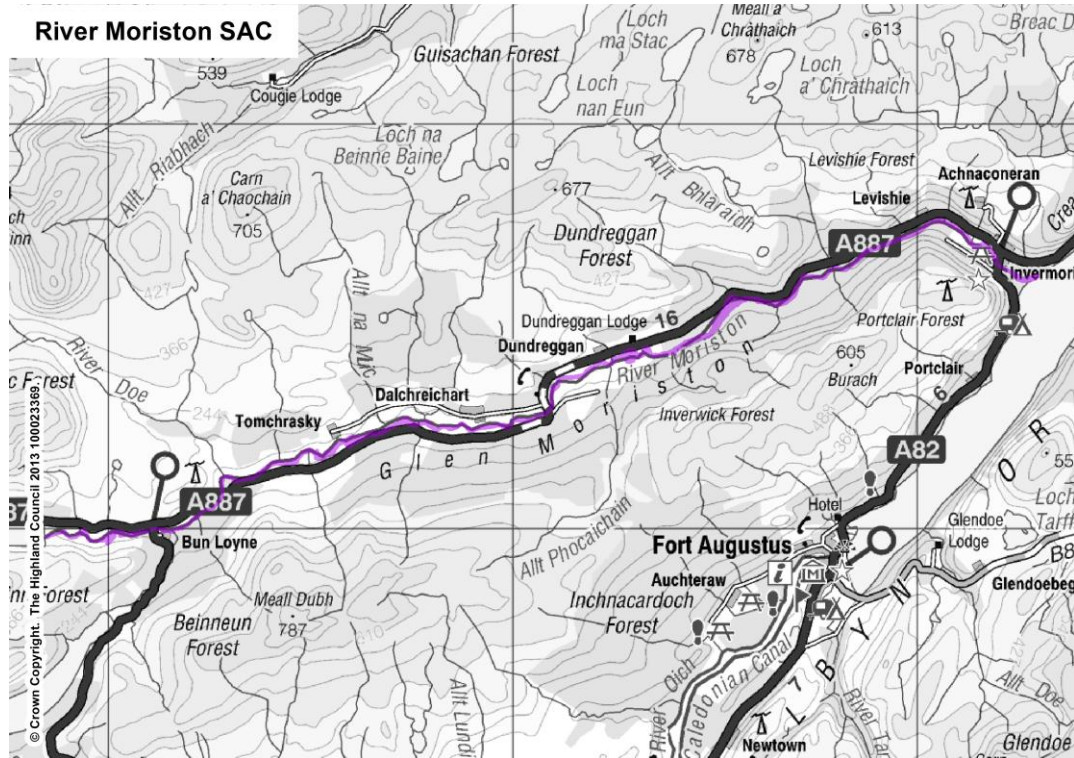
<p><b>Nigg/NG1</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in impacts on habitats and species due to the creation of additional noise and physical disturbance from commercial marine activities.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirements to be included for site allocation as per the mitigation proposed in the <b>Nigg Development Masterplan: Appropriate Assessment (October 2009)</b>, which includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention);</li> <li>• Operational Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention);</li> <li>• Boat Traffic Management Plan;</li> <li>• Noise and Vibration Mitigation Plan;</li> <li>• Full compliance with appropriate regulatory frameworks for ballast water discharge, dredging and disposal (including specific mitigation measures as set out in Section 7 of the masterplan AA), and ship-to-ship transfers; and</li> <li>• Oil Spill Contingency Plan</li> <li>• The developer needs to comply with JNCC piling guidance, Marine Scotland dredging and disposal guidance, vessel movements as assessed through the “Dolphin and Development” model and any later assessments.</li> </ul> <p>The Nigg Masterplan Appropriate Assessment can be found at <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/nigg.htm">http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/nigg.htm</a></p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The plan does not propose any development forms or locations over and above that proposed in the Nigg masterplan which has already been subject to its own Appropriate Assessment</p> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
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<p><b>In-Combination – Evanton/EV5 and Invergordon/IG1 1 and IG12</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in impacts on habitats and species due to the creation of additional noise and physical disturbance from commercial marine activities, in particular the cumulative effects of boat traffic in the Moray Firth from potential developments at Nigg, Whiteness, Muirtown, Evanton and Invergordon taking also into consideration other existing marinas and harbours.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirements to be included for each site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any adverse effects on the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC through disturbance effects of increased marine traffic in combination with other proposals must be avoided. See model in 'Dolphins and Development' - <a href="http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=1958">http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=1958</a> and any later assessments;</li> <li>• Demonstration of account being taken of the Moray Firth SAC Management Scheme (available online: <a href="http://www.morayfirth-partnership.org/sac-publications.html">http://www.morayfirth-partnership.org/sac-publications.html</a>)</li> <li>• Submission of Oil Spill Contingency Plan.</li> <li>• Compliance with JNCC piling guidance and Marine Scotland dredging and disposal guidance</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
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<b>Site Name</b>	<b>River Moriston</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SAC</b>
Date of Designation	17 March 2005
Qualifying Interests	Freshwater pearl mussel Atlantic salmon
Conservation Objectives	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species, including range of genetic types for salmon, as a viable component of the site;</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site;</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species;</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species;</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species;</li> <li>• Distribution and viability of freshwater pearl mussel host species;</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting freshwater pearl mussel host species.</li> </ul>
Condition of the qualifying interests	<p>Atlantic Salmon – unfavourable, recovering</p> <p>Freshwater pearl mussel – unfavourable, no change</p>
Factors currently influencing the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The river is affected by hydropower schemes with changes in water flow-rates. Flow rates which are compatible with the qualifying features of the site are currently being discussed between SSE, SEPA and SNH</li> <li>• The long-term wellbeing of the river, including the riparian woodland and the catchment area, will be encouraged through discussion of site management with land managers and the local Fishery Board.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	<p>Loss of habitats and/or species due to the requirement for additional water abstraction for developments along the A96 Corridor and/or the proposed construction of a river and canal crossing over the River Ness downstream of the SAC.</p> <p>If Loch Ness is used to supplement the water supply for the Inverness and Nairn area then Scottish Water will need to ensure that any changes to the water level of Loch Ness do not affect the ability of migrating salmon reaching the River Moriston or food supply via the water margin area.</p>

<p>Extent of Natura Site</p>	
<p>Settlement/Site Reference</p> <p>All sites in Inverness to Nairn Area</p>	<p><b>Impacts and Mitigation</b></p> <p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Loss of habitats and/or species due to the requirement for additional water abstraction for developments along the A96 Corridor and/or the proposed construction of a river and canal crossing over the River Ness downstream of the SAC.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following policy to be included within the Inverness to Nairn Growth Area Strategy in the plan within the ‘Safeguarding Our Natural Environment’ section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In considering the need to increase the level of abstraction from existing sources or the need for other sources of abstraction to accommodate the level of development supported by this plan, there must be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Moriston SAC, Urquhart Bay Wood SAC and/or Loch Ashie SPA as a result of reduced water levels/flows on the relative qualifying features either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>



### Settlement/Site Reference

## Impacts and Mitigation

### All sites in Inverness to Nairn Area

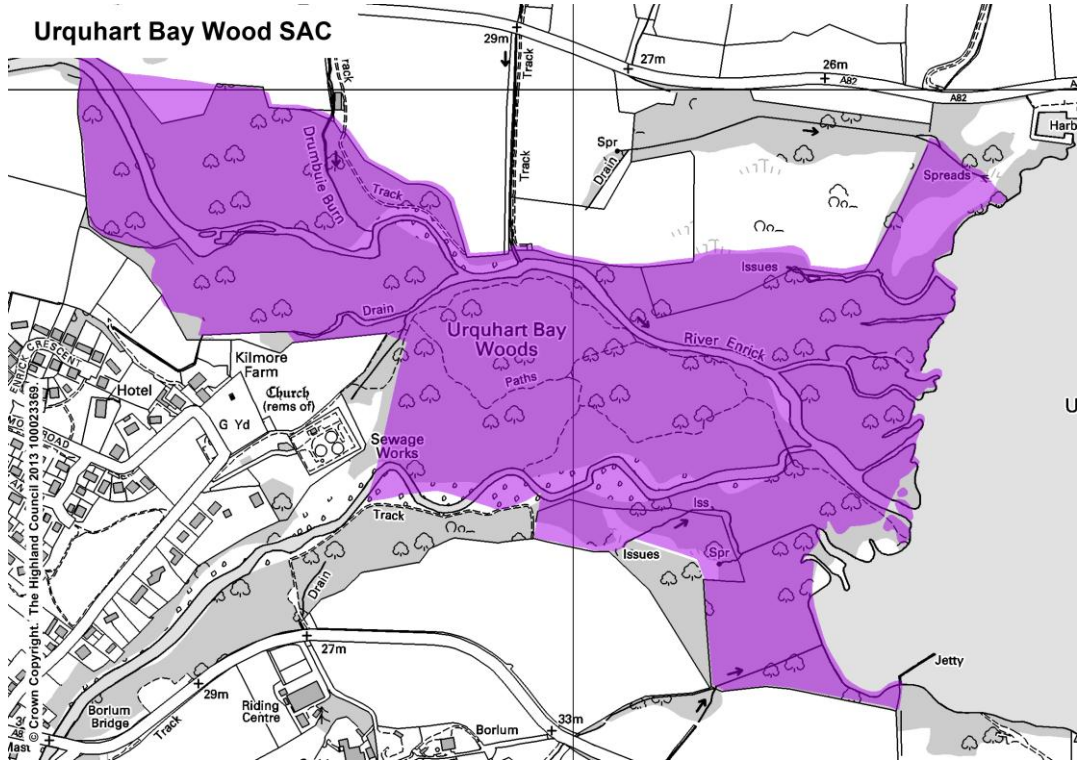
**Potential Impact:** Loss of habitats and/or species due to the requirement for additional water abstraction for developments along the A96 Corridor and/or the proposed construction of a river and canal crossing over the River Ness downstream of the SAC.

**Mitigation:** Following policy to be included within the Inverness to Nairn Growth Area Strategy in the plan within the ‘Safeguarding Our Natural Environment’ section

- In considering the need to increase the level of abstraction from existing sources or the need for other sources of abstraction to accommodate the level of development supported by this plan, there must be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Moriston SAC, Urquhart Bay Wood SAC and/or Loch Ashie SPA as a result of reduced water levels/flows on the relative qualifying features either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

**Residual Impact:** No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

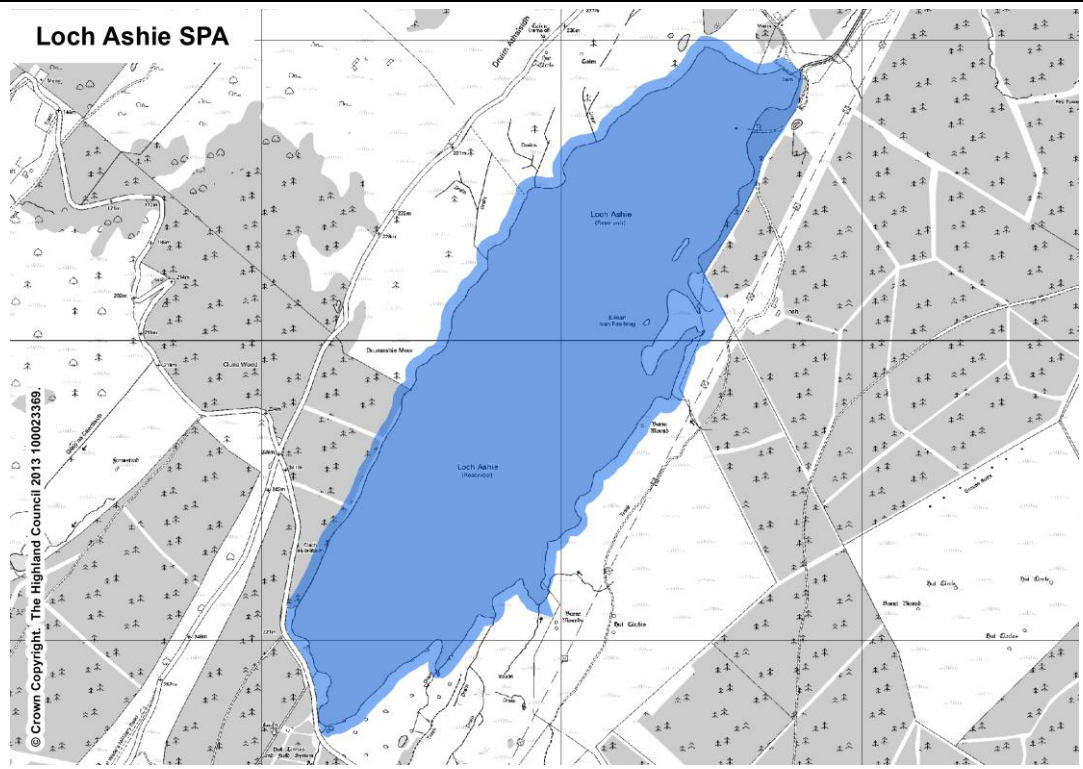
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Urquhart Bay Woods</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SAC</b>
Date of Designation	17 March 2005
Qualifying Interests	Alder woodland on floodplains
Conservation Objectives	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent of the habitat on site;</li> <li>• Distribution of the habitat within site;</li> <li>• Structure and function of the habitat;</li> <li>• Processes supporting the habitat;</li> <li>• Distribution of typical species of the habitat;</li> <li>• Viability of typical species as components of the habitat;</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Condition of the qualifying interests	Unfavourable, no change
Factors currently influencing the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Browsing pressure on young trees from cattle and roe deer</li> <li>• Abundance of non-native plant species including Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, snowberry and white butterbur</li> <li>• Removal of river gravels and modification of river channels</li> <li>• Activities taking place higher up in the catchment, such as river engineering and disposal of garden waste that may contain invasive non-native plant species</li> <li>• Management of significant community and visitor interests</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	<p>Loss of habitats and/or species due to the requirement for additional water abstraction for developments along the A96 Corridor.</p> <p>If Loch Ness is used to supplement the water supply for the Inverness and Nairn area then Scottish Water will need to ensure that any changes to the water level of Loch Ness do not affect the integrity of the site in terms of the hydrological functioning of the area.</p>

<p>Extent of Natura Site</p>	
Settlement/Site Reference	Impacts and Mitigation
<p>All sites in Inverness to Nairn Area</p>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> The requirement for additional water abstraction for developments along the A96 Corridor and subsequent draw down of water in Loch Ness may result in the loss of or damage to the alluvial woodland habitats due to changes in the erosion and accretion patterns.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following policy to be included within the Inverness to Nairn Growth Area Strategy in the plan within the 'Safeguarding Our Natural Environment' section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In considering the need to increase the level of abstraction from existing sources or the need for other sources of abstraction to accommodate the level of development supported by this plan, there must be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Moriston SAC, Urquhart Bay Wood SAC and/or Loch Ashie SPA as a result of reduced water levels/flows on the relative qualifying features either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

## Special Protection Areas

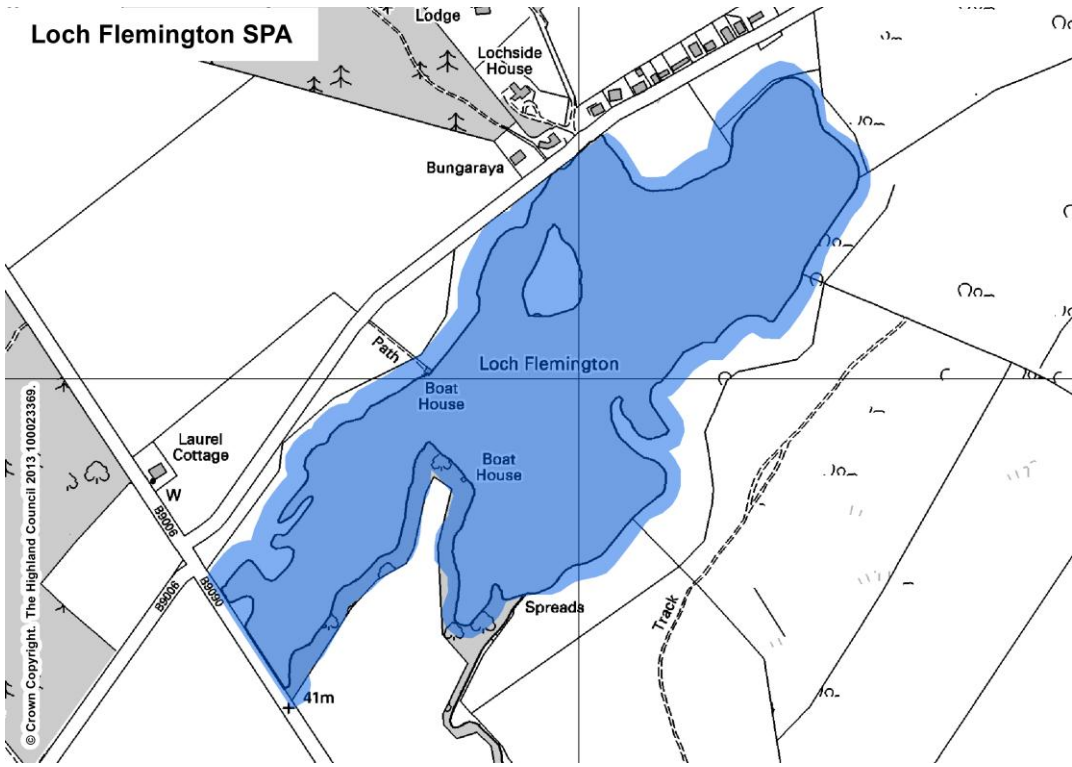
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Loch Ashie</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SPA</b>
<b>Date of Designation</b>	11 August 1997
<b>Qualifying Interests</b>	Slavonian grebe, breeding Slavonian grebe, non-breeding
<b>Conservation Objectives</b>	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species as a viable component of the site;</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site;</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species;</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species;</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species.</li> </ul>
<b>Condition of the qualifying interests</b>	<p>Slavonian grebe, breeding – unfavourable, no change</p> <p>Slavonian grebe, non-breeding – favourable, maintained</p>
<b>Factors currently influencing the site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for disturbance from anglers, water sports or other visitors at key times of year;</li> <li>• Managing changes in water quality and water levels; and</li> <li>• Appropriate fishery management and fluctuation in water levels.</li> </ul>
<b>Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan</b>	Loss of habitats and/or species due to the requirement for additional water abstraction for developments along the A96 Corridor.



Extent of Natura Site	
Settlement/Site Reference	Impacts and Mitigation
All sites in Inverness to Nairn Area	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the requirement for additional water abstraction for developments along the A96 Corridor. In particular potential bigger swings in water levels at the site which have the potential to affect the grebes supporting habitat (sedge beds)</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following policy to be included within the Inverness to Nairn Growth Area Strategy in the plan within the 'Safeguarding Our Natural Environment' section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In considering the need to increase the level of abstraction from existing sources or the need for other sources of abstraction to accommodate the level of development supported by this plan, there must be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Moriston SAC, Urquhart Bay Wood SAC and/or Loch Ashie SPA as a result of reduced water levels/flows on the relative qualifying features either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

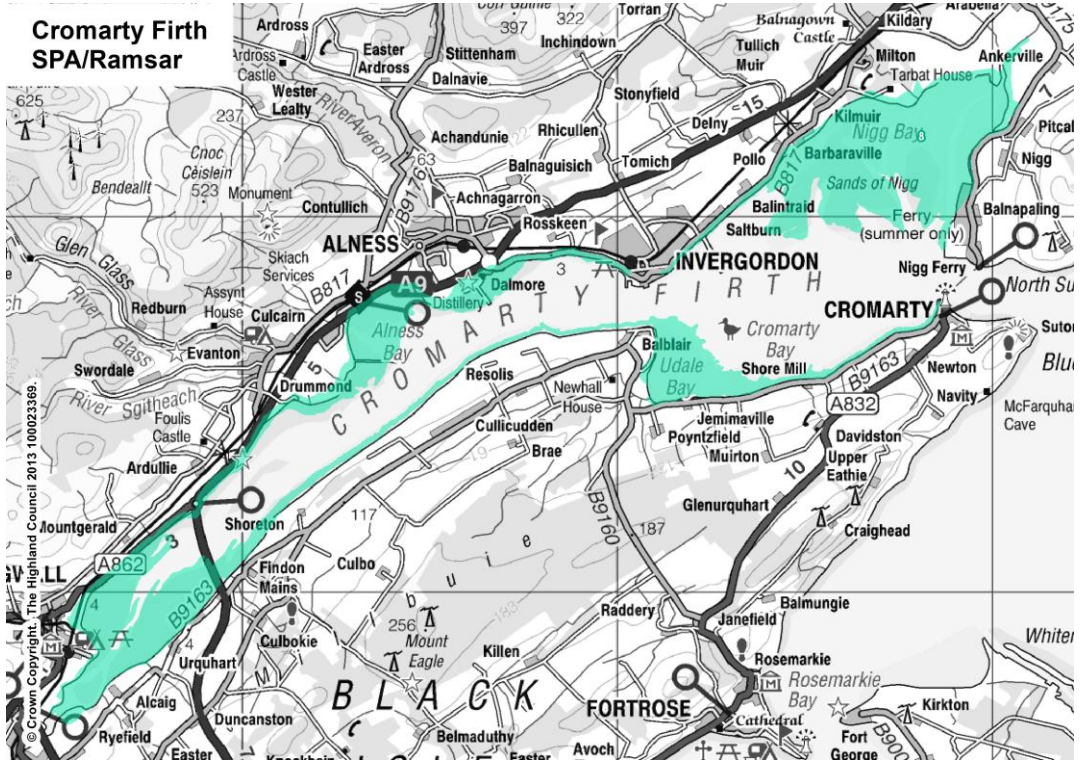
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Loch Flemington</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SPA</b>
Date of Designation	14 March 1997
Qualifying Interests	Slavonian grebe, breeding
Conservation Objectives	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained.</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species as a viable component of the site</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species</li> </ul>
Condition of the qualifying interests	Unfavourable, no change
Factors currently influencing the site	Availability of appropriate breeding habitat; appropriate management of activities that may cause disturbance to breeding birds; nutrient enrichment; influences beyond those affecting the site alone, for example climate change and availability of other breeding sites.
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrient enrichment</li> <li>• Recreational disturbance</li> <li>• Effects on water quality and hydrology from development in the catchment</li> </ul>



Extent of Natura Site	 <p>The map shows Loch Flemington, a large body of water, surrounded by land. To the north, there is a 'Lodge' and 'Lochside House'. To the west, there is a 'Bungaraya' area. To the south, there is a 'Boat House' and 'Spreada'. To the east, there is a 'Track'. A 'Path' is shown running along the western shore of the lake. A 'Laurel Cottage' is located to the southwest of the lake. A '41m' depth marker is shown in the lake. The map is titled 'Loch Flemington SPA'. A copyright notice is visible on the left side: '© Crown Copyright. The Highland Council 2013 100023389.'.</p>
Settlement/Site Reference	Impacts and Mitigation
Tornagrain/TG1	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to potential recreational disturbance.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirements to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Recreation Access Management Plan should be prepared to ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of the Loch Flemington SPA as a result of recreational disturbance to qualifying species</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

## Special Protection Areas and Ramsars

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Cromarty Firth</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SPA and Ramsar</b>
<b>Date of Designation</b>	22 March 1999
<b>Qualifying Interests</b>	<p>SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bar-tailed godwit, non-breeding</li> <li>• Common tern , breeding</li> <li>• Curlew, non-breeding</li> <li>• Dunlin, non-breeding</li> <li>• Greylag goose, non-breeding</li> <li>• Knot, non-breeding</li> <li>• Osprey , breeding</li> <li>• Oystercatcher, non-breeding</li> <li>• Pintail, non-breeding</li> <li>• Red-breasted merganser, non-breeding</li> <li>• Redshank, non-breeding</li> <li>• Scaup, non-breeding</li> <li>• Whooper swan, non-breeding</li> <li>• Wigeon, non-breeding</li> <li>• Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding</li> </ul> <p>Ramsar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding</li> <li>• Greylag goose, non-breeding</li> <li>• Bar-tailed godwit, non-breeding</li> <li>• Intertidal mudflats and sandflats</li> </ul>
<b>Conservation Objectives</b>	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species as a viable component of the site</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species</li> </ul>
<b>Condition of the qualifying interests</b>	<p>SPA: All favourable, maintained with the exception of Common tern which is unfavourable, declining and Scaup and Whooper swan which are both unfavourable, no change.</p> <p>Ramsar: All favourable, maintained</p>
<b>Factors currently influencing the</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and enhancement of intertidal habitats by seasonal grazing of saltmarsh habitats where appropriate;</li> <li>• control of non-native invasive plant species;</li> </ul>

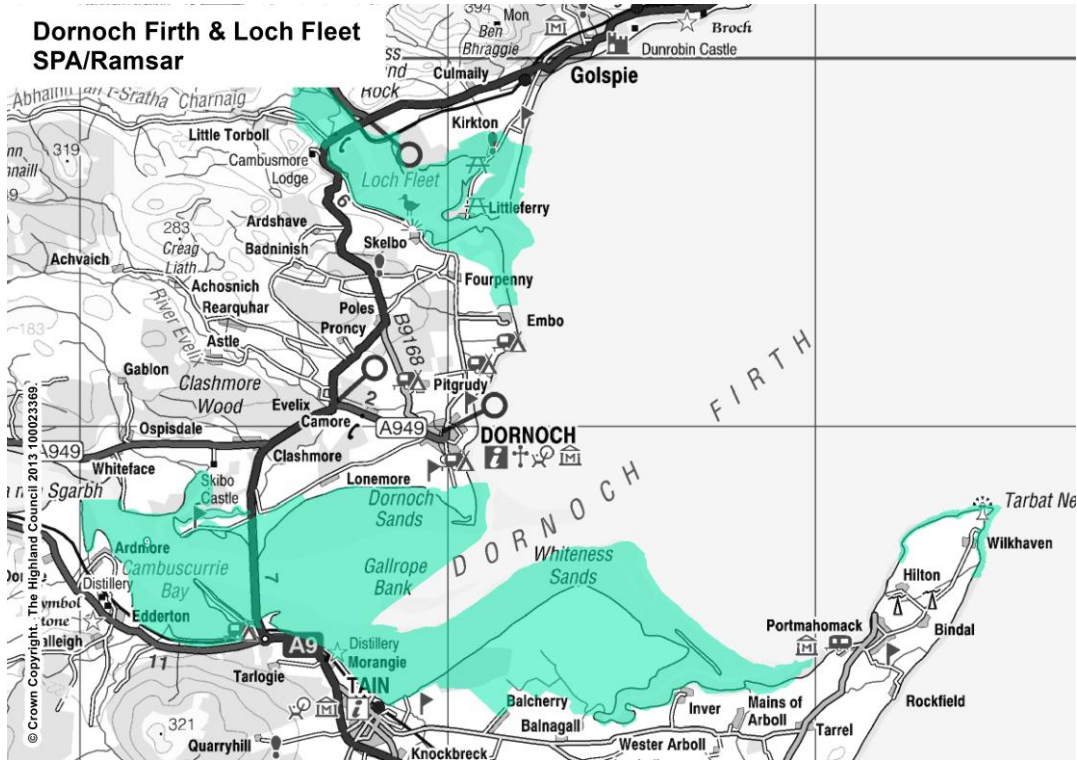
site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• taking action to prevent the use of motor vehicles and/or dumping on the foreshore;</li> <li>• managing disturbance through the provision of information and wildlife watching facilities where disturbance will be minimal;</li> <li>• managing disturbance from other users of the Firth;</li> <li>• ensuring that all wildfowling is practised sustainably;</li> <li>• maintaining or improving water quality;</li> <li>• providing disturbance-free nesting areas for breeding terns; and</li> <li>• Large scale trends in climate change and sea level change may also affect this site. For example, small change in tidal habitats could affect the distribution of habitats within this site.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	Renewables related development proposed for Nigg may have an impact on qualifying interests of the Natura site. There are other proposed developments around the firth including those at Conon Bridge, Maryburgh, Dingwall, Evanton and Invergordon which may introduce additional recreational and/or water quality pressures.
Extent of Natura Site	
Settlement/Site Reference	<b>Impacts and Mitigation</b>
Nigg/NG1	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to potential pollution and disturbance effects.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> As per mitigation proposed in the <b>Nigg Development Masterplan: Appropriate Assessment (October 2009)</b>, which includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention)</li> <li>• Operational Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention)</li> <li>• Noise Mitigation Plan</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full compliance with appropriate regulatory frameworks for ballast water discharge, dredging and disposal (including specific mitigation measures as set out in Section 7 of the masterplan AA), and ship-to-ship transfers</li> <li>• Oil Spill Contingency Plan</li> </ul> <p>The Nigg Masterplan Appropriate Assessment can be found at –  <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/nigg.htm">http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/nigg.htm</a></p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The plan does not propose any development forms or locations over and above that proposed in the Nigg masterplan which has already been subject to its own Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Dingwall/DW7	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in impacts on habitats and species due to increased recreational pressure.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational Access Management Plan to be prepared in order that any adverse effects on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar as a result of recreational disturbance are avoided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Evanton/EV5	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to potential pollution and disturbance effects.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Development should demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar by satisfactory submission of the following with more detailed proposals (dependent on the exact nature of the development):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention)</li> <li>• Operational Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention)</li> <li>• Noise Mitigation Plan</li> <li>• Full compliance with appropriate regulatory frameworks for ballast water discharge, dredging and disposal and ship-to-ship transfers</li> <li>• Oil Spill Contingency Plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Invergordon/IG11	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to potential pollution and disturbance effects.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Development should demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar by satisfactory submission of the following with more detailed proposals (dependent on the exact nature of the development):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention)</li> <li>• Operational Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention)</li> <li>• Noise Mitigation Plan</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full compliance with appropriate regulatory frameworks for ballast water discharge, dredging and disposal and ship-to-ship transfers</li> <li>• Oil Spill Contingency Plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
<b>Invergordon/IG12</b>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to potential pollution and disturbance effects.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Development should demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar by satisfactory submission of the following with more detailed proposals (dependent on the exact nature of the development):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention)</li> <li>• Operational Environment Management Plan (including pollution prevention)</li> <li>• Noise Mitigation Plan</li> <li>• Full compliance with appropriate regulatory frameworks for ballast water discharge, dredging and disposal and ship-to-ship transfers</li> <li>• Oil Spill Contingency Plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
<b>In-Combination Conon Bridge/CB1-CB6; Maryburgh/MB1- MB3</b>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in impacts on habitats and species due to increased recreational pressure.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational Access Management Plan to be prepared with a view to the combination of scheduled residential development in Conon Bridge and Maryburgh in order that any cumulative adverse effects on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar as a result of recreational disturbance are avoided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SPA and Ramsar</b>
<b>Date of Designation</b>	24 March 1997
<b>Qualifying Interests</b>	<p>SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Osprey, breeding</li> <li>• Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding</li> <li>• Curlew, non-breeding</li> <li>• Dunlin, non-breeding</li> <li>• Greylag goose, non-breeding</li> <li>• Oystercatcher, non-breeding</li> <li>• Wigeon, non-breeding</li> <li>• Bar-tailed godwit, non-breeding</li> <li>• Teal, non-breeding</li> </ul> <p>Ramsar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding</li> <li>• Bar-tailed godwit, non-breeding</li> <li>• Greylag goose, non-breeding</li> <li>• Wigeon, non-breeding</li> <li>• Wet woodland</li> <li>• Reefs</li> <li>• Saltmarsh</li> <li>• Intertidal mudflats and sandflats</li> <li>• Sand dune</li> </ul>
<b>Conservation Objectives</b>	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species as a viable component of the site;</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site;</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species;</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species; and</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species.</li> </ul>
<b>Condition of the qualifying interests</b>	<p>SPA: All favourable, maintained</p> <p>Ramsar: All favourable, maintained with the exception of sand dune which is unfavourable, declining</p>
<b>Factors currently influencing the</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational disturbance, including from dog walking and horse riding, to roosting and feeding birds;</li> <li>• Risk of proposals within or close to the marine habitats displacing ospreys from their preferred fishing sites;</li> </ul>

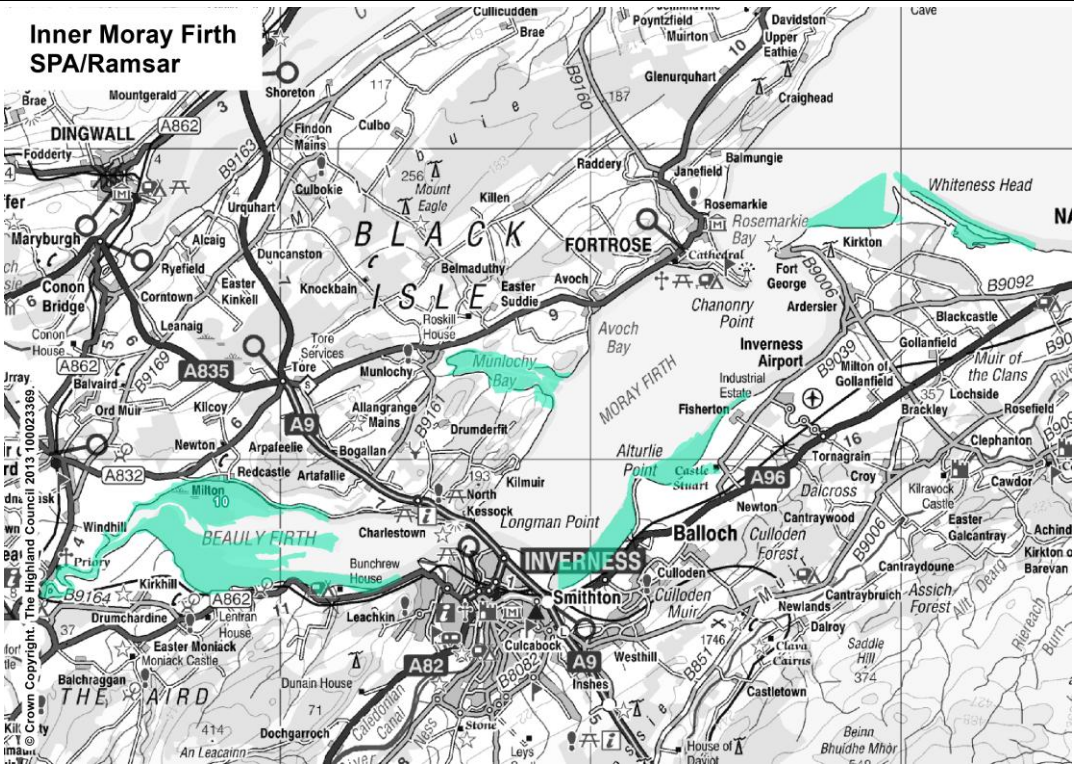


site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motorised vehicle use over sand and mudflats at low tide can cause tracking damage to plants and invertebrates;</li> <li>• Egg collecting;</li> <li>• Changes in climate change or sea level;</li> <li>• Coastal erosion;</li> <li>• Heather Beetle;</li> <li>• Scrub and tree encroachment of sand dunes; and</li> <li>• Small scale wind energy developments.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	Potential for disturbance due to increased recreational pressures and/or off-designated site feeding habitat loss by proposed developments at Tain and Fendom including in combination with small scale wind energy developments.
Extent of Natura Site	
Settlement/Site Reference	<b>Impacts and Mitigation</b>
In-Combination – Tain TN5 and Fendom FD1	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in impacts on habitats and species due to increased recreational pressure.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site Tain TN5 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational Access Management Plan to be prepared in order that any cumulative adverse effects on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA/Ramsar through recreational and business/industrial disturbance are avoided.</li> </ul> <p>Following developer requirement to be included for site Fendom FD1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any development at this site (including redevelopment of the site for its former use) will be required to ensure that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC or the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA/Ramsar, alone or in combination including</li> </ul>

	<p>saltmarsh and sand dune habitats.</p> <p><b><i>Residual Impact:</i></b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Loch Feet SPA and Ramsar.</p>
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<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Inner Moray Firth</b>
<b>Designation</b>	<b>SPA and Ramsar</b>
<b>Date of Designation</b>	22 March 1999
<b>Qualifying Interests</b>	<p>SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Tern, breeding</li> <li>• Osprey, breeding</li> <li>• Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding</li> <li>• Oystercatcher, non-breeding</li> <li>• Teal, non-breeding</li> <li>• Bar-tailed godwit, non-breeding</li> <li>• Cormorant, non-breeding</li> <li>• Curlew, non-breeding</li> <li>• Goldeneye, non-breeding</li> <li>• Wigeon, non-breeding</li> <li>• Goosander, non-breeding</li> <li>• Greylag goose, non-breeding</li> <li>• Red-breasted merganser, non-breeding</li> <li>• Redshank, non-breeding</li> <li>• Scaup, non-breeding</li> </ul> <p>Ramsar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding</li> <li>• Redshank, non-breeding</li> <li>• Greylag goose, non-breeding</li> <li>• Red-breasted merganser, non-breeding</li> <li>• Bar-tailed godwit, non-breeding</li> <li>• Saltmarsh</li> <li>• Intertidal mudflats and sandflats</li> <li>• Sand dune</li> <li>• Shingle</li> </ul>
<b>Conservation Objectives</b>	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained.</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species as a viable component of the site</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species</li> </ul>
<b>Condition of the</b>	SPA: All favourable, maintained with the exception of common tern, cormorant,

qualifying interests	<p>goosander and red-breasted merganser, which are unfavourable, no change.</p> <p>Ramsar: All favourable, maintained with the exception of red-breasted merganser which is unfavourable, no change.</p>
Factors currently influencing the site	<p>Disturbance is the main limiting factor to wader and wildfowl population size. Food supply is not believed to be a limiting factor, although further research is required. Climate change may limit populations and result in shifts into less well monitored areas (see Austin &amp; Rehfisch 2005) and more research work is needed to determine the effects of climatic changes on wader and wildfowl distributions. It is suspected that the tern interest of the site is being influenced by predator numbers and climate change impacting food availability.</p> <p><sup>1</sup> Austin, G E &amp; Rehfisch, M M (2005). Shifting non-breeding distributions of migratory fauna in relation to climatic change. <i>Global Change Biology</i> 11, 31–38.</p>
Vulnerabilities to change through the potential effects of the plan	Potential for disturbance due to increased recreational pressures and/or off-site feeding habitat loss arising from A96 corridor developments including Inverness City and Nairn and potentially developments in Beauly, Kirkhill, Muir of Ord.
Extent of Natura Site	 <p>The map shows the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar area, which includes the Black Isle and the Beauly Firth. Key locations marked include Dingwall, Fortrose, Inverness, Balloch, and Balgownie. The map also shows the A96 corridor and various other roads and landmarks in the region.</p>
Settlement/Site Reference	<b>Impacts and Mitigation</b>
Inverness/IN8	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage, and potential for pollution from possible commercial, industrial, waste management and energy-from-waste uses.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any development must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar as a result of disturbance to or pollution of the SPA or adjacent bird feeding and roosting areas linked to the SPA.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Inverness/IN9	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage, and potential for pollution from possible commercial, industrial, leisure and recreation uses.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any development must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar as a result of loss of or disturbance to or pollution of bird feeding and roosting areas of the SPA or linked to the SPA.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Inverness/IN13	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance physical damage and pollution from possible commercial, industrial, waste management and energy-from-waste uses.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any development must demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar as a result of disturbance to or pollution of the SPA or adjacent bird feeding and roosting areas linked to the SPA</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European Site.</p>
Castle Stuart/CS1	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of recreational access management plan including satisfactory provision and/or contribution towards open space, path and green network requirements, including mitigation associated with the Inverness to Nairn Coastal Trail.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Whiteness/WH1	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from industrial activities, and potential for pollution from possible commercial, industrial, waste management and energy-from-waste uses, and alterations to habitat as a result of capital and maintenance works through dredging and disposal.</p>

	<p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any development should have no adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar including any modification to the natural processes of the spit and associated capital and maintenance dredging and disposal operations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Inverness/IN82	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Inverness/IN83	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Inverness/IN84	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Inverness/IN76	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p>

	<p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Nairn/NA6	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Nairn/NA4	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Nairn/NA8	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
Nairn/NA9	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>
<p>In-combination – Ardersier/AR1-6 Tornagrain/TG1 Nairn/NA1, NA2, NA3, NA5</p>	<p><b>Potential Impact:</b> Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, disturbance and physical damage from recreational activities and off-site feeding habitat loss</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Following developer requirement to be included for site allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through satisfactory provision and/or contribution towards open space, path and green network requirements, including mitigation associated with the Inverness to Nairn Coastal Trail</li> </ul> <p><b>Residual Impact:</b> No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p>

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1. All Natura sites potentially affected by the IMFLDP have been identified and mapped, and all policies, policy tools and proposals contained within the plan have been screened both individually and cumulatively to determine the likelihood of significant effects on these Natura sites that may arise due to their implementation. Policy tools and Policies which have been identified as having no effect on Natura sites have been listed and detailed in Tables 2 and 3, including reasons for the decision to screen them out. Projects referred to in, but not proposed by, the IMFLDP have been listed in Table 4 and accordingly screened out. Proposals which would have no effect on any Natura site, apart from a general issue regarding water supply and waste water discharge for the Inverness to Nairn Corridor, have been listed in Table 5. A policy has been added to the Local Development Plan to ensure that future infrastructural expansion for water supply and waste water discharge will not have any adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura site. This has enabled all these sites to be screened out. Proposals which would have a minor (i.e. insignificant) effect only on a Natura site have been listed in Table 6, and those which would still have a minor effect only both alone and in combination, have been listed in Table 9 and accordingly screened out. The remaining proposals likely to have a significant effect on a Natura site either alone or in combination were identified and listed in Tables 7 and 8 as requiring an appropriate assessment.
- 7.2. The results of these assessments, including mitigation in the form of added developer requirements to the plan, have been detailed and reasoned in the Natura site tables contained in section 6. As a result the Highland Council concludes that, with the mitigation set out in this Habitats Regulations Appraisal, which has been incorporated into the plan, the policies, policy tools and proposals within the IMFLDP will either have no likely significant effects on Natura sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, or will not adversely affect the integrity of Natura sites, again either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. Minor residual effects that should be potentially considered as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisals of other plans or projects are listed in Table 9.

## Appendix 1 – Natura Sites within or close to Plan Area Screened Out

In agreement with SNH the Natura sites listed below have been screened out of the HRA as there is no link or pathway between the qualifying interests and development sites in the plan, or any effect would be a positive effect, or would not otherwise undermine the conservation objectives for the site.

Special Areas of Conservation				
<u>Beinn Dearg</u>	<u>Dam Wood</u>	<u>Loch Ruthven</u>	<u>Monadhliath</u>	<u>River Spey</u>
<u>Ben Wyvis</u>	<u>Fannich Hills</u>	<u>Loch Ussie</u>	<u>Moniack Gorge</u>	<u>Slochd</u>
<u>Carn nan Tri-tighearnan</u>	<u>Kinveachy Forest</u>	<u>Moidach More</u>	<u>Ness Woods</u>	<u>Strathglass Complex</u>
<u>Culbin Bar</u>	<u>Loch Achnacloich</u>	<u>Monadh Mor</u>	<u>Pitmaduthy Moss</u>	
Special Protection Areas				
<u>Achanalt Marshes</u>	<u>Darnaway and Lethen Forest</u>	<u>Loch Knockie and nearby Lochs</u>		<u>Novar</u>
<u>Beinn Dearg</u>	<u>Glen Affric to Strathconon</u>	<u>Morangie Forest</u>	<u>West Inverness-shire Lochs</u>	
<u>Ben Wyvis</u>	<u>Kinveachy Forest</u>	<u>North Inverness Lochs</u>		
Special Protection Areas and Ramsars				
<u>Loch Ruthven</u>	<u>Moray and Nairn Coast</u>	<u>Loch Eye</u>		