The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Green Networks
Lìonraidhean Uaine

Supplementary Guidance

ADOPTED

January 2013

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Introduction
Ro-ràdh

Purpose
Adhbhar

The aim of this Green Network: Supplementary Guidance is to help promote greenspace linkages and to safeguard and enhance wildlife corridors in and around new and existing developments. Green Networks already exist in Highland and comprise important habitats and recreation opportunities. The Council is seeking to protect and where possible enhance these spaces and places, enabling new development to take advantage of the outstanding landscape in the area.

The purpose of the guidance is to put in place a means of identifying the Highland Green Network and a mechanism for the delivery of its enhancement, in line with Policy 74 of The Highland wide Local Development Plan which states;

Policy 74   Green Networks

Green networks should be protected and enhanced. Development in areas identified for the creation of green networks should seek to avoid the fragmentation of the network and take steps to improve its connectivity, where this is appropriate. The detailed identification of green networks around regional and sub regional centres (see Figure 10) will be carried out by the Council using the methodology described in the document "Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance". Pending identification by the Council of green networks, both within the study areas and elsewhere, developers should identify, protect and enhance the existing network of green spaces and green corridors which link built-up areas to the surrounding countryside, using the methodology in the supplementary guidance. The main principles of the guidance are to:

- help promote greenspace linkages and to safeguard and enhance wildlife corridors in and around new and existing developments;
- set out a methodology for identifying the Highland Green Network;
- enable new development to take advantage of the outstanding landscape in the area while also preserving areas of significant landscape value; and
- set out mechanisms for delivery of projects to maintain and enhance the existing green network.

It is not the intention of the green network to contribute new formal open spaces in the countryside, but to prevent the existing spaces being broken up and where there are development proposals, identify how they can help to link up existing spaces through the creation of new green spaces where appropriate.

The proposals for the Green Network can be separated into the three elements of sustainable development, each recognising the development areas within the area:

Environmental – the most significant habitats of the area, designated sites, European protected species and other good quality habitats;

Social – existing paths in the area and any aspirational paths which have been identified through consultation with the public on the Core Path Plans;

Economic – will look at existing, proposed and future land uses and how they fit with the network.

Status of the Guidance
Inbhe an Stiùiridh

The guidance reflects the policy advice given in Scottish Planning Policy, and will supplement The Highland Council's Highland wide Local Development Plan. The guidance will be adopted as statutory Supplementary Guidance under the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. This guidance will apply to all developments in Highland to ensure that a cohesive Highland Green Network can be formed.

This guidance will work with other Council guidance including Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance, Forest and Woodland Strategy, Highland Core Path Plans and The Highland Access Strategy to deliver Green Networks across Highland.

The Council will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the guidance and add to it as further Green Networks are mapped in more detail throughout Highland. The guidance as a whole will be reviewed every 5 years.

Note: Only detail of the A96 Green Network is included at this stage. Detail of other green networks will follow in due course. Information on this is included in the Green Networks – Action Programme.

What is a green network?
Dè tha ann an lìonradh uaine?

A green network comprises the network of greenspaces and green corridors within and around settlements, linking out into the wider countryside, helping to enhance the area's biodiversity, quality of life and sense of place. A green network provides the setting within which high quality, sustainable growth can occur.

A green network can be made up of:

- Woodlands;

- Other natural and semi-natural habitats such as grassland;

- Formal and informal greenspace in and around settlements;

- The water environment, wetlands and other blue spaces (including lochs, estuaries and coastal waters); and

- Active travel routes.

A Vision for a Highland Green Network
Lèirsinn airson lìonradh uaine na Gàidhealtachd

The Highland Council's long term vision for a Highland Green Network is:

"The creation of a sustainable, connected network of high quality, fit for purpose greenspaces and green corridors which deliver benefits to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the whole region."

Why a green network?
Carson lìonradh uaine?

In order to make the growth in Highland sustainable and respond to climate change, maintaining and, where identified, improving environmental quality and performance of the green network is required. The development of a green network is an ambitious programme, which will link green spaces, walks, woodlands, other habitats and countryside along miles of paths and cycle routes bringing a range of social, economic and environmental benefits to the Highland Council area.

There are pressures for development around all of our larger settlements but most noticeably around the major settlements in the Inner Moray Firth. In these areas green networks have an important role to play in creating an attractive, high quality environment in which to live, visit, work and invest.

Policy Context for the Green Network
Co-theacsa poileasaidh airson lìonradh uaine

This document has been informed by a number of pieces of guidance and policy.

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) is the European legislation which sets the framework for green networks. Both Article 3 and Article 10 of the European Habitats Directive make reference to improving the 'ecological coherence' of that series of sites. For a site to be ecologically 'coherent' it needs to have links outside its designated area, to ensure that all habitats and species can be maintained in favourable conservation status in the long term.

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) "WFD", requires (i) water bodies to achieve "good" ecological status by 2015 and (ii) there to be no deterioration in status. As such measures must be put in place that will both protect and improve the water environment. Ensuring the integrity of vegetation adjacent to water bodies and taking measures to prevent the spread of non-native invasive species (e.g. giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam) will contribute to these WFD objectives. A system of river basin management plans (RBMP) has been set up to support the successful implementation of the WFD. Full details of the plans prepared and measures agreed in support of the WFD, including an interactive map, can be viewed on the SEPA website. The Council will continue to contribute to the RBMP process in its capacity as a "responsible authority" and RBMPs and will be given due consideration in determining development proposals.

National Planning Framework 2 is the key national framework document which guides the spatial development of Scotland to 2030. It sets the agenda for change, providing focus on reducing inequalities, improving sustainability and creating opportunities for education, training and employment.

Green Networks are identified in NPF2 as a key driver towards creating a more sustainable and equitable Scotland. Green Networks provide an "opportunity to develop extensive Green Networks connecting our inner urban areas with their surrounding rural environments, providing a wide range of social, health and environmental benefits."

Scottish Planning Policy identifies the role that open space and greenspace can play in the drive to make people more active and create a healthier population. The benefits of Green Networks are highlighted through the SPP: "Linking greenspaces in and around settlements through Green Networks can deliver benefits for people and nature. By encouraging connectivity between habitats, Green Networks can improve the viability of species and the health and viability of previously isolated habitats and ecosystems, supporting adaptation to climate change."

The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 establishes a framework for the assessment and management of flood risk with the overall aim of reducing flood risk particularly in relation to four key receptors human health, environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. This will involve a multi-phased approach to establish a framework for catchment based assessment and management of flood risk.

Planning Advice Note 65: Planning and Open Space gives advice on the role of the planning system in protecting and enhancing existing open spaces providing high quality new spaces.

The Highland wide Local Development Plan sets the context for the development of a Highland Green Network and bring a local context to the national stance of National Planning Framework 2 and Scottish Planning Policy.

Open Space in New residential Development: Supplementary Guidance explains how the Council will work to achieve, high quality, accessible and fit for purpose open spaces right across Highland.

Core Path Plans show where routes are for walking and cycling in and around the settlements in Highland. Many of the routes link up important greenspaces and other settlements in the area and provide opportunities for recreation and exercise.

Highland Biodiversity Actions Plans set out priorities and targets for biodiversity across Highland and identify many issues which can be addressed by a Highland Green Network. There are separate plans for each area and these can be viewed online at http://www.highlandbiodiversity.co.uk

Landscape Character Assessments identify, describe and classify the variety of landscape types in Highland. Landscape types are classified in terms of the composition of inter-related natural, physical, cultural and historical characteristics. The help explain what makes landscapes different to each other, and can guide landscape change to minimised any detrimental effects on existing character.

1. The Highland Green Network
Lìonradh Uaine na Gàidhealtachd

Principles for the Highland Green Network
Prionnsapalan airson lìonradh uaine na Gàidhealtachd

We need to set consistent and proportionate principles for a green network right across the Highlands. There are overarching principles for the network as a whole and also principles identified around the key elements of a green network. Further details on each of the General Principles are contained in Appendix 1.

General

- Development should contribute positively to the creation, maintenance and enhancement of the Green Network;

- Quality and function are more important than quantity;

- Planning for the Green Network must be based on spatial analysis;

- The Green Network should be a starting point, not an afterthought;

- The Green Network will be a key contributor to place- making and the enhancement of local distinctiveness;

- Partnership working should maximise the range and scale of benefits delivered by the Green Network;

- Long term management and maintenance of the Green Network should be considered from the outset.

Environment

- Internationally, nationally and regionally important sites and the land that directly supports them will form a key part of the green network and should remain green;

- Important views through the Green Networks should be maintained and where practical, enhanced;

- Green buffers at critical locations should avoid of coalescence of existing settlements;

- Heritage features should be respected and, where appropriate integrated into development;

- Green Networks should be protected to avoid further fragmentation of habitats and, where practical and appropriate, should re-connect fragmented habitats through planting and open space provision associated with development;

- Wildlife and habitat corridors scales depend on species plus the function of the habitat;

- Any unavoidable fragmentation of habitats should be mitigated to ensure continued connectivity;

- The presence of protected species (within and nearby) the network must be a key consideration, together with their movement patterns;

- Areas of floodplains should be included as part of the network;

- Where the network includes parts of the water environment the ecological status of   the water body under the Water Framework Directive will be a key consideration;

- Every effort must be taken to control the spread of non-native invasive species

Social

- A green network must seek to protect and, where appropriate, enhance, a cohesive path network to the benefit of tourists and the local population;

- Paths should primarily be for recreation and allow for active travel between spaces and places;

- Formal open spaces in new developments should be linked to the wider area to allow people to come into contact with natural, cultural and built heritage features and promote peoples' health and wellbeing.

- Green infrastructure should be multifunctional (where possible), be attractive, provide best value for money, and be sustainable in the short, medium and long term
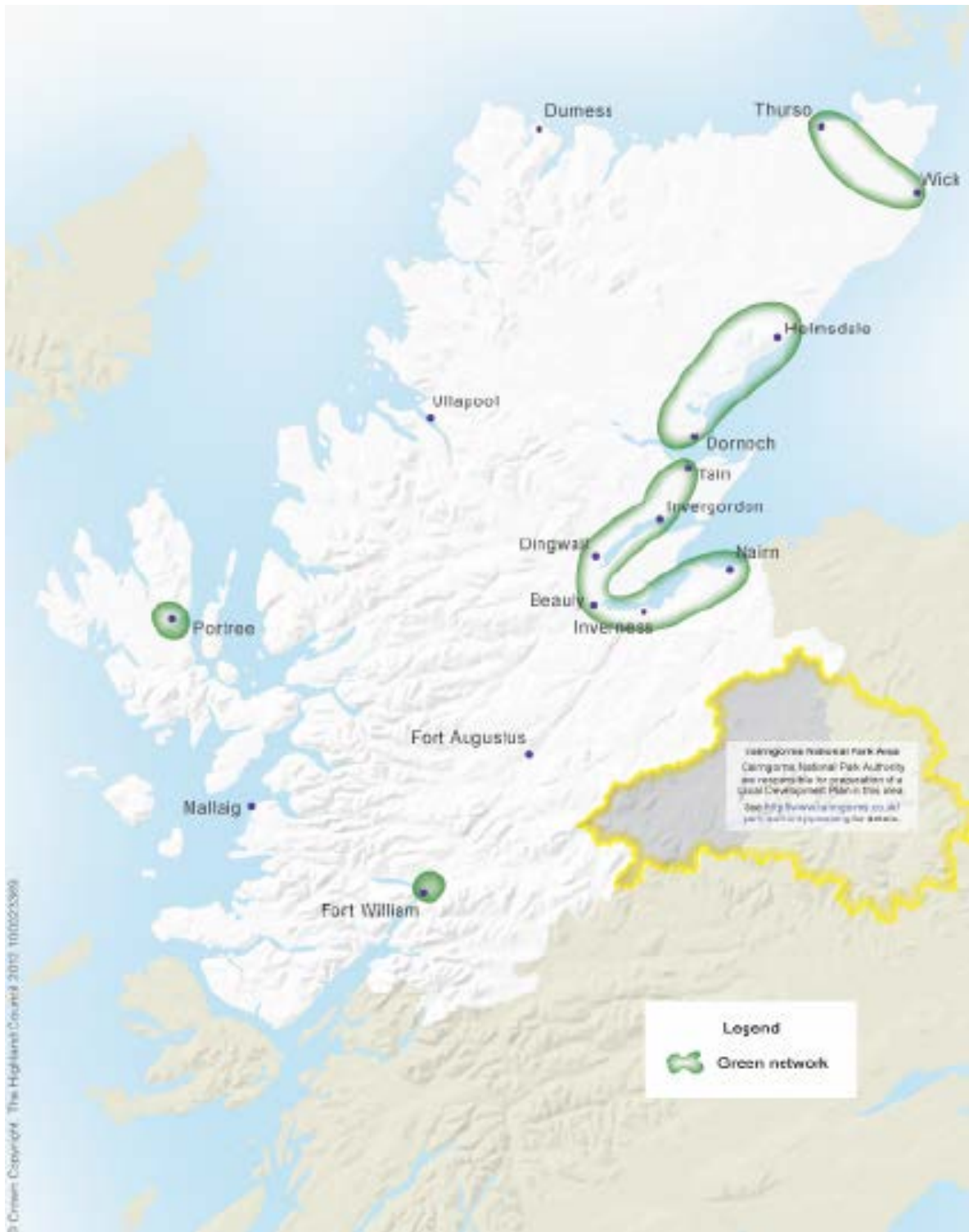
Economic

- Green networks should facilitate regeneration, job creation and enterprise

- Green networks must seek to enhance the tourist industry in the area.

- Green networks can stimulate inward investment, and provide high quality spaces for working and living

The above principles will form the cornerstone for the development of Green Networks right across Highland and will also help to prioritise projects to be developed within each of the Green Networks in Highland.

Where will the Green Networks be?
Càit' am bi na lìonraidhean uaine?

Over time we will identify Green Networks right across Highland but with a focus around the regional centre and sub-regional centres identified in the Highland wide Local Development Plan and identified on the diagram below. Each green network will have a specific set of deliverable projects that will have a benefit to the local area, and all will be underpinned by the set of green network principles that will be applied in all developments across Highland.

Benefits of a green network

Social benefits	Social benefits - health and recreation
A greater sense of public ownership and pride in the local area	Increased opportunities for physical exercise and recreation
Increasing public understanding of the natural environment	Health benefits from reduced pollution and improved urban development
Opportunity to create social cohesion through local practical community projects	Attractive green spaces become better utilised
Creating a physical link between rural and urban communities, reducing isolation	Improvements to mental and physical well-being gained from better surroundings
Better access to facilities for disabled people and non-car owners	

Environmental benefits	Economic benefits
Increasing walking and cycling journeys potentially reducing carbon emissions	Catalyst for regeneration, job creation and enterprise
Natural drainage processes help control floods and reduce pollution	Indirect benefits e.g. Flood alleviation, reduced traffic congestion, a more mobile healthy workforce
Improvement to natural habitats and biodiversity within green spaces	A basis for external funding bids and inward investment in Highland
New green corridors to help wildlife to move around and flourish	A potential increase in visitor numbers boosting urban and rural economies
Green Infrastructure can counter the effects of climate change by creating "green lungs" for cities, towns and villages, improved opportunities for active travel and species migration	Green Infrastructure provides vital habitats and jobs managing the land.
Well designed and well located green spaces reduce pressure on drainage and flood defences	Businesses attract and retain more motivated staff in greener settings
	Green spaces near workplaces reduce sickness absence, increasing productivity
	Views of natural landscapes can add up to 18% to property values

Adapted from:
The Economic Value of Green Infrastructure", Ecotec (2008).
http://www.nwda.co.uk/PDF/EconomicValueofGreenInfrastructure.pdf
Benefits and opportunities of a green network
http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/environment/greennetwork/benefits.shtml

Guidance for Developers

There is strong support for the Green Network at a national and local level, and the challenge is for the planning system to facilitate its implementation. The following pages are designed to enable the planning system to aid in the delivery of a Green Network and assist landowners in ensuring that we can work towards the principles of a Highland Green Network.

Good masterplanning has a vital role to play in creating Green Networks and open spaces. Its role is to consider the impact new development may have on a green network. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that the following questions are addressed in the preparation of any planning application. The Planning Officer will asses the degree to which the points have been addressed.

- Does the proposed development help conserve and enhance the green network?

- What are the spatial priorities for development of the Green Network in this area and are they reflected through the development proposal?

- Does the proposed development include new greenspace of an appropriate, size type and quality? Does it include arrangements for the long term management and maintenance of the greenspace?

- Is there a need to seek developer contributions to the creation or enhancement of off-site greenspaces?

- Has satisfactory mitigation been included within proposals that affect the Green Network to ensure no fragmentation or loss of connectivity takes place?

- Is a green network deliverable in this location?

Developers should ensure that their proposal can adequately demonstrate the above and how they have taken into consideration any particular green network priorities which have been identified in the area. Over time, each Green Network area (as identified on Figure 1 of this document) will be mapped and a set of green network priorities will be identified to address specific issues in that area. These will be available and further detail set out as appendices to this Supplementary Guidance.

Developer Contributions

We will seek the retention of existing important elements of the green network, along with developer contributions to the enhancement of the green network both within the site and linking into the wider green network. It is not always appropriate

or desirable for developments to automatically include elements of a green network within a development site. This is most likely where the site is small or where a new area of open space or other green network element would not fit the development's immediate context. There are also likely to be cases where there would be greater benefits in combining the contribution from a number of developments to create a more substantial resource or significantly enhance an existing one. In these cases developer contributions may be sought to deliver elements of the green network outwith a specific development site. When developer contributions are sought will be in line with the tests in Scottish Government Circular 1/2010 – Planning Agreements.

Guidance for landowners

Some projects may not need to be delivered through good masterplanning or through seeking developer contributions, it may be simply a case of amending, maintaining or formalising the current land use of an area. Where this is the case land management agreements may be sought with land owners or if access is required over the land for a new footpath or cycleway then an access management agreement may be sought.

Guidance for community groups

It may be that a community group may wish to deliver some elements of the network. To do this the project should meet the aims of the network and be sustainable. There is a range of ways in which projects could be funded and these include:

Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) 2007-2013

The SRDP is a programme of economic, environmental and social measures, worth some £1.5 billion, designed to develop rural Scotland from 2007 to 2013. Individuals and groups may seek support to help deliver the Government's strategic objectives in rural Scotland. Further information is available online at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/farmingrural/SRDP.

LEADER

LEADER is now part of the new Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP), aimed at promoting economic and community development within rural areas. It is a bottom up method of delivering support for rural development aimed primarily at small and medium sized community driven projects that are pilot and innovative in nature. Further information is available online at http://www.highlandleader.com/.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency Restoration Fund

Where a green network helps protect or enhance the water environment SEPA's Restoration Fund may be able to assist. Although SEPA will lead on projects at a strategic level across the country, we are keen to see improvements delivered through partnership working, with external stakeholders taking forward projects. SEPA welcome applications from projects that contribute to the Water Framework Diretive's objectives and tackle physical pressures affecting the water environment. Ideally, the project should also deliver wider environmental, social and economic benefits. Projects can be as simple as planting native bank side vegetation or as complex as a catchment scale process restoration or large dam removal. Full details are available from www.sepa.org.uk/water/restoration_fund.aspx.

Timescales for Delivering a Highland Green Network
Sgèilean-ama airson lìonradh uaine na Gàidhealtachd a lìbhrigeadh

The identification and ongoing maintenance, creation and delivery of an enhanced green network for Highland is a long term ambition and some elements of the enhanced green network will come forward earlier than others. For each of the Highland Green Network areas the following will be identified:

- Characteristics;

- Plans, projects and proposals; and

- Green Network Priorities.

By identifying these elements we will be able to set an approximate timescale for delivery of the enhanced network.

On our website you can find a Green Network Action Programme which sets out how and when elements of the enhanced green network can or will be delivered and also when additions to this guidance should be expected.

This guidance will be reviewed every 5 years alongside the review of the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

Mapping the Networks
A' mapadh an lìonraidh

The Council has worked with a number of organisations, including Scottish Natural Heritage, to formulate a methodology for mapping a green network. Green Networks are mapped by collating and analysing various pieces of information about existing and proposed future land uses in an area. This information falls into one of three categories:

- **Environmental** – the most significant habitats of the area, designated sites, European protected species and other good quality habitats – including greenspace - , especially corridors and other land that enables the movement of species;

- **Social** – existing paths in the area and any aspirational paths which have been identified through consultation with the public on the Core Path Plans;

- **Economic** –proposed future land uses, existing land uses and how they fit with the network both now and in the future.

In this first version of the guidance we have only mapped the Inverness to Nairn Green Corridor and identified projects based upon the provisional mapping and deliverability of the network. In time, and when resources allow, Green Networks will be mapped and continually updated across the rest of the areas identified in Figure 1. A Green Network Action Programme is available on our website setting out the likely timescale for analyis of the green network in other areas shown on Figure 1. This analysis will identify:

- Key elements of the existing green network that should be protected and enhanced;

- Key priorities for enhancing the Green Networks by enhancing existing provision, or by creating new green network assets;

- Key opportunities to link the existing green network to development and regeneration priorities; and

- Key green network outcomes.

The findings will then over time form part of this document and inform the development of the area Local Development Plans. In the meantime, development in the Highland wide Local Development Plan area should seek to protect and enhance the green network, wherever development is located, based on the general principles and considerations set out in this guidance. The first analysis has been carried out on the A96 Green Network, and an interactive map of this analysis is

available online. This mapping will be periodically updated as new information becomes available.

When mapping a green network the following should be taken into account:

- What is the current pattern of greenspace provision?

- Does the existing open space form any networks – and are there opportunities to link it to other areas?

- Is it possible to describe the key functions provided by different parts of the green network?

- Are there particular areas which are less well served by particular types of open space?

- Where are major developments planned in the area?

- Are there any cross local authority boundary issues?

- Undertake and assessment of what currently exists as part of the green network at various scales of movement of species and people.

- What is important about these existing components e.g. connectivity, scale, condition?

- Are there any protected species at present which move about in this green network?

- What/where are the priorities for enhancement?

- What opportunities are key/would deliver multiple benefits

- Where are there gaps that, if improved, could reduce the fragmentation of the green network?

- Are there any risks/negative consequences associated with increasing connectivity?

Contact
Cuir fios gu

If you have any questions about this guidance or would like to know more please contact the Development Plans Team using the details below:

Post:

Planning and Development Service

The Highland Council

Council Offices

Glenurquhart Road

Inverness

IV3 5NX

E-Mail:

devplans@highland.gov.uk

Telephone:

01463) 702261

Website:

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

Glossary

Access Rights: Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives everyone statutory access rights to most land and inland water. People only have these rights if they exercise them responsibly by respecting people's privacy, safety and livelihoods, and Scotland's environment.

Action Programme: is a working document developed in consultation with key stakeholders and sets out, in very broad terms, how and by whom the key elements of the Green Network vision will be implemented.

Appropriate Assessment: An assessment required under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c) Regulations 1994 (as amended) in order that the planning authority as competent authority may determine the likely impact of a development proposal on the conservation interests for which a European nature conservation site has been classified.

Circular: Contains Scottish Government policy on the implementation of legislation or procedures

Developer contributions: Payments made to The Council or another agency, or work in kind, to help improve the infrastructure (for example, roads, open space, waste-water treatment, restoring worked-out mineral sites) so that the development can go ahead.

Development Plan: Sets out how land could be used over the next few years. By law the Council need to produce a development plan for the whole area

Development Plan Scheme: The document setting out the Council's intentions for preparing development plans in the next few years.

European Protected Species: Species of animal and plant listed respectively in Schedule 2 and Schedule 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 as amended.

Green Network: Comprises the network of greenspaces and green corridors within and around settlements, linking out into the wider countryside, helping to enhance the area's biodiversity, quality of life and sense of place. A green network will provide the setting within which high quality, sustainable growth can occur.

HER: Historic Environment Record, available on the Council's website.

Historic Scotland: An executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

HwLDP: Highland wide Local Development Plan.

Infrastructure: The basic services and facilities needed to support development. These include road access and water and sewerage facilities.

Key Agency: A national or regional organisation that has an important role in planning for the future of an area. Key Agencies are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

Landscape Character: The distinct and recognisable pattern of landscape elements that occurs consistently in a particular area, and how these are perceived by people, that makes one landscape different from another.

Open Space: Areas of public open space identified through the Highland wide Open Space Audit. Open Space is defined in Planning Advice Note 65: Planning and Open Space.

Place-making: To ensure that the most sustainable sites are used for development and that the design process, layout structure and form provide a development that is appropriate to the local context and supports a sustainable community.

Planning Advice Note (PAN): Pprovides advice and information on technical planning matters.

Proposed Plan: This document essentially forms the plan that Highland Council would wish to see adopted and will require to be fully consulted upon. At this stage the Proposed Plan will have some materiality in relation to planning applications.

Protected Bird Species: All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. These are any bird of a kind which is ordinarily resident in or is a visitor to Great Britain in a wild state, but does not include poultry or game birds. Certain wild bird species are given extra protection, and these are listed in Schedule 1 of the Act. Certain of these species are given even greater protection (currently only the white-tailed eagle) and these are listed in Schedules 1A and A1 of the Act.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA): is Scotland's environmental regulator. SEPA is a non-departmental public body, accountable through Scottish Ministers to the Scottish Parliament. Their main role is to protect and improve the environment.

Scottish Government: The devolved government for Scotland is responsible for most of the issues of day-to-day concern to the people of Scotland, including health, education, justice, rural affairs, planning and transport.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH): Scottish Natural Heritage is funded by the Scottish Government. Their purpose is to:

- promote care for and improvement of the natural heritage

- help people enjoy it responsibly

- enable greater understanding and awareness of it

- promote its sustainable use, now and for future generations.

Scottish Planning Policy: Is the statement of Scottish Government policy on nationally important land use planning matters.

Settlement Hierarchy: The definition of settlements, for example as 'regional', 'sub regional' or 'local' centres, depending on the size of their population and the services they contain (for example, education, health, transport and retail).

Settlement Strategy: A justified overview of the distribution of development and roles of settlements.

Settlements: Groups of houses, some that do and some that don't have facilities, identified through the settlement hierarchy.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): SEA is a key component of sustainable development establishing important methods for protecting the environment and extending opportunities for participation in public policy decision making. SEA achieves this by:

- Systematically assessing and monitoring the significant environmental effects of public sector strategies, plans and programmes

- Ensuring that expertise and views are sought at various points in the process from SNH, SEPA, Historic Scotland and the public

- Requiring a public statement as to how opinions have been taken into account.

Supplementary Guidance (SG): is a document which can give further detail on policies and proposals within the Local Development Plan. Common types of Supplementary Guidance include:

- Development briefs or masterplans - which provide a detailed explanation of how the Council would like to see particular sites or small areas develop.

- Strategies or frameworks on specific issues - for example, guidance on the location of large wind farms.

- Detailed policies - for example on the design of new development.

For more information on the Supplementary Guidance that the Council will prepare please see Appendix 6.3 of this Local Development Plan.

Sustainable design: Design which reduces the possible negative effects on the environment as far as possible and makes the most of social and economic benefits.

Sustainable development: Sustainable development has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS): Drainage techniques used to treat and return surface water run-off from developments (roof water, road run-off, hard standing areas) to the water environment (rivers, groundwater, lochs) without adverse impact upon people or the environment. Further guidance can be found in CIRIA's SuDS Manual C697 or Sewers for Scotland 2nd Edition.

Transport Scotland: Is an agency of the Scottish Government and is accountable to Parliament and the public through Scottish Ministers. Transport Scotland works in partnership with private sector transport operators, local authorities and government. It also works closely with seven regional transport partnerships which take a strategic view of the transport needs of people and businesses in their region.

Viability: A measure of the capacity to attract ongoing investment, for maintenance, improvement and adaptation to changing needs.

Water Bodies: Places where water is found such as rivers, burns, lochs, ponds, boggy wet land, water held under the ground and coastal waters.

Appendix 1 Green Network General Principles
Pàipear-taice 1 Prionnsapalan coitcheann an lìonraidh uaine

Development should contribute positively to creation, maintenance and enhancement of the Green Network

Carefully designed development should help protect, restore and create green spaces, for example by creating new areas of woodland planting, creating Sustainable Urban Drainage infrastructure which is also a wetland habitat, or by helping to fund long term management of a valued community park. The green infrastructure elements of the Green Network operate at all scales – from a large woodland to a local equipped area for play, or a badger tunnel placed under a road It may be possible that a single piece of green infrastructure suitably placed and designed can have positive effects beyond the individual site boundaries. Connectivity of the Green Network should be maintained and enhanced, and fragmentation of the Network should be avoided. The green infrastructure elements of the Green Network operate at all scales – from a large woodland to a local equipped areas for play. It is important that the potential for all developments to influence the Green Network - positively and negatively - is therefore considered.

Quality and function are more important than quantity

Many communities illustrate the effects of concentrating on the quantity rather than the quality of greenspaces, with extensive areas of bland, undervalued and underused greenspaces which can actually detract from environmental quality, as well as providing a long term maintenance burden for the council. We need to refocus on ensuring that high quality functional greenspaces of the right kind is delivered in the right place. Planning can play a key role in ensuring that the development process reflects the importance of understanding the context and focusing on function and quality. For example by ensuring instead of delivering a bland open space the delivery of a multifunctional green space including uses for all abilities is provided. Development will often result in a net reduction in the extent of greenspace, but should result in an increase in quality of the Green Network and the benefits that it provides.

Planning for the Green Network must be based on spatial analysis

It is vital that the planning process looks beyond the boundaries of individual development sites, however large, to consider the broader spatial context; helping to create a more coordinated and joined up network. It needs to consider two dimensions of the Green Network. Firstly, how does a given site relate to the wider Green Network – does it currently, or is there potential for it to form part of a Green Network hub, link or stepping stone? Secondly, what kind of Green Network benefits

are most needed in that location – is there a lack of local play spaces, a need to change perceptions of an area, or shortage of semi-natural greenspace?

The Green Network should be a starting point, not an afterthought

Green Networks are an opportunity not a constraint. The greatest Green Network benefits are likely to be achieved when greenspace potential and grey infrastructure is considered together from the outset and as an integral part of the development process, rather than as an afterthought once other elements of the scheme have become 'fixed'. Often there is no need to create new green infrastructure, protection and enhancement of the existing infrastructure may be the better option. An understanding of a location or a site's current and potential contribution to the Green Network should inform decisions about use, scale and location of development. This will help avoid conflicts or missed opportunities emerging later in the process and can lead to innovative solutions based on stepping stones or green corridors which are integrated with the built development. In many cases innovation is to be welcomed – there are often many solutions to creating and enhancing habitat connectivity and path linkage. This is likely to improve the quality of the development, with obvious benefits for the developer. It can also ensure that development is more fully tied into its surroundings, helping to reinforce local identity as well as delivering access, biodiversity or other Green Network benefits.

The Green Network will be a key contributor to place making and the enhancement of local distinctiveness

Open space in all its forms has a key role to play in reinforcing the character and quality of urban and rural landscapes. It can provide continuity that extends beyond an individual site or area and can help emphasise key features such as surrounding areas of high ground. Place-making is central to the environmental and economic transformation of areas and perceptions of the area among investors, potential employees and visitors. Again, this requires that the Green Network is considered from the outset and at a broader scale than individual sites. Short term and temporary greening of future development sites can be as important as longer term solutions.

Partnership working should maximise the range and scale of benefits delivered by the Green Network

The wide range of potential Green Network benefits highlights the importance of working with others within the Council and in partner organisations and agencies in formulating, funding, delivering and managing the Green Network and its benefits. Key partners could include neighbouring councils and agencies responsible for

environmental conservation, economic development, education, healthy living or greenspace implementation.

Long term management and maintenance of the Green Network should be considered from the outset

Many of the problems associated with existing open spaces reflect a shortage of funding for effective management of green infrastructure. Like other elements of the public realm, capital investment is rarely backed by an adequate maintenance budget, resulting in an expensive and damaging cycle of investment and decay. While this remains an problem, the planning process can provide partial solutions in encouraging solutions which take future management and maintenance issues into account, and by using planning conditions and agreements to facilitate ongoing site management.

Appendix 2 – The A96 Green Network
Pàipear-taice 2 – Lìonradh Uaine an A96

Introduction
Ro-ràdh

The aim of the green network is to help promote and enhance greenspace quality and function, and its linkage, in and around new and existing developments. A green network already exists in this area and is comprised of important habitats and recreation opportunities. The green network is about protection, maintenance and where possible enhancement and creation of spaces and places, enabling new development to take advantage of the outstanding landscape in the area while also preserving over 90% of the A96 corridor as an area of significant landscape.

The Green Network in the A96 Corridor identifies a range of proposals that will benefit the area as a whole. It is not the intention of the green network to create new formal open spaces in the countryside but to prevent the existing spaces being fragmented and for the existing network to be enhanced. However, where there are development proposals, it is necessary to identify how they can aid in maintaining and enhancing the existing green network, and where necessary and appropriate, potentially link up fragmented areas of the green network by the creation of, for example green space, habitat or paths. New development proposals should avoid adverse effects on movement of protected species, using green network components to maintain connectivity, both of a 'soft' nature, e.g. new planting or habitat areas, and of a 'hard' nature, e.g. ducts and tunnels

Spatial Analysis
Anailis Farsaingeachd

To establish the key elements and aid in the mapping of the network we have carried out spatial analysis of the network.

You can view maps of each individual element of the network as set out below using our interactive map on our website:

Settlement Pattern

The settlement distribution shows an uncoordinated pattern of built up areas across the area. The two largest settlements are Inverness in the west and Nairn in the east. There are a number of smaller settlements in the central part of the corridor which have strong affiliations with the larger settlements for the provision of services.

Woodlands

The majority of the larger woodlands are located around the centre of the corridor. There are also a number of plantations within the corridor and some woodlands outwith the corridor which could successfully link into the network.

Open Space

The Highland Open Space Audit 2010 audited open space in all settlements contained within the Settlement Hierarchy. For the A96 Corridor this only concerned Inverness (including Culloden) and Nairn. There is a significant spread of different types of open space in both settlements and a number of important strategic open spaces can be identified.

Landscape Character

Landscape characterisation provides a high level analysis of landscape types. It helps to evaluate the importance of landscapes; and prioritise for conservation and enhancement. The landscape character map is useful in showing the variations in character right across the corridor. The most predominant characteristics are coastal and agricultural.

Habitats

Scottish Natural Heritage, The Highland Council and other organisations have worked together to identify the most important and dominant habitats in the area. Hedgerows, burns and smaller natural spaces should also form part of a green network however, such features can not be identified at this stage.

Designated Sites

There are a large number of designated sites in and around the A96 Corridor that contribute to its character. These include sites designated as internationally or nationally important for their wildlife, geological and/or habitat value such as the Moray Firth SAC, Inner Moray Firth SPA/RAMSAR Site, Kildrummie Kames SSSI (and the Loch Flemington SPA which sits within the SSSI) and the Cawdor Woods SAC.

Built Heritage Features

There are a number of built and cultural heritage features in the corridor including significant conservation areas, designed landscapes and listed buildings. These help to identify areas of a green network which should be protected from inappropriate development and enhance them where appropriate.

Paths and Trails

There are hundreds of important access routes across the A96 Corridor. These routes and aspirations for coastal and landward trails in the area have been identified through consultation on the Inverness and Nairn Core Paths Plan. Parts of the Great Glen Way and national cycle network have sections located in the A96 Corridor area.

Proposed Major Developments

The area is one of the most important areas for growth in Highland. Over time there is potential for development including new houses, new employment opportunities and new higher and further education facilities.

The Analysis Results

When all of the above information is pulled together, the three main elements of the network can be drawn out:

The Environment Network

An important part of the network is the way it can protect and enhance the landscape and heritage of the area.

Part of the green network comprises natural, built and cultural heritage features of international, national or regional/local importance which should be protected and enhanced as part of the environmental network. These include but are not limited to:

- Battlefields;

- Special Areas of Conservation;

- Special Protection Areas;

- RAMSAR Sites;

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- Designed Landscapes;

- Scheduled Monuments;

- Listed Buildings;

- Conservation Areas;

- Local Nature Conservation Sites;

- Special Landscape Areas.

All of the above features are protected by legislation at a range of levels and a policy framework is in place in the Highland wide Local Development Plan to bring this into a planning context.

Fundamental components of the green network are the existing habitats and the species that they support. There are a number of important habitats within the green network which contribute to the biodiversity value of the area. Working with SNH and others the Council has been able to map these habitats and the networks they create. You can view the interactive map of these habitats and view information on what the habitat network maps are and what they mean for development planning online.

Habitats and their networks are not fixed. They move with time and adapt to the conditions around them. However, it is important to improve the connectivity of the networks; other networks could form part of these larger networks through appropriate land management and development which is sympathetic to the setting and needs of the habitats.

The Social Network

Leisure and recreation is an important element of the network to allow people to come into contact with heritage and to enjoy physical exercise, leading to a healthier lifestyle.

Open spaces have been identified in Inverness and Nairn. All new developments in the corridor will need to meet the requirements for the delivery of open space set out in the Council's Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance. These existing spaces have a key role to play in maintaining the network and future open spaces should be suitably located in order to help link up the network. There are key opportunities for this at east Inverness, west of Nairn and around the smaller settlements of Croy and Cawdor.

Linking up the network for people is just as important as linking up spaces for wildlife - links can provide multifunctional connections for access and habitat. The best way to do this is by ensuring a cohesive path and trail network across the corridor connecting existing settlements and important areas for recreation. New developments should facilitate this by having legible street layouts and through connecting existing footpaths and cycleways throughout the corridor.

The existing network for recreation and leisure clearly has gaps and these will be subject to a green network project.

The Economic Network

Economic development of the area will deliver significant benefits. In land use terms this includes the major development sites. Each major development site should take into consideration its setting in relation to the Environment and Social elements of the Green Network.

These major developments offer key opportunities for the delivery of the green network primarily through sound masterplanning but also through developer contributions, where appropriate, to deliver off-site benefits.

Characteristics of the A96 Green Network
Feartan Lìonradh Uaine an A96

The A96 Green Network is located between the City of Inverness and Nairn and forms part of the most urbanised area of Highland. It is lowland in character, contrasting with the landscape to the south of the Eastern Monadhliath Hills and bounded to the north by the Moray Firth. The landscape is mainly coastal lowlands and rolling farmland both of which have a significant influence on the drainage pattern and development of the area.

The area includes a number of paths and trails including sections of a number of long distance routes including the Great Glen Way and National Cycle Network. The long distance routes are suitably complimented by a range of paths which have been identified in the Inverness and Nairn Core Paths Plan. There are a number of natural and built heritage features, which add to the character of the area. There is a significant amount of formal open space in the two main settlements and many informal areas for recreation between these settlements. The River Nairn in the east and Caledonian Canal and River Ness in the west provide a key recreation and access links to the south west.

A number of protected species are present in the area including Badgers, bats, and great crested newts.

A number of wedges of open land are important in maintaining the separation of settlements (e.g. between Culloden and Balloch, and between Ardersier and Fort George).

Existing Green Network Components

The following paragraphs highlight key green network components in the A96 Corridor:

Core Green Network Features: Culloden Battlefield Conservation Area, Moray Firth Special Area for Conservation, Inner Moray Firth and Loch Flemington Special Protection Areas, Designed Landscapes, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Local Heritage Interest, mixed habitat around the Carse of Ardersier and woodland habitat to the west of Croy.

Green Network Links: Habitats along the Moray Firth Coast, River Ness and River Nairn corridors. Open spaces running alongside the A96 towards Nairn town centre and open spaces running through the centre of Inverness forming the Millburn Escarpment. There are potential pedestrian and cycle links which could be formed along the coast, through the woodland in the centre of the corridor and between the main tourist destinations.

Green Network Stepping Stones: The area contains a number of small fragmented habitats and open spaces within and on the edge of the major settlements which allow for movement of wildlife providing opportunities to connect these areas through Green Network enhancement associated with new development on the edges of settlements.

Plans, Projects and Proposals

The area is subject to a number of proposals for major development. Significant expansion to the City of Inverness, Nairn and Cawdor is proposed with two new settlements proposed at Whiteness Head and Tornagrain. There will also be smaller scale expansion of other existing settlements including Ardersier and Croy. A new Waste Water Treatment works is proposed at Ardersier to cope with the additional population in the area and a number of transport improvements are planned but not yet programmed. A new Campus for the University of the Highlands and Islands is planned for the Beechwood area of Inverness, as is a new business park at Inverness Airport.

Green Network Priorities

New development must reflect the following priorities wherever possible:

Realise the potential of the Inverness – Nairn Coastal Trail, as well as a Landward Trail, north-south connections between the trails and a tourist trail.

Maintain and improve green network connections between habitats in areas for proposed development.

Identify positive land uses for important undeveloped wedges providing a setting and framework for settlements, and maintaining separation of existing settlements.

Ensure a positive contribution to the further development of the green network and high quality local greenspace.

Delivering the Priorities

The following priorities should be supported by development proposals in the A96 corridor, whether at a masterplanning, design brief or planning application stage.

Realise the potential of the Inverness – Nairn Coastal Trail, as well as a Landward Trail, north-south connections between the trails and a tourist trail

A long term aspiration of The Highland Council has been to connect Inverness and Nairn with a Coastal Trail. The development of the A96 Corridor is the perfect opportunity to develop this important strategic Link. Once developed it would form a key part of the A96 Corridor Green Network and provide a model for providing coastal trails in other areas of Highland. The success of a Coastal Trail would be closely linked to provision of other trails in the area including a "Landward Trail", links between the landward and coastal trails and a "Tourist Trail".

This project has the aim to connect our green places for leisure and recreation while giving people the opportunity to come into connect with the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area. It is about paths and trails that let us explore where we live, work or visit; that connect our communities, work and play spaces and where we can move about on foot or bike travelling, exploring and enjoying ourselves.

The protection of the qualifying features of the designated sites is of the utmost importance in this area. It is essential that the Coastal Trail is developed in a way that does not adversely affect the integrity of European sites, in particular the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar site, through disturbance to roosting and feeding birds. Through the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of this Supplementary Guidance, mitigation has been identified which will be essential for the development of this route.

We will provide further detail on how we can deliver this project as a priority from page 29.

Maintain and improve the green network connections between habitats in areas for proposed development.

In areas where new developments are proposed they should be masterplanned taking due consideration of the habitats in the areas, the green network should be one of the first considerations when looking to develop a site. The green network can help a development fit within its landscape.

There are a number of key habitats and habitat networks in the area – see the interactive map on www........

When masterplanning sites, habitats such as this can be easier to integrate into the development as they are easy to identify and while their extent does move over time this movement in extent is slow.

A number of protected species are widespread throughout the area, including great crested newt, badger, otter and bat species. All protected species should be considered when masterplanning a site. The NBN Gateway http://data.nbn.org.uk/ is a useful source of species records. Further information about protected species including survey methodologies is available on SNH's website at http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/advice-for-planners-and-developers/protected-animals/ . The Council has produced additional guidance on the planning issues related to badgers in the Badger Policy Guidance Note which is available online at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/inverness-development-briefs-and-framework-plans.htm.

One particular priority is for fatalities of protected species on roads e.g. badgers, red squirrels, otters to be mitigated by the incorporation of specially-designed tunnels, ducts or bridges into roads projects to allow for the presence and movement of such species. To deliver this priority we have a dedicated webpage with information on mitigation measures and good practice to facilitate improvement to the habitat networks. It is available at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/GreenNetworksDraftSupplementaryGuidance.htm

To ensure this priority is delivered, developer requirements will be written into the appropriate plan or planning decisions to ensure these habitats and species are protected when masterplanning the site. It is important to bear in mind that even if there are no protected species on site, the site may be part of a network for that species.

Identify positive land uses for important undeveloped wedges providing a setting and framework for settlements, and maintaining separation of existing settlements. This should be done through the area Local Development Plan.

There are areas across the corridor which should be safeguarded from development. These areas can form part of important natural, built and cultural heritage features or can play an important role in the landscape of the area. In area local development plans we will identify these areas as being key

to the setting of a settlement. Subject to landowner agreement, we may also allocate areas of open countryside on the edge of settlements as amenity areas for informal recreation, giving people greater opportunity to come into contact with the natural environment.

Ensure a positive contribution to the further development of the green network and high quality local greenspace

The green network in the area can make a significant difference to property prices, improve health and wellbeing and make areas more attractive to live in. To ensure that these benefits are maximised it is important to consider the development of the green network as early as possible in the masterplanning process. To facilitate this early and effective pre-application advice can identify the key elements of the green network which are relevant to a proposed development.

We recommend that all developers consult with the Council as early as possible to consider how a development in this area can meet the aims of the green network and actively contribute towards its consolidation. One of the most effective ways of doing this is through the Council's Pre-Application Advice Service, further information can be found at http://www.highland.gov.uk/planning.

Paths and Trails in the A96 Corridor
Ceuman is Slighean air Trannsa an A96

Introduction
Ro-ràdh

This part of the guidance focuses on the delivery of the social element of the Green Network. The intention is to promote responsible and managed access around the area to create better active travel links to connect places together improving active travel and recreation opportunities.

What will this project deliver?

A **Coastal Path** will follow the line of the coast between Inverness and Nairn and connect with the paths through Culbin Forest to link up with the Moray Coast Trail in Forres. It will be accessible to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

North-South Links will help link the coastal and landward trails and contribute to the development of a true network. Here a selection of rights of way, core paths, quiet roads and a range of other paths and tracks will contribute too.

A **Landward Trail** will take you out of Inverness onto National Cycle Route 1 and 7 and onto forest tracks in Culloden Wood. From there more forest tracks will lead east emerging at Croy. It will then cross the River Nairn and into Cawdor, picking up the river again to head north-east and into Nairn. It will be accessible to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

A **Tourist Route** would link Auldearn, Rait, Cawdor and Culloden Battlefield by road although there is a ford and footbridge at Bog of Cawdor.
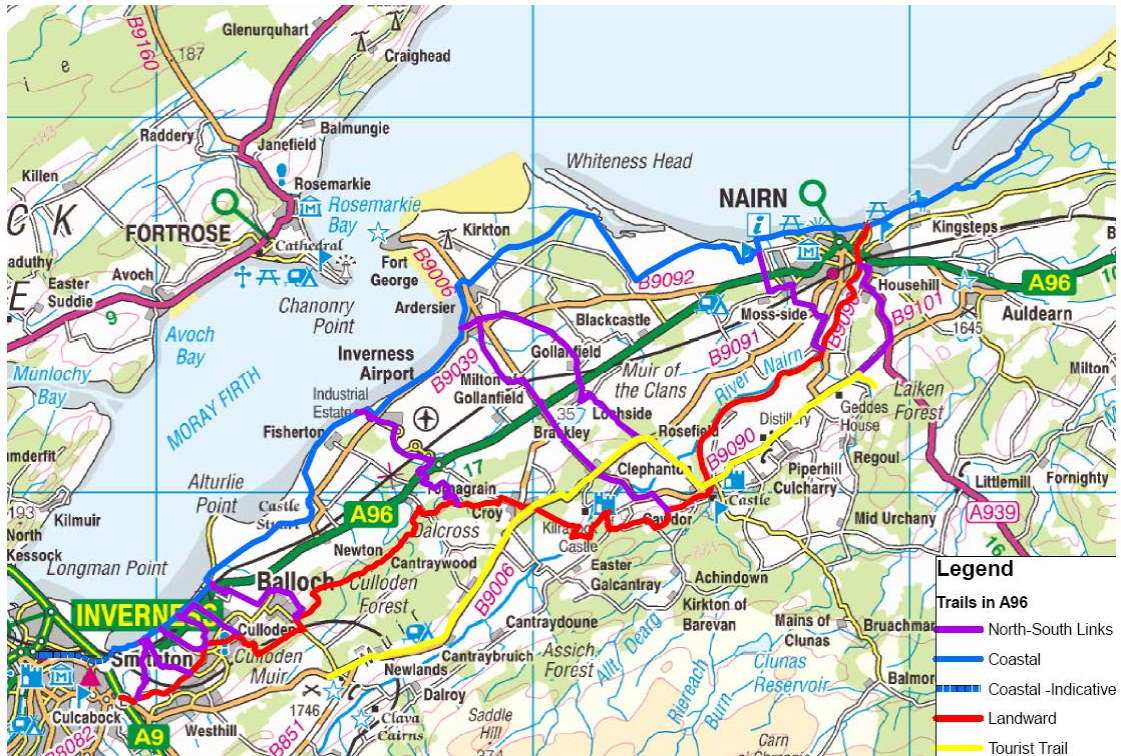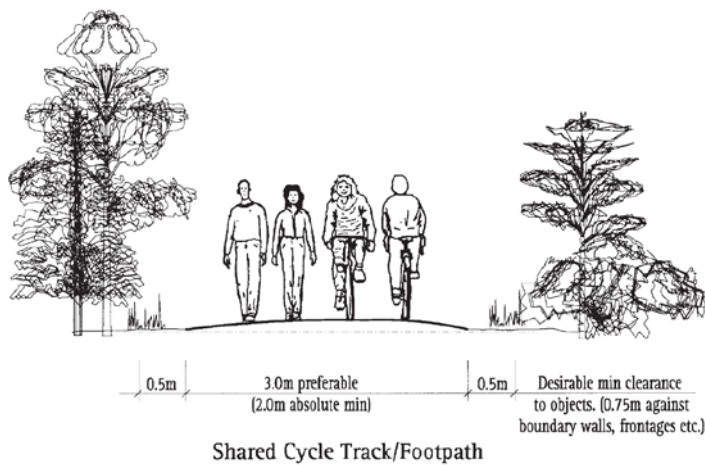
Please note all paths are indicative. Detailed routes are subject to detailed design and consultation with landowners and other interested parties.

How might a new trail network look?

Different paths will be designed and maintained differently. For instance the Coastal Path will be an important route for recreation and active travel. To that end it should be designed and maintained to accommodate those uses.

On important new paths where different users like walkers and cyclists are expected to meet each other a standard specification will apply.

| 0.5m | 3.0m preferable (2.0m absolute min) | 0.5m | Desirable min clearance to objects. (0.75m against boundary walls, frontages etc.) |

Shared Cycle Track/Footpath

The standard specification is:

3m wide aggregate path, shoulders level with 0.5m wide grass verges, with a central camber of between 1:25 to 1:50, finished with blinding of compacted 3mm to dust to fill all voids and shed water above 100mm compacted type 1 [40mm to dust] above 150mm compacted 75mm to dust [over medium grade woven geo-textile (where required).
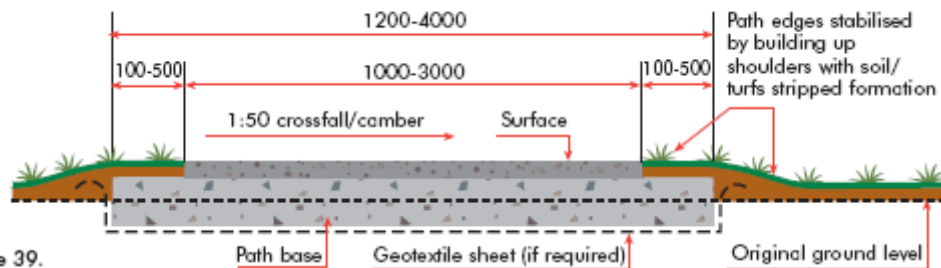

Figure 39.

[1]

Some sections of the paths may already follow existing paths and tracks like much of the Landward Trail. These range from 3m wide tarmac cycleways to narrow, little used old driveways which are poorly drained. Much of it will already be looked after in some form or other and it is not realistic to expect it all to be mud-free. There are grants available to land managers through the Scottish Rural Development Programme to help maintain paths and some paths already fall into that category.

The type of paths used for the north south links will depend on whether they go through developments or follow existing paths through the countryside. In either circumstance they will be made as accessible as possible.

Maintenance will involve tasks such as mowing verges, controlling weed encroachment, cutting back vegetation, repairing damage to the path surface and keeping drainage features working. This is estimated to cost £0.40 per linear metre per year or £400 per km per year.

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[1] Lowland Path Construction - A Guide to Good Practice, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Enterprise, Paths For All Partnership, 2001

Guidance for Developers

Delivery of the trails

There are Core Paths, rights of way and other routes throughout this area but there are gaps. By bridging these gaps with new paths and trails we will contribute to the development of the green network in the A96 corridor. Links between the established routes, core paths and forest tracks need to be identified. With the help of local land managers this guidance will do that. We need to address all the gaps in the network to create a flowing path network. The most significant gaps are shown on the map below:

- Longman and Seafield

- Alturlie

- Castle Stuart

- Fisherton

- Carse of Ardersier

- Carse of Delnies

- Kilravock
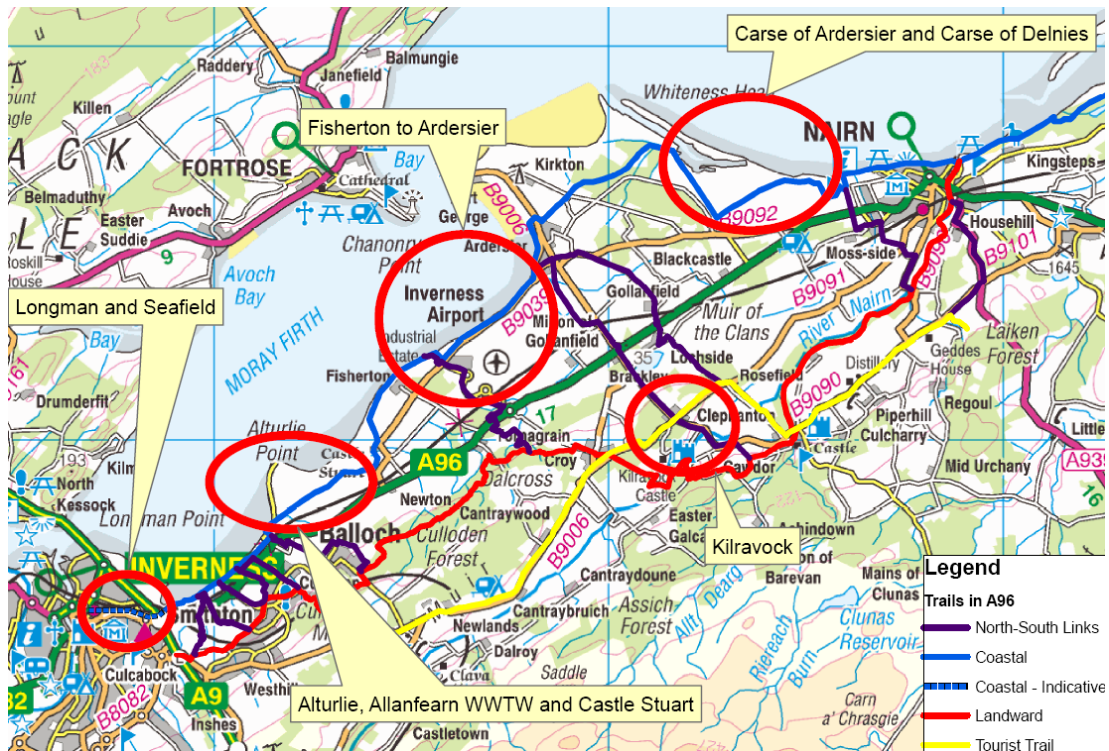
Where there are paths already, and provided that land managers are happy to accommodate these paths and trails on them, all that may be required is some signposting. For instance much of the Landward Trail could be formed from what is there already. Some of it is managed as a Council asset and some as part of Forestry Commission Scotland's holdings. Much is managed privately as forest tracks such as those through High Wood and Dallaschyle and a short section is already managed under the Scottish Rural Development Programme's Land Managers' Options scheme.

The **North-South Links** will also be a mixture of existing and new paths and tracks; some created as elements of large developments, e.g. East Inverness, some may be created with the agreement of land managers while some may follow quiet roads. The Council will seek developer contributions towards these links.

Since most of the **Tourist Trail** follows roads that the Council looks after, costs are likely to focus on signposting.

How will the trails be delivered in areas with no immediate development proposals?

It is the intention that developments right across the corridor contribute to the delivery of paths and trails in the A96 Corridor. However, where there are no proposals for development we will negotiate with land managers to secure agreement to install paths. In these cases there are a number of funding options:

- Council capital funding where there are agreements in place

- Council revenue funding under the Highland Core Paths Improvement Project

- Heritage Lottery Funding

- Common Good funding

In some cases land managers may choose to deliver sections themselves through Scottish Rural Development Programme funding under Land Managers Options or the Rural Priorities scheme.

How will the trails be delivered in areas with immediate development proposals?

Where development proposals are being brought forward we may secure the provision and maintenance of paths through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended. In the first instance we will seek the use of conditions on planning permissions to secure the creation of the trails. Our standard conditions related to the green network which will be applied right across the areas are:

Standard Condition A

The applicants shall ensure that the development incorporates and facilitates the development of a Coastal Path, the details of which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing within 6 months of the grant of planning permission and thereafter implemented as agreed by and in accordance with the Planning Authority specifications.

Reason: In order to comply with Council policy to provide a dedicated Coastal Path.

Standard Condition B

Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed plan of public access across the site (existing, during construction and upon completion) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. The details shall show:

- All existing paths, tracks and rights of way, and any areas currently outwith or excluded from statutory access rights;

- Any areas proposed for exclusion from statutory access rights, for reasons of privacy, disturbance or curtilage, in relation to proposed buildings or structures;

- All paths and tracks proposed for construction, for use by walkers, riders, cyclists, all-abilities users, etc;

- Any diversion of paths, temporary or permanent, proposed for the purposes of the development.

- The agreed plan and/or works shall be implemented prior to [insert date].

- Under Part One of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

Reason: In order to comply with Council policy to provide enhanced access opportunities between Inverness and Nairn.

Developer Contributions

Where a development is likely to increase pressure on the existing access resources and the potential trails to be delivered by this guidance, the Council will seek to enter a Planning Agreement to secure the provision of the trails. Any agreement will be in line with Circular 1/2010: Planning Agreements.

The following sections of this document provide an indication of how, when, why and where we will seek developer contributions. Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 provide an indication of where improvements and mitigation will be required. The figures in the delivery framework section should act as a guide to the level of contributions that will be required. It should be recognised that circumstances may change over time which may require higher or lower levels of contributions.

Delivery Framework

Below is a matrix which describes how each trail network will need to be delivered to create a cohesive path network right across the A96 Corridor. The cost described here will be apportioned in scale and kind by development proposals across the A96 Corridor.

Cost has been calculated based upon the following information:

- Total Number of Potential Dwellings in A96 Corridor – 16,505

- Total Number of Potential Dwellings not delivered by either Cawdor or Moray Estates2 – 11,420

The cost for the construction of paths is set out below, we have a high and low cost scenario. We have also included a median cost.

Note: The costs included below are the maximum contribution that the Council will seek towards provision of paths and trails in the A96 Corridor.

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[2] It is anticipated that path agreements would be secured in relation to Cawdor Estates and Moray Estates given their land holdings in areas where the trails will run. Therefore contribution would not be sought toward the provision of the trails from the following developments: Tornagrain, Delnies, Cawdor Village. However if path agreements are not possible then developer contributions will be required. In addition planning agreements have been reached with Castle Stuart Golf Course and Whiteness Head for delivery of the coastal trail.

Item	Low (£)	High (£)	Median (£)
1km of 3m wide aggregate path	45000	70000	57500
Watercourse crossing, 10/km	2000	2000	2000
Side drain/km	1500	6500	4000
Clear walking tunnel	2000	2000	2000
2 signposts/km	300	300	300
3 waymarkers/km	225	225	225
Total	51025/km	81025/km	66025/km

Coastal Trail

The total length of the Costal Trail is 40.8km. However as mentioned in footnote 1 path agreements will be secured with land owned by Moray Estates, Cawdor Estates and planning agreements are already in place with Castle Stuart Golf Course and Whiteness Head, therefore only 24.19km of this trial needs to be delivered through seeking developer contributions. The cost for the delivery of this trail would be:

Cost	Total	Per Dwelling[3]
High (£81025/km)	£1,959,995	£171.63
Median (£66,0/km)	£1,597,145	£139.86
Low (£51,025/km)	£1,234,294	£108.08

Landward Trail

The total length of the Landward Trail is 32.48km. There are already suitable paths in place in a number of the sections of the trail. Some others need upgrading to a suitable standard while in other areas completely new paths are required. National Cycle Network 1 (Inverness to Aberdeen) forms part of the start of this trail and no work would be required to upgrade that section of the trail. There are also many links on roads where only way-marking may be

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[3] Based on a total of 11,420 dwellings.

required. In total it is anticipated that a maximum of 23.53km of trails will need to be delivered or upgraded.

Cost	Total	Per Dwelling[4]
High (£81025/km)	£1,906,518	£166.95
Median (£66,025/km)	£1,553,568	£136.04
Low (£51,025/km)	£1,200,618	£105.13

North-South Links

There are a total of 11 north-south links, totalling 44.85km, which should be created to help form a cohesive path network in the area. They will link the Coastal and Tourist Trail while offering linkages to the wider countryside and connecting smaller settlements within the A96 Corridor. The majority of these links are on quite roads however in some areas new paths need to be created. Only 11.22km of new or upgraded paths need to be delivered to create the north south links.

Cost	Total	Per Dwelling[5]
High (£81025/km)	£909,101	£79.61
Median (£66,025/km)	£740,801	£64.87
Low (£51,025/km)	£572,501	£50.13

Tourist Trail

The Tourist Trail, as previously mentioned would be road based and connect three of the areas most prominent tourist destinations, Culloden Battlefield, Cawdor Castle and Rait Castle. The cost of delivering this trail would be based upon road signage only.

Along the Tourist Trail there are a total of 14 road junctions each of which would require two signs. The total cost for delivery of the Tourist Trail based on a cost of £350 per sign would be £9800. This equates to only £0.86 per dwelling across the corridor.

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[4] Based on a total of 11,420 dwellings.
[5] Based on a total of 11,420 dwellings.

Delivery of the entire trail network

To deliver the entire trail network (Coastal, Landward, Tourist and North-South Links) to the specification set out in this guidance it would cost the following:

Cost	Total	Per Dwelling[6]
High	£4,785,414	£419.04
Median	£4,351,331	£381.03
Low	£3,017,213	£264.20

The table below describes each section of the Coastal and Landward trail and explains what needs to be delivered in each section.

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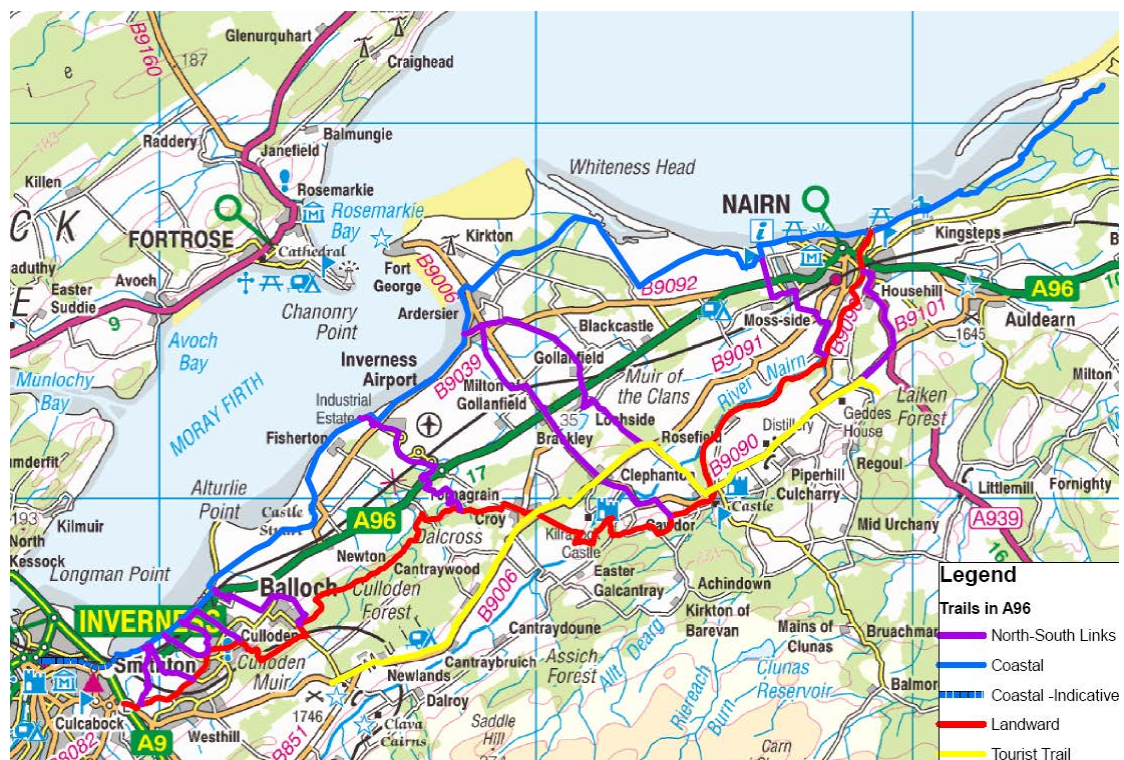
[6] Based on a total of 11,420 dwellings.

Table 1 - Coastal Trail
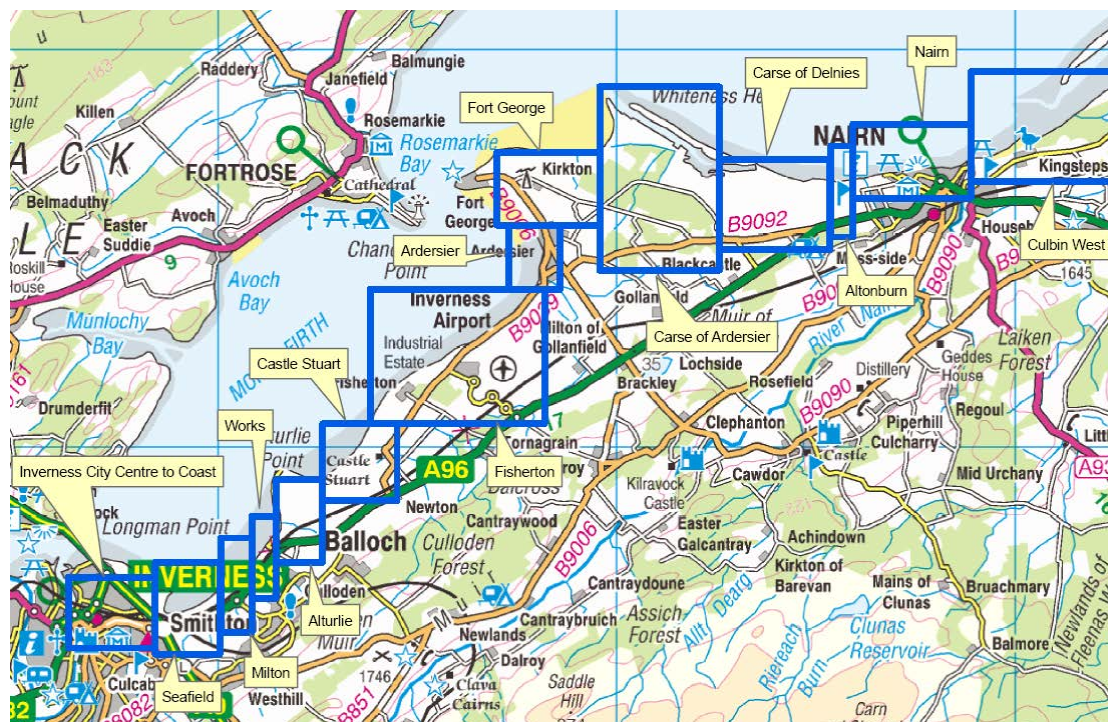
The coastal trail will follow the line of the coast between Inverness and Nairn and connect with the paths through Culbin Forest to link up with the Moray Coast Trail in Forres. It will be accessible to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Section Name	Description	Remarks	Opportunities	Recommendation and Mitigation
Inverness City Centre to Coast (2.7km)	Inverness to Old A96	Potential for linkages between Inverness and City Centre via Proposed Campus at Beechwood.	NCN 1 & 7 to Old A96. Linkages via proposed Beechwood Campus.	Deliver Coastal Path through planning agreement. Explore opportunities for route between Inverness City Centre and Beechwood.
Seafield (2.04)	Old A96 to Milton underpass	Existing old tarmac road. Poor links to Inverness Retail and Business Park.	Existing route that is well-used locally. Develop formal link to IRBP through core	Deliver through core paths implementation. Deliver spurs through planning agreements. Managing access to the

		A96 is a barrier No links to city	paths implementation programme. UHI Beechwood links may emerge.	foreshore using a 2km long 1100mm high post and wire fence with rylock between the sea and old road Planting a dense, mixed species screening hedge along the same line that will screen and help manage access to the foreshore. Planting to be along the length of the route with prickly, wildlife-friendly, native shrubs – gorse, buckthorn, hawthorn, dog rose etc. The shrubs will take 5 to 10 years to grow to a reasonable size so it is of key importance that they are planted as soon as possible. This will involve repairing the sea wall – fence and planting to go on top of this. Undertake all works in the summer months – (end April to beginning of October) Directly address negative desire lines, including discouraging access to the shore at Milton of Culloden. Interpretation and strategic education and awareness programme highlighting the issues on this section of coast. This would be co-ordinated by The Highland Council's Planning and Development Service. Local PR campaign to

				promote responsible access targeted especially at visitors and residents of Milton of Culloden. This would be co-ordinated by The Highland Council's Planning and Development Service in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage 3-sided vandal-resistant hide to encourage wildlife watching All mitigation should be place before the route is promoted and the pedestrian bridge installed over the A96.
Milton (0.53)	Milton underpass to level crossing	Existing adopted road Householders to consider Level crossing use may be resisted by Network Rail	Already used by walkers	Use this section
Works (0.7)	Milton level crossing to Allanfearn level crossing	Difficult section; access to shore down past houses, sewage works are a barrier to shoreline access and railside path.	Railway, A96 and works are barriers Work being done to secure roadside path	Secure roadside path to Allanfearn junction via Transport Scotland
Alturlie (3.44)	Allanfearn level crossing to Lonnie	Level crossing use may be resisted by Network Rail	Using quarry stone	Leave shore road at approximately NH713484 and follow fence line to NH717487 heading on to NH721490. From there the trail will be set back from the shore by approximately 250m.

| | | | | | Exact line will be finalised by THC in consultation with SNH.

Fully assess options re parking location and size, bin placement and alternative path location here. Act on findings so that there will be no significant effect on SPA birds.

Investigate methods for managing access during high tide and implement where practicable.

Interpretation and strategic education and awareness programme highlighting the issues on this section of coast. This would be co-ordinated by The Highland Council's Planning and Development Service.

Local PR campaign to promote responsible access targeted especially at visitors during high tide co-ordinated by The Highland Council's Planning and Development Service in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage

Before the indicative route (as shown on the map on page 29) is finalised on the ground it should be walked and the exact line agreed by an experienced observer. This should be done at high tide to check that it is far enough from the coast to prevent |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

				disturbance. It is likely that birds use these fields during extreme high tides. Ensure route of path is sufficiently far from the roost sites (including lower fields) to ensure roosts are protected from disturbance. The final route should be approved by THC in consultation with SNH. Provide opportunities to see the coast and coastal birds from natural and built hides. Any hide on the shore line will need to be well screened to prevent disturbance. Promote responsible access and provide interpretation about the coast, including birds at the hide. Manage car parking at Alturlie
Castle Stuart (3.58)	Lonnie to Fisherton	Will be delivered as part of planning condition for Castle Stuart Golf Course Date of delivery uncertain Specifications, route and signposting secured		Confirm delivery and discharge of conditions Before the indicative route (as amended on the map) is finalised on the ground it should be walked and the exact line agreed by an experienced observer. This should be done at high tide to check that it is far enough from the coast to prevent disturbance. It is likely that birds use these fields during extreme high tides. Ensure route of path is sufficiently far from the roost sites (including

	52			lower fields) to ensure roosts are protected from disturbance. The final route should be approved by THC in consultation with SNH. Provide opportunities to see the coast and coastal birds from natural and built hides. Any hide on the shore line will need to be well screened to prevent disturbance. Promote responsible access and provide interpretation about the coast, including birds at the hide. Manage car parking at Petty
Fisherton (4.6)	Fisherton to Ardersier	Shoreline path between Fisherton and Wester Kerrowgair only Old link path into Westerton Some good quality grazing. Some whin-covered Short section of roadside may be needed at Ardersier opposite Milton of Connage	Shoreline path possible. Agreement and accommodation works may be required Traffic-free links to airport and business park	Secure path agreement Between Wester Kerrowgair/Dalcross and Arderseir siting path to avoid the coast and foreshore and the fields behind the shoreline, i.e avoiding all the land at the base of the raised shoreline between these points. Path here to be a shrub screened roadside path on the top of the raised shoreline, on seaward side of the road. Path to cross by Connage dairy to southeast side of road to avoid house with a roadside frontage and well-used field behind. Ensure good quality and

				quantity of open space provision as part of village expansion
Ardersier (2.1)	Ardersier village	Roadside footway and shoreline path through village Lanes linking back to B9039	Tourism Improved links to Fort George Traffic free access to Fort George	Adopt existing paths as part of Coastal Path Signpost lanes to village centre
Fort George (1.55)	Ardersier village to east end of MoD land	Existing path part way Shingle beach for most Important site for butterfly conservation and watersports Looped shorter path options used by community and visitors	Community interest in delivering remaining path to Fort George by Highland Core Path Improvement Project Secure links back to road through planning agreements with Scottish Water	Assist community deliver this section Identify sensitive sites for breeding birds within Carse Wood and take into consideration in selecting route Route to be selected using quiet roads and forest tracks away from the coast Avoid Defence Estates property that will be closed from time to time In event of residential development at Whiteness pursue open space provision and delivery of the approved Access Management Plan
Carse of Ardersier (4.43)	MoD land to Carse of Delnies	Limited access when MoD site not in use Attractive but often inaccessible shoreline Conservation interests – over-wintering birds	Secure path through Whiteness Head development Use quiet and forest roads	Planning agreement – Whiteness Head Liaison with MoD and Cawdor re forest tracks TECS for quiet roads.

		Quiet roads, forest tracks		
Carse of Delnies (4.0)	Carse of Delnies to Altonburn Hotel	High conservation interest – breeding birds and SSSI Managing access away from spit Nairn Golf Club Existing path network Mixed use demand will include horses	Delnies development presents planning agreement opportunities Expansion of Nairn Golf Club	Delivered as part of Delnies development Deliver shoreline route with planning agreement with Nairn Golf Club Incorporate the Coastal Trail into a jointly approved Delnies Access Management Plan Identification of route should be at a distance from Saltmarsh, breeding, roosting and feeding sites (distance to be agreed as part of Delnies AMP) Ensure the identification and delivery of a comprehensive network of paths including signage and interpretation as appropriate in the Delnies AMP. Ensure that good quality open space is provided as part of the developments Make sure that good quality open space is provided as part of the developments
Altonburn (1.08)	Altonburn Hotel to Nairn promenade	Existing path network	To secure aspirational shoreline path	Deliver shoreline route with planning agreement with Nairn Golf Club

Nairn (3.66)	West end of Nairn promenade to Kingsteps	Existing path network		Adopt as part of Coastal Path Not expanding the car parking at Nairn East Beech.
Culbin West (6.5)	Kingsteps to Moray boundary	Existing core path network Conservation concerns about increased use by coast Links to Moray Coastal Path	Use existing paths Develop alternative inland links with Forestry Commission Scotland	Coastal Trail to follow a line inside the forest from Kingsteps THC in partnership with RSPB, FCS and SNH to build on existing visitor management arrangements including Explore Culbin. This will include promoting responsible access encouraging visitors to use less sensitive areas (with reference to both birds and habitats). Not expanding the Kingsteps Tackling of user specific issues especially re habitat damage caused by mountain bikers and horse riders. Also, work with police re groups not covered by SOAC including quad riders and motorcross bikers.

General Mitigation

- The quality and quantity requirements of the Open Space Supplementary Guidance should be met and assessed for their suitability as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.

- The location, provision and management of SUDS for developments should be considered as possible feeding and roosting sites for waders. This is especially relevant where they are immediately adjacent to the coast (i.e. within 500m).

Monitoring of Mitigation

To ensure that the mitigation is effective and that there is no significant adverse impact on the qualifying features of the European designated species, a monitoring programme will be required for the coastal trail. This monitoring programme will include the following elements and will be agreed with THC in consultation with SNH.

- Pre- during and post- construction monitoring

- WeBS surveys extended to include September, October, November, December, January, February and March

- WeBS surveys to incorporate observations on people walking past the sites and bird reactions

- Research should be done to determine movements of birds around the Firth in relation to disturbance

- Programme of people counters to establish visitor numbers

Table 2 - Landward Trail

The Landward Trail will take you out of Inverness onto National Cycle Route 1 and 7 and onto forest tracks in Culloden Wood. From there more forest tracks will lead east emerging at Croy. It will then cross the River Nairn and into Cawdor, picking up the river again to head north-east and into Nairn. It will be accessible to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
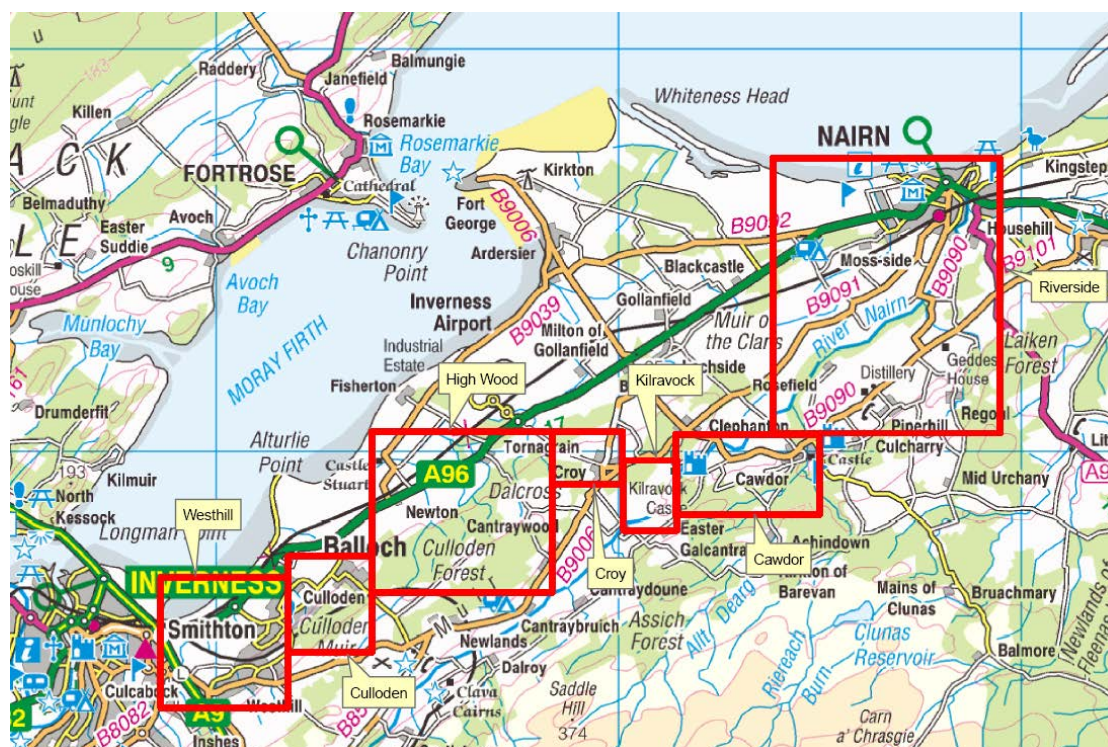
Section Name	Description	Remarks	Opportunities	Recommendation
Westhill (3.86)	Raigmore to Smithton	Part of NCN 1; Inverness to Aberdeen Roadside footways, quiet roads and purpose-built cycleway	Use this route	0km
Culloden (3.43)	Smithton to Balloch	Enter forest and use forest tracks Core path network	On core paths and signposted and promoted routes	Use forest tracks and core path (3.43km)

			Links to initiative for improving access to Culloden Battlefield Spurs to communities and battlefield	
High Wood (7.45)	Balloch to Croy	Forest and farm tracks Core paths	Community demand for links to Sunnyside via Feabuie Tornagrain development	Use forest and farm tracks; core paths (7.45km)
Croy (1.1)	Croy	Roadside footway Road	Possible new development Links to and through new development	(0)
Kilravock (4.29)	Croy to Dallaschyle	Old driveways, estate tracks, bridge and forest Concerns of estate[s] Concern of field archery club Poor state of some tracks Objections to access	Use old routes Manage access away from larger estate houses Opportunities for loops for poorly served community	(3.18km)
Cawdor (2.9)	Dallaschyle to Cawdor	Poor state of some tracks Core path links Quiet road sections Private drive sections [also core path]		(0km)

Table 3 - North South Links

North-South Links will help link the coastal and landward trails and contribute to the development of a true network. Here a selection of rights of way, core paths, quiet roads and a range of other paths and tracks will contribute too.

Section Name	Description	Remarks	Opportunities	Recommendation
Beechwood (2.26)	Beechwood Campus to Old A96	New trail to be delivered through campus site and across railway		New Trail to be delivered 1.6km
Ashton (1.48)	Resuarie to Old A96	Existing core path on track		Sign posting required 0km
Stratton (1.38)	Roadside footway between Culloden and A96	Link on Barn Church Road		Sign Posting Required 0km
Culloden (1.36) (1.85)	Stratton Lodge and Milton of Culloden Smallholdings links	Both links on roads		Sign posting required 0km
Allanfearn (3.67)	Balloch – Allanfearn - Alturlie	Link on road and partial new trail		Sign posting on road link and new section to be delivered 1.48km
Tornagrain (5.75)	Croy – Tornagrain – Inverness airport - Fisherton	Link on road, part of wider existing path network in need of upgrade and new sections of path		Sign posting on road links and new section to be delivered 4.61km
Old Military Road	Cawdor – Clephanton –	Mainly links on existing road but also parts of		Sign posting on road links and new section

(9.79)	Ardersier	wider path network to be upgraded and new paths created.		to be delivered 2.27km
Gollanfield (8.84)	Cawdor – Lochside – Gollanfield - Ardersier	Links on road		Sign posting on road link 0km
Howford (4.24)	Howford – Lochdhu - Altonburn	Mainly link on road but with some existing path in need of upgrade		Sign posting on road section and upgrade of existing path 1.03km
Househill (4.2)	Raitcastle – Househill - Nairn	Mainly link on road with upgrade of existing path needed		Sign posting on road and upgrade of existing path 0.23km

Getting Involved

If you would like more information or to get involved in the production of future plans please contact us in one of the following ways:

Telephone
(01463) 702259

Post
Director of Planning and Development, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX

Email
devplans@highland.gov.uk

Fax
(01463) 702298

For the most up to date news on the work of the Development Plans Team (and more) please follow our twitter account, 'Like' our Facebook page and check out our blog:

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