

## SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN: NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FEEDBACK COMMENTS

### NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

For example: Are there any development opportunities associated with the environment that you'd like to see encouraged? Are there any areas you'd like to see protected or those which would benefit from some improvement?

#### General Comments

- Sutherland has the most dramatic scenery in the UK and Tongue and Farr has the greatest spaces of part of flow-country, & "The Queen of Mountains". Ben Loyal, and with the sea being to the north of us the blue of the sea and the coast on a sunny day is more dramatic than other places (so there is scope for expansion of tourism) It gives uplift to many people from all over UK. Without involving false development so the whole needs protection.
- I moved to the Sutherland area from the Netherlands this year, because I really appreciate the wide open spaces and wildlife. Promote the area to tourists and please realise how valuable nature is (but I'm sure you do).
- Any development should be sympathetic to the Local Environment.
- In Norway all country primaries had a wood and each child planted a tree before leaving. Primary 7 children should have country skills taught at least one day per week. Give them a pride in their home background – not a useless country bumpkin. Bird watching/butterflies/wild flowers. How to hedge ditch, fence, build walls etc.
- It is quite possible to develop an area without destroying much of the natural beauty. There will still be loads of underused 'natural beauty' even if lots of the land is developed! Get something moving for the next generation before it is too late.
- Consider making Sutherland a national park, and visiting other national parks for ideas eg. Yorkshire Dales, no pylons there.
- I visit many places here and abroad. Big isn't beautiful, in fact strict controls are needed in Sutherland guarding our heritage.
- Protect SSSIs and traditional land use. Develop forestry, sporting activities, natural heritage sites and wildlife habitats to continue attracting responsible tourism.
- To protect the beauty of the wonderful surrounds of Sutherland and work on the areas of neglect.
- A point about safeguarding – does that include buildings? Some so called new agricultural sheds are a terrible eyesore spoiling beautiful places – why allow such insensitive development?
- I do hope that environmental issues will be well regarded.
- Preserve this beautiful landscape!! It is important to the British Isles. Don't forget the value of tourism. Local trades depend on a good season every year. Tourists come up to Sutherland to explore rugged beauty in its natural state NOT commercialised developments and wind farms spoiling the landscape.
- The environment is exceptional. My effort – a garden 'open'. A new area being made for children.
- I can not stress enough how important I feel it is to safeguard Sutherland from too much development. I was born in Southern England, Essex. Essex was once countryside and a joy to live in. Over the past 25 years more and more land has been snatched up for development, even the few remaining recreational areas are being reclaimed for development. Once started they just did not know when to stop building; now it is too late. Quality of life there is not good, it's even difficult outside of one's garden to find somewhere pleasant to walk your dog. I moved to Sutherland and had spent years holidaying here because of its natural beauty; fresh air, uncrowded land. I would not like to see the very spirit of the place destroyed forever by developers.
- There is definitely a great deal lacking regarding the safety/protection of wild life. Much needs to be done in this direction.
- Sutherland is one of the most beautiful parts of the world and this should be preserved for future

generations. Any development should take this into consideration.

- Preserve areas of outstanding beauty. Areas of moorland should be fenced, the surface lightly scarified and left for the establishment, by natural means, of fresh woodland, together with undergrowth. This is important – only undergrowth can check accidental moorland fires, which have been so destructive in the past. NOTE: I have lived in Strathuarer for 9 years, these are the views of a newcomer from England, but the habitual practices and private estates and their clients' anger me.
- As an architect for the Highland Council I am dismayed at the erosion of the rural areas. Despite planning legislation/guidelines which are there to protect the countryside the blots on the landscape are still appearing. Please do something to protect Badninish, Baluraid, Astle etc. People enjoy walking, cycling, driving in the country, soon there won't be any left in the Dornoch area for the people to enjoy.
- The planting and preservation of more broadleaf woodland – not for commercial exploitation – but as an erosion protectorate.
- Do not go down the natural park route of severe restriction as this only stops development. Watch out for this coming in the back door by land purchased by so called conservation bodies.
- Remember the appeal of the area relies on the unspoiled nature of the countryside therefore ensure the area is not peppered with ill considered developments i.e. windfarms, phone masts, unnecessary upgrading and lighting of roads, kit built homes and Spanish style villas
- Overall, priority should be given to preserving the natural beauty of the area and to conserving the crofting way of life. Less forestry would help.
- All developments should be carried out without too much damage to the environment.
- We need to make sure wildlife is protected and many of our trees as this is what attracts tourists here and we moved here from England six years ago, for the 'unspoilt' Beauty here.
- Sutherland is a lovely area with nice walks and beaches etc. which are a nice thing for people.
- Please don't spoil our unique and treasured landscape. Will this be the reverse of the Clearances.
- Encouragement of natural regeneration
- Safeguard natural beauty of landscape. The major asset for the future. Hence no pylons!! No Windfarms in ? areas.
- The title 'Area of Natural Beauty' should be preserved – development should be minimal
- Generally, S.E. Sutherland is presently a most attractive, relatively unspoilt area – don't allow it to be spoilt.
- Countryside walks developed. Yacht Haven developed in Loch Eriboll. More support for these activities.
- Our area should be as free from development as possible, man can't improve on nature.
- Safeguard the wilderness but provide more facilities to enjoy it e.g. Mountain bike routes.
- You can see it all over the world. Development destroys the environment. 'Progress' is the opposite, Fish Farms a disaster in every way. Please try and prevent more destruction of this fragile last tiny corner of the UK. We hoped the John Muir Trust purchase would save it from more building but every year several more houses are built and their advertising Sandwood Bay has pained hundreds of people along to see it. Tourists will cease to come to a spoilt area.
- Sutherland should be preserved as a 'wilderness' area for tourists from Britain, Europe and the World.
- It is crucially important that we do not despoil the wonderful majesty of the scenery in the far north in pursuit of the impossible dream of wind generated electricity being the answer to our energy problems. Certainly it has a part to play, but alone it will never be the answer and too much development in the wrong areas will destroy the tourist industry ( why else do people visit if its not to enjoy the wilderness, our only asset!)
- Make the most of the wonderful natural scenic assets we have all over Scotland. It is unique and one of the few remaining unspoiled areas of Britain.
- What about a marina conservation strategy. Stop tankers going through the Minch.
- Highlight the safeguarding – too many people here and infrastructure will collapse.

- Remember that people are attracted to live here because of the way it is now, avoid too much change. Keep it rural and use this as the carrot.
- The natural undeveloped nature of the area is a very precious and increasingly rare resource. There is a real risk that 'development of any type will damage and undermine the natural asset, which is then lost forever.
- We must try to preserve Sutherland, esp. the remote parts by guarding against too much development, i.e. housing.
- Safeguarding the environment is important.
- There should be much stricter regulation of agricultural practice to enhance environmentally friendly practice and not the current vandalism which is common place
- As previously – long term strategic plan for environmental regeneration west of the main A838 in NW Sutherland. This would accommodate needs of tourism and deer estates. Within 50 years the area could have a landscape and environment with significantly greater tourism and environmental opportunity.
- The natural and cultural heritage of every area should be respected. It is a joy to study the wildlife and explore the archaeological remains that are so abundant. Archaeological research could be greatly encouraged. Care should be taken that new building does not needlessly obliterate old habitations. The low (or containable) risk of fire, theft and flood – and the easy access to sites and facilities – make this an ideal place to site national important archives and research facilities.
- Our hills and wildlife should be more protected than they are. There is a huge potential for wildlife tourism in our area, there are so many rare and protected species.
- The natural beauty of the area is in itself a valuable asset, such areas are becoming increasingly rare in Europe. Development to be limited to that which preserves the natural beauty and supports the quiet enjoyment of it.
- Again, I don't see that pouring money into schemes which encourage non-development is an advantage. People should be embracing our environment, not leaving it to become a useless wilderness.
- See enclosed letter re protecting crofts. I would welcome help in developing further my gallery and possibly having more of my sculpture on show outside – perhaps even in my croft.
- Existing woodlands and moors: NO further rural spread until existing houses developed and inhabited continuously, (ie not second homes).
- Prevent spread into rural area – woodlands, moors, crofting land. This is what attracts tourists and new settlers – there is nothing else to offer here.
- Stop pushing Gaelic, waste of public funds.
- Protect the far North West area.
- Also pylons should be painted Khaki-green.
- Upgrade of A836.
- Commercialisation' of the environment must be avoided – no development is needed, and would be detrimental. All areas in NW Sutherland should be protected from unnecessary development.
- We are blessed in this ward with a wealth of historic buildings and sites, cultural events, and especially, areas of outstanding scenery and wildlife habitats. Once again all important for tourism.
- Kyle wetlands should be protected.
- The old houses and businesses in conservation areas & listed buildings should be considered for council tax rebates as maintenance of houses is high
- Current provision should be protected.
- Should be presumption against holiday houses overlooking secluded beaches. Protect biodiversity and identify special wildlife rich areas. Take note of Sutherland biodiversity action plan.
- Coastal erosion.
- Wool mill site.
- Preservation of Gaelic language, eg place names on maps, continues preservation of ancient sites and any building of historical value.
- No we have already Geoparked, EURO SSI and SSI up to our necks.
- I would like to see guarantees that a Railway line will not be driven across the firth straight through

SSSI and SAC areas, with questionable economic benefits.

- Stop getting rid of single track roads. Dual roads are more dangerous and a financial burden on tax payers.
- Try to strike a balance between the need to control seal numbers in Loch Laxford and the ‘near’ extinct levels we see now. In five years’ the population has been decimated – if its now more likely to see Lord Lucan or Shergar than a seal in Loch Laxford.
- The Geopark area should be given the highest degree of protection and conservation.
- The whole area needs protection from human invasion and the destruction this causes to the environment and wildlife.
- Any initiatives that bring tourists into the area should be encouraged both to benefit them and the local community.
- SEPA is proposing a tax on all ponds and since they are something that improves the environment and improves biodiversity they should be told that this is just not on.
- The biodiversity of the Corry meadow should be protected from future development.
- Landowners shouldn’t be allowed to take place names (e.g. Inveroykel Estate) and plant them somewhere else – very confusing! Road signs should be checked with people with local knowledge (+Gaelic) before being erected. (The Kyle of Sutherland could be developed for recreation (canoeing, boating.)
- Open moorland, particularly that which is not forested, should be protected.
- Encourage low key development on community owned land where it will help to improve the habitats that have been degraded over the last 100-200 years. Healthier land leads to better production of food, more wildlife, leading to improved tourism.
- The local development group and community council work together on developing the area.
- The natural beauty of the whole area should be protected. All too often things like electric pylons (whilst necessary) spoil the views (think of the view from the main Lairg to Bonar road opposite Carbisdale Castle where you have to look through electric cables to see the Castle.)
- Visitors wish to see the natural beauty of the area so this should be protected and house or electric pylons not built in scenic viewpoint areas. Electric cables should be put underground wherever possible and telephone masts should be more controlled – make all companies use one pole.
- Tourists come to the Highlands for the unspoilt beauty and tranquillity.
- Possibility of creating a National (Wildlife) Park with input from Natural Heritage, WWF, John Muir Trust etc. Traditional music initiatives e.g. local pubs and hotels, sponsorship of other Mhan Feis Chahaibh (summer only). Liaison between main population centres – Lochinver, Drumbeg, Scourie, Kinlochbervie, Durnell.
- Sympathetic consideration should be given to high quality tourist facilities ‘off grid’ in selected remote areas for eco-adventure.
- Protection is important but access is even more important. Our landscape is beautiful and access roads are extremely important.
- Protection of wildlife.
- Nature is our power resource. Loch Fleet – mound area – birds. Spotlighters/highlighter facilities. Compulsory action must be taken on properties which are left empty/deserted for 30 months. NB High Streets in Wick, Helmsdale, Golspie, Dornoch, Brora and elsewhere. – for example Megan Boyd’s former home in Kintradwell.
- We have a lot of protected areas – Coastal and Pentland.
- Any development which would increase the use of the area for tourism should be welcomed and not stifled by planning restrictions.
- Cycling on the A9 is positively dangerous and noisy. Instead of putting up signs ‘No Overnight Parking’ in every layby why not provide designated roadside/rural pull ins with Bins and Toilet facilities as they do in France. Signs ‘No Overnight Parking’ gives the wrong message to visitors.
- I would like to see scenic lochs protected from any further commercial fishing including fish farming. They have a negative impact on tourism via wildlife.
- Coastal fringe requires protection. Major asset must not repeat the mistakes at Knockan. Architecture and trails excellent. Display boards very poor. This is not quality tourist provision.

- Total overhaul of subsidised sheep farming and its concomitant negative effects on the native ecosystem.
- I feel that the areas at Littleferry and Balblair Woods that are well used by locals and visitors would benefit from upgrading of paths and picnic areas.
- Yes, a development of leaving the natural environment alone.
- The whole of Sutherland is our Heritage and I would hate to see it spoilt by vast developments.
- Protect areas of natural beauty for future generations to enjoy and be able to walk amongst lots of wild flowers instead of more concrete jungles and roads for more fast cars.
- Major road improvement.
- Care needed balancing traditional or low key activities (e.g. stalking, fishing, climbing, walking etc) with much more intrusive fashionable pursuits often involving engines, or requiring considerable infrastructure.
- I would like to see the deer off of the road as they are worse than ever.
- The odd house or houses here and there, but no big areas of houses with 20+ houses.
- Any development involving people growing local produce would be very beneficial. This area produces excellent root and winter vegetables as well as summer fruits (raspberries, blueberries etc.) It would be good to see more local vegetables and meat for sale.
- History links has it about right – they could possibly use more space, but encourage them.
- No more protected areas as they do not reflect local wishes and provide almost no benefit to local communities.
- Schools should have wildlife gardens and pupils encouraged to protect i.e. by litter control, etc.
- Any environmental project should be encouraged.
- As an incomer I am loathe to develop or over protect without greater knowledge of the history. As a conservationist in natural habitats I feel things could be done which would assist the area in tourism venues.
- This whole area needs protecting!! Any development for whatever purposes HAS to be sympathetic.
- Language protected by compulsory pass in Gaelic for all public sector jobs – as in Ireland.
- Better looked after woodlands, walks and areas which were once business parks and such like re-developed.
- Would like to see better protections and management of agreements for existing SSSIs and other designated areas of protection. Would like to see renovation/protection of key buildings within the area to preserve local heritage and character. Review of old buildings within area – including farm buildings with a view to protecting and restoring.
- Some relaxation by SNH to allow controlled development.
- To whom is the John Muir Trust answerable? Not all environmental groups are beyond criticism.
- Too much protection has a negative effect stifling development and land use by native populations
- A stop to apportionments of hill ground, which leads to erratic fencing, liable to be run down in the short term, if grant aid is not adequate.
- More commercial/residential recycling.
- The whole Geopark Area should be designated a National Park as soon as possible. This would allow for regular statutory funding of staff etc. and ensure cohesion in planning.
- Strenuous efforts should be made to rid the area of Red Deer. This would allow crofters to grow crops and would begin to put an end to sheep tick plagues. The nonsense of continuing to fish should come to an end, and a start made to reinstate bank-side vegetation.
- The environment of the Highlands can look after itself! It is the people that need helping – with employment in ‘heritage’ opportunities. We do not need any more signs put up telling us what we already know. Have people lost the ability to read an O/S map!!
- Highlands should be given National Park status.
- More recycling ideas, waste (grass etc.) large bulky furniture, electrical.
- The areas rich in wildlife should continue to be protected and any development in such places should be avoided. SNH and RSPB advice should be heeded. Sensitive tourism, which does not disturb or damage should be encouraged. A lot of people come to Scotland, and Sutherland in particular, to see

eagles.

- Bring an ornithologist and dedicated naturalist. I am of the opinion that many, many areas here need protecting. Wildlife suffers due to man's greed for money. Businesses and more houses and so on. At the rate things are going in this age, there isn't going to be a pocket handkerchief size of greenery left. Damned wind turbines and the likes. It is absolutely appalling.
- No more protected areas – we have enough restrictions (SSSIs)! Mountain bike and motor bike trails would bring in much needed revenue but would always be opposed by some crofters.
- I feel that environmental issues are beginning to take precedence of place over people. Regarding doing away with the old dips for sheep because they were affecting bird fertility and bringing out a dip making people very ill but the birds would be alright! I like animals, countryside and wildlife, but its going too far. By all means have a bird sanctuary etc, but remember people!
- A place for youth development e.g. a café for young people.
- More local recycling facilities!!
- People like the 'natural' environment and I think anything of this sort should be encouraged e.g. interest in birds, land creation etc.
- With new changing weather patterns of high hurricane winds and rain being frequent, houses to be built of strong round and low construction similar to round houses and in lost areas like lighthouse style. The round tower in south east Britain from Napoleonic times and lighthouses still stand strong. We cannot change climate but can adapt!!!
- More money put into tourism – salmon fishing etc.
- Bee-keeping co-operative. Regular, organised beach cleaning to enhance the spectacular north coast as a tourism area. Salmon fishing boats 'protected' for future – same reasons. Highland venison – promoted as a healthy food option by Highland Council/Food Standards Agency and TV Chefs and Supermarkets.
- Ensure the removal of litter from beauty spots. Keep people away from wildlife. Although there is public access everywhere this does not mean that everything should be made accessible now. Discourage coaches from using single track roads.
- More effort should be expended on renovation and less on new build.
- I'd like to see smokeless fuel (coal).  
Yes, you need to find a method to put pressure on current land owners to release land for reasonably environmentally friendly developments. Wind farms, wood burning mini power stations, hit house making businesses. Just need the land.
- Areas closed March – June therefore quiet for fishers/lambs etc. Nesting birds/wild flowers – good access back to road. A publicity attempt to reduce the numbers of cats – domestic and feral.
- Loch Fleet.
- Improved recreational facilities would be an advantage for younger persons of the communities.
- Research into viability of pelletisation plant for possible local use heating schools etc.
- Harbour and Lower Brora.
- The coast line and land at the edge (for at least ¼ mile) should be protected for wild life.
- Guided and organised hill walking or specialist holidays with facilities to transport baggage to next stopover accommodation – of cycling for softies or Rambler Association holidays.

### **Interpretation facilities**

- This is again something which has never been properly developed and tourists passing through are largely unaware of even listed historical monuments. Every effort should be made to encourage the awareness and enjoyment of our natural and cultural heritage by improving awareness of and access to historic monuments and areas of interest.
- Development of facilities to observe wildlife without constituting a threat
- More needs to be done to highlight routes and actual sites of our industrial heritage. The closure of Tourist Boards all over Sutherland is a disgrace and insult to all Sutherland (and surrounding areas) has to offer.
- More archaeological / historical information boards – free not visitors centres selling tacky souvenirs.
- Yes the Pittentrail Burn.

- More should be made of the 'Geopark'. Smoo Cave should have high priority.
- We support most of the Local Celididhs and enjoy the abundant local talent, please keep helping those out. Carnegie Hall is a good example and Kincardine Church where they put on events in Ardgay Old Church.
- Yes. As there are plenty of seals at Loch Fleet plus Dolphins around Embo, Golspie and Brora, why not do as other areas and cash in on them with an observation place and bird watching towers or buildings. Plus coffee shop nearby with plenty rubbish bins, as litter gets worse every year
- The old mills could run as tourist sites to encourage and teach some old values – self sufficiency was a way of life – jobs were always available in the old ways. A lot has been lost through high tech education where the kids leave to find work.
- The Loch Clash area would be ideal for an interpretation centre which would include wildlife, seafaring and the 'Armada' shipwreck story.
- More visitor information – Loch Fleet, Little Ferry.

### **Environmental Improvements**

- Just maintenance of local forest walks and beaches. Litter pick ups / more bins would be a good thing!
- The environment could be better protected by clearing-up the rubbish that is blown ashore in coastal areas.
- I think we protect enough areas of natural beauty very well, but we could perhaps try to educate the public more on keeping these areas clean. The true nature lovers take their litter etc away, but how often do we see discarded bottles and wrappers?
- Coastal protection for the local Golf Course and coastal walks are disappearing through rising sea levels.
- Adjoining the Lady Ross, the Old Steading could be an attractive feature. Refurbishment to the Ice House's / Ardgay – Bonar Bridge development at Lower Glenfield Loch-Na-Ha to be cleared/picnic site/wild fowl attraction.
- Coastline and river mouth situations should be of more concern re protection and maintenance. E.g. Entrance to Brora Harbour and river mouth should be permanently improved. It is an important part of local tourism. Archaeological sites should be more developed and protected.
- Also the unsightly fencing around the masts at Ord Archaeological Trail should be painted to blend in with the hillside. We have around 10,000 visitors a year to walk the trail and the comments that come back to the Ferrycroft Centre are not favourable.
- Too much litter in the hedgerows. Promote Green and Garden.
- Brownbelt land and dilapidated buildings.
- More litter bins required in Borgie Forest and other areas of interest to tourists, great emphasis required on litter control. Don't spoil our countryside. Same applies to the beach areas also.
- Leave Loch Brora and Glen Loth alone. The Backies needs improvement. Also Brora Beach from people using it as a toilet for their dogs.
- Oh yes, revive grouse (our only native bird) and control bird lobby with regard to predators. Realistic laws on salmon poaching required.

### **Renewable Energy**

- Windfarm development – Sutherland desperately needs a comprehensive strategy and proper controls. Should grazings committees be going into partnership with developers without the backing of the whole local community? Reasonable windfarm development is fine, development is fine, but the whole area is still not sufficiently investigated as to models of management, community benefit, change of land use impacts, etc.,
- Unless there is a halt to the planned mass of wind farms we will have no tourist industry, a devastated environment and de-population – who wants to live next to masses of windmills!
- Protect our wild areas from the damage and disturbance caused by construction of windfarms in sensitive areas.
- I do not like the corrupt financing of wind farms and it seems we contribute enough power already to

meet Government requirements. Wave energy sounds interesting but may be ugly – siting would have to be appropriate.

- Safeguard the area from more wind turbines.
- Safeguard scenery from too many obtrusive developments eg wind turbines.
- Concerned over the seeming haphazard proliferation of wind farms in the area. Absentee landowners will gain financially while residents will suffer disruption and decline in visitor usage. A proper strategy is essential.
- The bit by bit picking off of land for wind farms is obscene. There should be a co-ordinated approach to really getting revenue for the developers into providing facilities for the community not a few who by accident are sitting on a gold mine and ruining the area that locals do not benefit from.
- The wind farms have been the subject of a lot of talk – if its going to be a case of them or nuclear power they win every time. Probably when electric pylons went up at first they wouldn't have been welcome
- Use ideal sites for wind farms, brings extra revenue to satisfy some of the above sections through community funds which the Highland Council will never afford or do.
- I feel it would be a great pity for Sutherland to be industrialised. For example being covered in wind farms generating electricity for the south. Small schemes serving local needs would be preferable.
- The outstanding landscape encourages tourism, or has done in the past and this will be lost if there is no action to stop the spread of wind farms which are not economically viable in any case. Except to the land owner.
- Please limit wind farms.
- Wind Power must be developed. NW Sutherland has the best wind profile in Europe.
- No more wind farms.
- Hope you are thinking about the future not drooling over the past as often happens in the Highlands, but the statistics you enclose are encouraging. But the situation is as it was in the past. Highlanders have to move south for worthwhile jobs. Electric schemes changed that and now so do fish farms. Again, biggest hope is wind and wave energy. Get it moving.
- I do not want to see Sutherland with a mass of wind turbines. The unspoiled beauty does need to be safeguarded for the local people and for the tourist.
- Stop the windfarms or forget Sutherland's wildlife and tourism in the future.
- No more windfarms
- Please keep the wretched windfarms away from where people live and if there have to be some put them where they cannot be seen.
- By the time we have all the windfarms that the Council wish for we don't need any other industry.
- No Windfarms – the only ones to gain are the landowners.
- Build the wind farm at Gordon Bush. At least it will hopefully create a little work for a while and also provide cheaper electricity.
- Tourism is one of the main sources of income here : these tourists visit us because of the unspoilt landscape. However this priceless asset is now at risk due to onshore wind 'farms' – our vulnerable landscape will take decades to regenerate from the impact of this industry
- We should safeguard our tourist economy. Tourists come to enjoy the natural beauty of the Highlands. To sustain this income wind farms should only be given permission for development where they cannot be seen easily.
- Limit the erection of wind farms in Sutherland and Caithness.
- The cumulative effect of wind farms in S.E. Sutherland is very serious.
- When talking to local residents there is a ? for wind farms (and I agree) they are unsightly and not required. There are two alternatives – nuclear power and the use of the sea. Personally I support nuclear power and here in Sutherland we have ? and opportunity for developments of this sort.
- No visually obtrusive wind farms please!
- Potential for renewable energy from hydro and tidal power but needs undersea cabling to preserve landscape for tourism.
- Yes – wind farms should not be land based, but should be set out to sea.



- No large scale wind farms. More woodland.
- I am not keen on wind farms for well known reasons.
- Safeguard Straths from Windfarms.
- No more wind farms.
- No Windfarms.
- I would express strong opposition to a proliferation of windfarms in this area.
- If we are to have windmills in east Sutherland. We support your policy of getting a substantial 'community fund' on compensation for the negative effect of turbines.
- No Wind farms.
- The second most popular activity for tourists is walks (low-level) of 7-8 miles. This area has huge potential for this activity, but wind farm developments are destroying it. You can already see 2 wind farms from some of the best walks and if more are agreed you will see 6 wind-farms from some areas.
- The land must be protected from large scale windfarms, pylons and hydro-electric schemes. However, small scale community of individual turbines and hydro-schemes should be permitted, provided no new power lines are required.
- For the sake of tourists ensure no extra large pylons area erected, or large scale wind farms. Use underground cables and small scale wind farms.
- Better control of wind farm development to prevent Sutherland becoming covered in turbines and pylons.
- Windfarms: ensure new windfarms make minimal impact on landscape and wildlife. Preserve those areas that have most use by hill-walker and tourists. Any developments have to go underground as the scenic beauty will be impacted heavily.
- Less windfarms, more hydro.
- Keep windfarms to a minimum, and get into wave-power, that's the way forward.
- Wind-farm developments should be kept out of the ward. The 'wild' scenery is our best asset and should be preserved at all costs. Present council policy looks like suicide for this area.
- Wind farm development should be carefully controlled and not implemented on a piecemeal basis. No area should be overwhelmed. A tangible benefit should be provided for local people affected by such developments, lower fuel costs for example.
- Again, windfarms – more pressure needed on Scottish Executive to come up with a strategy.
- Maintain the scenic beauty. Avoid the obviously visible windfarm – these should be hidden from main view points. No more pylons – cables underground.
- The massive windfarms being planned for Strathy Forest area and being sought by some for land SE of Bettyhill, and planned for Melvich area will destroy what north Sutherland contributes to the lives of people throughout UK. Images of these places help people all over the UK to cope with their daily lives. Highland Council Renewable energy Strategy consultation document will destroy Tongue and Farr by Recommending Strathy Forest for "windfarm" that consultation document had many "inaccuracies". Far better that people all over the UK have more economical houses and cars, and use aircraft less that destroy our land for stupid wind farm.
- The proliferation of windfarm applications must be turned down unless tourists and most importantly residents wishes are ignored. The council's proposals for prepared sites should be hastened to avoid further unwanted desecration of the landscape.
- Sutherland has a unique beauty, so no windfarms, electricity pylons.
- Global warming – an initiative to encourage solar panel installation should be considered – could local funds from wind farm developers be used to set up and finance the idea.
- More research for the use of wave power which is a constant supply. Less wind farms which affect tourism.
- On balance windfarms do more harm than good to the environment.
- Would like to see all future pylons and power lines and replacements underground. This would be a massive step forward.
- Finally wind turbines, please stick out for wave power which is on our doorstep.
- Protect all areas from industrial scale windfarm development.

- Windmills within sight of the village are not welcome. The Portskerra ?? will be lost if it's not ?? shortly.
- Encourage and develop community wind farms. Develop local economy.
- There is absolutely no point in encouraging tourists into Europe's last wilderness and designating SSSI's then building industrial wind-farms
- If any industrial activities take place they should, in a scene setting, be screened by planting, eg quarries, wind farms. Once they become obsolete – I hope there is a clause to ensure that all evidence is obliterated and the land made good. Possibly joint responsibility of energy co. and land owner. Possibly good practice for all industrial activities.
- As above. I believe we should protect Sutherland from invading wind farms.
- The wilderness must be protected from inappropriate and over development of 'wind farms'.
- No wind farms.
- Small scale Hydro Schemes.
- We don't want the countryside covered in wind farms!
- Renewable energy is the way forward. Do not allow nuclear power into Sutherland.
- No wind farms built in area please! Build a power station close to where the electricity is needed e.g. middle of London!
- More small scale and domestic alternative energy projects. For example a 'mail shot' to rural properties giving details of alternatives and grants for same. Perhaps higher grants.
- Yes, stop wind farms now. Westminster are the only ones to gain. Not Scotland.
- I believe wind farms are being too actively promoted. There is a lack of debate and ignorance of other opinions e.g. nuclear. Any windfarms built in the area should largely benefit the parish rather than the landowner.
- Positive but limited wind turbines.
- Protect the natural and rich habitat instead of windfarms. Ask the landowners if they will allow windfarms on their estates in the South.
- Wind farms should not be sited within view of the village.
- With full access to our countryside we are extremely fortunate. The beauty of the landscapes is what brings visitors to our area. Do not put this in jeopardy by development. Windfarms, pylons etc.
- Areas set aside for 'Wind Farms' either inland or offshore
- Open areas should be protected from Wind Farms to keep the Tourist Industry.
- Alternative energy schemes. But not too intrusive. A balance between wilderness and progress, I think the people who condemn all pylons and turbo windmills are not living in the real world.
- No more wind farms on our hills.
- Would welcome planning guidance on windfarms.
- Do not put wind farms near tourist areas, or near main road view points, should only do that if they are cost effective. Should be placed further inland away from people. The extra cost put on the companies involved.
- Local landowners that have sold land and would receive annual increment towards appraising local interests and allowing wind farms to produce not only 'Power to the People', but vast profits. What happens to the environment in fifty years' time when usage of these wind farms no longer become financially viable due to costly maintenance. Are we left with our countryside blighted by eyesores.
- No windmills please except on high ground.
- Planning issue – instead of these unused service laybys at each new house planning should insist on solar units in roof space for every new build. Cost is very similar and green values are better for us all. The more demand for solar energy the cheaper it will become, then existing housing owners would convert.
- I am not keen on wind farms because I think the financing is corrupt and nuclear power is being revisited.
- I would like all wind farms to be sited as far away from residential areas, preferably in England.
- Halt the wind farms and the whole of Sutherland benefits as far as the environment is concerned.
- I'd like to see the Kilbraur area being protected from building a windfarm. I support green energy but

this plan seems like mission impossible and a disaster for birds/wildlife.

- More development of alternative sources of energy e.g. wind and solar power. Each house to have solar panels and/ or wind generators. (Government Grant – Scottish Parliament).
- More development of alternative sources of energy e.g. wind and solar power. Each house to have solar panels and/ or wind generators. (Government Grant – Scottish Parliament).
- Should not be stuck on top of the hills but developed offshore.

### **Forestry and Woodlands**

- More emphasis should be given to natural and native woodland regeneration – less to blanket forestry.
- Protect semi-natural woodlands at all costs
- Some woods are becoming fragmented by new house sites e.g. Achmelvich/Torbreck. Common Grazings should let more land regenerate into woods to compensate or else no more houses. These woods are not an SSSI but are of that standard and should be protected.
- Small scarce woodlands in the North West should be totally protected. Native planting encouraged.
- Protect our forests – especially from the use of motorcyclists and quad bikes destroying our wildlife.
- Restructuring of 35 year old pine woodlands.
- Protection of existing native woodland fragments (including Riparian).

### **Access**

- Protect our beaches – improve upkeep of pathways. Create motor areas for youngsters to protect pathways.
- Guided walks / tours to the more remote parts that tourists might miss. Almost all of Sutherland and Certainly Tongue / Farr district should be protected, it is a beautiful, unspoilt place.
- Less fencing everywhere to allow people to wander at will and enjoy the beauty of the countryside.
- Having just returned from Switzerland please promote and increase the walks like they do there – for the fully fit to the less infirm. Visitors have money to spend but need choice, well published and sure routes, accommodation etc.
- More pathways opened up for nature walks.
- More footpaths (circular routes) around settlements. Better quality paths linking areas, around the coast for example.
- Why do we not aim for a ‘Cross Sutherland Way’, Brora to Kylesku? Old roads and estate partners already exist most of the way.
- Foot paths to be maintained on a regular basis rather than left to crisis point. Makes for better access of visitors / tourists.
- The Kyle (from Invershin – Invercassley) is woefully under used for recreation. There should be far more facilities for access – walking, bird watching, etc. etc
- More forest walks. Better access to Shin Falls, particularly for the disabled.
- Teas and Toilets. Better access for very young and old to beaches.
- Tourist trails and nature walks should be encouraged.
- Sputie Burn walk to beach should be maintained as this area is a popular tourist area.
- Forest paths have been opened up to encourage walks, but I deplore the use of weedkiller this year – giving a poor ecological message and making paths shiny and slippery as the grass was killed – quite apart from flowers, frogs, lizards, funghi etc. being inhibited.
- I would like to see a good network of footpaths to encourage the less experienced walker.
- Two areas for improvement – more footpaths and cycle tracks especially along the coast line – a coastal cycle track between say Brora and Tain would be very beneficial.
- Long distance cycle and walking trails would be an advantage to our area
- East Sutherland Paths – (walk/cycle/horse). North route, Dornoch to Helmsdale circular. Dornoch/Embo/Mound/Rogart/Lairg/Bonar – branch to Loch Buidae or old A9 to Dornoch.
- I would like to see more green tourism in the area and promotion of different walks and wildlife etc.
- Maintaining more footpaths and maybe creating more.

- Improve and promote coastal path (as in Moray). This could eventually form part of a Moray Firth path. Initial focus should be on a route along shores of Loch Fleet which (away from roads) has poor access.
- More designated built and maintained paths should be provided, especially for the disabled to enjoy our countryside.
- Currently organising walk/paths from Brora river mouth to Loch Brora is under investigation by voluntary group. Open up old rights of way.
- Further thought should be given to structured paths for walking and cycling.
- I would like to see some development of cycle paths throughout the area and more care given to keep walking pathways open.
- Access to unused areas for the enjoyment of all through bridleways and foot paths.
- We have a splendid coastline in our ward. As long as litter and dog fouling is kept under control, I feel it would be a positive move to focus development opportunities here. Improve access to our ward's coastlines, tourists have often asked me how to get access to stretches of coastline north of Brora. Improve access to Loch Brora for tourists by placing signs on the A9 and sensitively developing areas for visitors to enjoy the loch.
- More structured walks. The outlying areas to be protected (Rearguhar, Badninish, Balvraid, Birchen.)
- More walks, both sides of rivers. Fifty metre strips planted with trees – low maced pavements 1 metre wide for walkers/wheelchairs and a second for horse riding.  
The path along the beach needs to be improved both north and south of Brora could form part of a long distance walk which could cut off at Loth up towards Kinbrace etc. This would also help bird watchers, seal watchers etc.
- Forest walks are popular. Safe traffic free tracks for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, should be encouraged.
- I would like to see walks (signposted and paths maintained) through some of the beautiful scenery, where you would be allowed to take dogs provided they are kept under control, like the walk to Sandwood Bay.
- There should be an Archaeology Trail to attract tourists interested in Archaeology Walks. This trail should be connected to local Artists Open Studio Trail as local artists find inspiration from the local environment and history of archaeology.
- How about a John O' Groat – Lands End walk – better than the main road – possibly beside the coast?
- Rights of way protected and signposted.
- Land access is now with us. Incorporate in your plan all existing access routes and possibly identify some new walks/cycle/horse routes, obviously with the agreement of the landowners.
- 

### **Crofting**

- Recognition to local practices which sustain the environment – crofting for example – and agency promotion of that. The local way of life has maintained the environment over the years. Help us to maintain our way of life against the odds and external influences – Europe/outside business etc.

### **Ardgay area**

- Increased recycling facilities would be useful.
- Not a nice advert for beautiful Scotland. Next to Council yard, Ardgay, private bungalow at present unoccupied and ground and house in need of tlc. Old fridge freezer and other household appliances standing at present in front of garden? On view to public Ardgay main road. Rats have been seen in ground.
- Improvement. Wasteland as we drive into Ardgay from north and east Tain end – soon a mess (and some kind of fence around the works yard leading into Ardgay – also unsightly).
- Gearcholle wood is currently protected and the old curling pond cleared and a path made. More ideas like this would and should be encouraged for example Carbisdale Castle's old walled garden.

### **Armadale area**

- Pouluriscaig Village which is on Armadale Common Grazing land is deserted and fairly remote. Again, funding is a problem.

### **Bettyhill area**

- I would like to see the street (workhouse) in Bettyhill protected and refurbished before it completely decays and falls down. It could make an outlying display linked by path to the ice house and Naver Museum.
- The environmental project being run by Farr High is a good idea, but they receive no help from the Council. The area desperately needs other forms of employment.
- Apart from the land noted above, most of Achnabourin is SSSI or SPA and is regularly studied by SNH. There is too much scrap and old caravans etc. dumped along Inverness Road. This approach road to Torrisdale Bay needs tidying up.

### **Bonar Bridge area**

- Walking trails in the 'Back of Bonar' area.
- Loch Migdale needs to be protected from over development. Scope for the likes of holiday lodges but not mass tourism.
- Community ownership of village fishing rights in Bonar Bridge.
- The Airdens area near Bonar Bridge has many chambered cairns, hut circles etc. which could be of interest if they were signposted and tidied up.
- The local woodlands trust at Migdale, and Ravens rock walk at Rosehall are very good examples of what can be done environmentally.
- Community buy out fishing rights.
- Removal of rusting and dilapidated machinery. Poorly managed crofts and farms made to upgrade, clean ditches and keep fences in order. No waste material, left on fields .... e.g. Swordale Farm, Bonar Bridge.

### **Brora area**

- Heritage centre in Brora needs more advertising and local input.
- Our heritage centre needs to be in the village for both locals and visitors to get the best benefit from it. It is excellent inside, but much too far out. We all need to be proud of it. Also we need a bigger facility so as to house all the yearly themed 'As we used to be' exhibitions.
- I'd like to see the Highland council give the Brora Heritage Centre to the Clyne Heritage Society and for them to be based there.
- Braes hotel in Brora should be improved and west end garage tidied up.
- More areas opened up for graded walking. More use of the harbour.
- Total refurbishment of Brora Railway Station and removal of the eyesore that is the goods yard building.
- Clean up and improvement of riverbanks from Harbour mouth up to Loch Brora.
- The Salt Pans back beach Brora – should be actively encouraged. This seems to be the only thing left to do with Brora. The pit, brickworks, the railway from pit to harbour. The lemonade factory lower Brora. T.M Hunter's Wool Mills all have sadly been demolished. Only thing left is the old Clynenish Distillery.
- I have been involved with the Brora Heritage Society in the Clunekirkton Cemetary Project and hope it will be able to continue.
- The Brora Heritage Centre is totally out of place, situated at Tascally. The former Drill Hall (now the Cultural Centre) should have been earmarked for the Heritage Centre.
- Can anything be done with old coal pit reclaimed area? Currently totally unused. Sell off heritage centre, use these funds to relocate to centre of village – railway station?
- I believe the rugby pitch area, now so waterlogged and unused would make a wonderful woodland area with ponds/path etc.

- Rugby pitches and playing fields down Riverside / Brora.
- Lower Brora Radio Station should be cultivated towards tourists who go down there all year round. No toilet provided, etc, etc. It really could be a winner without too much change. 'Learners' golf link to be encouraged for the young.  
Brora harbour requires mud/sand/stone extraction for its further use.
- The playing field folly, constructed some years ago, overlooking rock pool of Brora River, has never been a success. The area needs to be properly drained and could become a useful social amenity. Possibly a picnic area or putting green or both. The clubhouse, long disused, could be refurbished and fitted into the scheme.
- Dornoch is hopeless as a tourist information centre and off the main route A9 N & S. I have tried to get specific information for my visitors and keep getting 'I'll see if we have anything on it.'  
Information available to staff only is in a filing cabinet and neither comprehensive enough, nor available for browsing.  
Here in Brora Mr Cunningham is doing a great service but very limited, by offering space in his shop, where he barely has a sufficient display for selling space.
- Coast erosion/ protection is essential as this threatens the golf courses and other areas that are the linchpin of tourism but equally sympathetic developments on the coast such as marinas / leisure fishing facilities and designated picnic areas with toilets are needed. The Helmsdale monument scheme to the Clearances has failed but a less expensive scheme that augments the Brora Heritage Centre or at Helmsdale or Brora Harbour areas could impact on tourism. More could be made of the fossil finding potential between Loth and Brora and more could also be made of wildlife and scenic photography tourism. The continued expansion of Timespan is important but could Brora not have a facility linked to it and under its management.
- Lack of recycling in the locality. Grean & Mobious struggling for funds. We still seem to persist in filling holes with our rubbish.
- The front shore could be kept tidy and bins provided so people could put rubbish in before leaving the beach.

### **Dornoch area**

- All links and wet land need protection.
- All of Dornoch should be preserved as it is except the improvement of existing buildings where this is required. Woodland areas and land adjacent to the beaches / sea should be protected as nature reserves. Dornoch in a Tourist Centre and this should be it's main business, to perpetuate tourism for the local economy.
- The old right of way should be fenced between Clashmore and Astle, it is not even on the map now, it could be a lure to walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc.
- Placing more passing place signs up along Loch Fleet (at places where they are missing) and perhaps creating one more parking area closer to the A9 with bird identification boards.
- Protect the area around the Dornoch Square.
- Safeguarding is the key word. Dornoch and the Firth is a beautiful area. Over population could spoil it.
- No further 'ribbon' development to destroy the environment further. The coastal walks should be improved. Royal Dornoch golf course must be protected, it is the golden egg of our town. The present development 'above' the course is a desperate mistake. It should have been further back with a broad esplanade running in front of it to circle back to the Embo road.
- Maintain and if possible increase protection for buildings within the conservation area in Dornoch and prevent unsuitable/out-of-character buildings in this area.
- A marina at the Meilke Ferry?
- I would like to see the conservation area preserved and enhanced as much as possible, eg Dornoch Square (Filling Station Site)– traditional architecture in keeping with surroundings. It is the 'Old World charm', the cathedral, the golf course, the pleasant walks around the town, the woods, the beach, which make Dornoch such a pleasant place to live and visit.
- Less Trees being cut down, especially in the town (Dornoch). Less cleaning of sites to facilitate future

applications. Conserve the conservation area or lose it and its unique atmosphere. (Less development is conservation area).

- Yes – not enough made to justify public purse pay-out by SNH on Loch Fleet Nature Reserve. Could this not have more tourism and recreational potential? Walks interlinking East Coast and hinterland towards Lairg could be further developed.
- Land round the perimeter of the town should be protected, more public footpaths should be opened up for locals and visitors. There is not the infra structure for a large development in Dornoch.
- Dornoch's cultural heritage protected. Brochs, cairns, historical sites, protected also.
- Cycle trail at Balblair Wood.
- Improvement of coastal path from Dornoch to Embo.
- I would always agree to some areas being protected for wildlife. Dornoch should be 'green.'
- Other villages like Golspie/Tain run a recycling plant where they go door to door collecting paper, cardboard etc. I think Dornoch would benefit from this, also giving jobs to local people.
- A property developer wishes to build modern houses in Dornoch Square, Castle Street (a conservation area). At present there are several historical buildings in Castle Street. The square is not suitable for modern houses. The majority of Dornoch residences are very much against these modern houses.
- Stop building along raised cliff of Royal Dornoch Golf Club – preserve the natural beauty of the Links, Dornoch's finest asset.
- The rural and wildlife surroundings should be preserved – not obliterated. The present environment is one of the main attractions of Dornoch. Leave it alone!
- In Dornoch itself there are no gym facilities such as are available in Invergordon and Golspie.
- The Fleet Estuary – Ben Bhoaggie Hill – our spotless beautiful beaches and excellent walking areas. Yes – activities for all ages but not to spoil our beautiful country.
- Reduction (cull) of huge seal population in Fleet Estuary.
- A new public building is required of really good architectural merit in the square. The meadows football park area should be doubled in size for future recreation. Dornoch is the County down – why have the offices been removed to Golspie?
- Less clinical approach to removing dead trees, branches etc around Dornoch, thereby removing one total habitat, nesting holes, fungi etc. which may be of great interest in the centre a town.
- Encouragement of boggy areas in fields and discouragement of continual draining of low lying areas.
- Motorbikes should be banned from Woodland areas and waste bins should be situated at these areas i.e. Skelbo Wood, Camore, Earls Cross.
- All the environs of Dornoch and the Firth should be protected i.e. left as they are with perhaps some trails for walking, bird watching etc.
- Dornoch Firth area should be protected as one of the last unspoilt areas in the country.
- Dornoch should become a conservation town. The only people who want development are those with a commercial interest.
- The woods in Bishopfield plus a lot more re-planting.
- Lower links should be protected. However the number of nesting birds, brown hares etc. has certainly declined due to dogs being allowed to run free. Particularly whippets/greyhounds. Many dog owners from outwith the Burgh (e.g. Tain/Edderton etc.) use Dornoch links to exercise their animals.
- We are desperately in need of a leisure centre with a hall for dances or small concerts, ceilidhs etc. I would like to see the lower links protected.
- More dune meadows need protection. The outstanding Esker should not be quarried.
- Protect the road from RDEC clubhouse to the beach.
- The Lochans road would support a training golf development – say 9 holes of varying difficulty to promote what should be a proper School of Golf.
- More promotion of wildlife and scenery to make visitors to the area aware of the wealth of variety species we have.
- More cycle tracks, more emphasis on the natural beauty of the area.
- Better sports facilities in the area.

**Durness area**

- I would like to see the wheelhouse above Laid on Loch Eribol protected, I understand there is an idea to extend an existing footpath from Durness. I feel to have a footpath/cycle track going directly to a remote ancient building is to invite vandalism. I would like to see more footpaths, clearly signed as in Durness. More protection for such an unspoilt area is essential. Tourism is the main industry and employment and needs to be protected and encouraged. Visitors won't come if the area is spoiled by inappropriate development, ie quarries, windfarms, pylons, more could be done to encourage walkers and people who enjoy the outdoors.
- A specific suggestion about protection would be the whole of Loch Eriboll for it's beauty and historical and geological interest.
- I'd like to see Smoo Cave being protected in its present state – not made into an over manicured theme park!
- Skelbo Castle and surrounds is crying out for something to be done. Obtain a compulsory purchase order and buy the site from the Russian owner and the Council along with the other local environmentally friendly groups could take it in hand.
- A linked network of walking trails, with the MOD off Cape Wrath main land and sensible provision of interpretative centres/refreshment sources and decent bothy or camping facilities could encourage walkers. Low-key but accurate directional signage is needed on routes for safety reasons. Add interpretation of immediate environment.
- Lots! Most important sites are protected by SSSIs/SMRs etc. However more consideration should be given to locally important buildings e.g. The Blacksmiths in Sangomore, Durness and to native woodland such as Arnaboll on Loch Hope.
- Air strip to south of village hall as proposed in 1975/76. b) Link up of single track roads with sections already two lane.

#### **Edderton area**

- There is a great wealth of natural, historic and cultural heritage within the parish. Edderton could play a vital role in the future of the Dornoch Firth countryside by providing resources for wildlife, antiquities and walks. The assistance given to those caring for these resources is at present poor and difficult to obtain.
- Pictish stone off Station Road access and information. Also better protection.

#### **Elphin area**

- This beautiful unspoilt area could be utilised to promote itself, if there were cheaper facilities/eco-friendly schemes to see and experience. Tree planting and trails go down well for locals and visitors. Picnic areas and cycle routes, native trees. Protect/ clean up the lochs and sea lochs, tighten up on polluters like the fish farms. Keep the area organic. Protect from jetskis in Ardmelvicher Bay!

#### **Embo area**

- The Embo Pier is a disgrace, as every week goes by without any repair or maintenance. It is going to cost thousands of pounds to put right in the future! What about a marina?
- I would specifically like to see the areas around Loch Fleet and Embo being protected from development. There is such a wonderful variety of wild flowers and bird life here there are so few places like this left in Scotland that I think it deserves all the protection it can get.
- The bottom part of Embo Village is a disgrace. Houses and extension have been built out of keeping with the old ones. Lanes and pieces of land are overgrown and dangerous, soak-aways are also in a state. Considering the tourists that use Embo and the number of older people in the area it should be a nice safe place ?? it is not.
- I have just been offered 3 miles of railway track (which I think I will take) and I would like to relay part of the Dornoch Branch Line (from Skelbo to Embo to start off with) having collected railway artefacts including the oldest preserved carriage in Scotland. I feel it would be a great crowd puller along the side of Loch Fleet, but I'd need a hand.
- The area close to the village known as Back Park to be kept as open land as previously agreed.



- Embo back Park made more attractive! Picnic tables? Paths, trees.

### **Golspie area**

- The sea wall pathway might benefit from a “make-over”.
- We do have an NNR in the Golspie area which is wonderful to walk through. More set picnic areas.
- No development should take place from Duke St, Main St, Church St. sea side. Standard of design is poor. Pitch roofs should be a design standard. The promenade could be resurfaced with suitable block from council offices – road- Mitchells.
- It is important to protect the Glebe in Golspie – it is a tempting site and it would be undesirable (to say the least) to see this open area go – surrounded as it is by beautiful and listed buildings, the Botanical Garden and the mouth of the Big Burn. Also an adverse effect on Seaforth House amenity.
- We in Golspie need a village hall on the blaize pitch/in the business park.
- Big burn walk very important. Try to keep it natural with not too much concrete. Develop (i.e. clear/drains) existing footpaths e.g. around Golspie tower/Backies. That area should be preserved – Dukes, traditional steadings etc. And kept free of further housing development.
- The areas to be protected are Rhives Farm and land and adjoining fields to the Ben.
- More broadleaf planting – tasteful development of Ben Bhraggie.
- Countryside and already fragile crofting areas should be protected i.e. Backies, Dunrobin Glen and Golspie Tower.
- Sea wall at Dunrobin is so eroded we’ll lose another area to the Sea
- Would like to see improvements to Golspie Pier.
- We have very nice walks in the area – e.g. Balblair along the coast from Golspie to Brora and in Big Burn. Perhaps better paths from Golspie to Littleferry along the coast would be nice.
- Shoreline needs to be preserved and protected.
- Area to be improved – Blaize Pitch at primary school.
- Yes, there are many development opportunities associated with the environment. Sutherland is an inspirational place of artists throughout the world. Would like to visit and stay for a while producing art work inspired from the Environment and the rich local heritage. We need an Arts Centre for Cultural activity in the area – a place with cinema and performance areas as well as exhibitions.
- The continued maintenance of the excellent walks and of the beaches and prom. A pier?

### **Helmsdale area**

- Brora and Helmsdale railway stations are in dire need of improvement / upgrading as is the site adjoining Timespan in Helmsdale.
- The upgrading and expansion of the ‘timespan heritage centre’ should continue to receive maximum possible public funding.
- What about Helmsdale’s purpose-built tourist centre now lost to the tourist industry. Wake up and stop selling off our assets, we have a wonderful county, village and area.
- Again, helmsdale community council would like support on this issue.
- I think Shore Street should be greatly improved and walking areas provided.
- Improvement to basin area.
- I think this is well catered for in my area – Helmsdale – thanks to activities generated from ‘Timespan.’
- Strath Willie/Kildonan and Glen Loth to be fully protected. Glen Loth road surface needs repair/resurfacing.
- The harbour area should/could be tidied up with provision for small craft with a reasonable snack shop if possible. Local and inland sites detailed.

### **Kinlochbervie area**

- With support from HC, the Community development Partnership is moving and improving the road signage on the A838 indicating the KLB area and its related visitor facilities. KLBCDP is currently involved with HC,s Access Officer in identifying and / or creating a network of walking routes in the KLB area. Support funding is being obtained for signage, path construction / maintenance, sites and

gates etc. KLBCDP is engaged in tidying up and regenerating disused and /or run down areas in and around KLB such as removing old caravans and creating a view-point picnic area by the old harbour to attract / retain tourists / visitors.

- Marina is much needed and proven new investment. Loch Clash developed for heritage centre.
- Many visitors to Kinlochbervie look for access to Loch Innes. A footpath round the bank from Burnside to the preschool building, round below the war memorial/carpark would suffice. Fencing of all the roads would protect more of the wildlife and stock, and the very necessary and highly insured vehicles from the wildlife and stock. The thought of travelling from community to community in winter is balanced against the risk of accident both from animals and single track roads.
- Heritage Centre. Revitalise the Harbour for tourism.

### **Lairg area**

- Ferrycroft centre provides good facilities combining Cultural / tourist interests.
- A footpath from Rhian Bridge, up to and alongside the waterfall above Deanside and then onto the drover's trail and down to Loyal Terrace would be an advantage locally and for tourism.
- Shore line of Loch Shin is suffering badly from erosion (due to hydro developments?). These need protecting for the future to encourage bird life and also use of the Loch for fishing access. Re-introduction of Salmon?, hydro dams may prevent their migration.
- Animal/bird hides, 'outdoor' activity centre. Both would encourage visitors as well as helping locals – could be run from Ferrycroft Centre – activities need better promotion.
- Work started on Sutherland Arms Hotel in Lairg, which is a terrible eyesore, especially during the summer season, and is also very sad for locals to see what was once a thriving workplace empty.
- Encourage use of Loch Shin.
- Salmon Interpretive Centre at Falls of Shin. Pitch and putt at Ferrycroft Visitor Centre.
- The area at Lochside, which is a wildlife habitat, should be protected.
- Lots of work has been done locally to develop forest walk/ cycle tracks. The Highland Ranger is a valuable resource – with more funding he could make wildlife a tourist attraction while safeguarding it. Local history interests could be used to attract tourism too. The Rivers and fishing should keep their protection.
- It would be good to have proper paths on some of the most popular mountains. This would prevent erosion and be safer for climbers. I am thinking in particular of Clibreck where people have died.

### **Lochinver area**

- Greater ability to interact with the environment would be possible with the provision of wooded huts in the interior of the Glencanisp Estate. Coppicing should be re-introduced in Assynt and potential bio-fuels, crops and/or pharmaceutical crops identified and developed.
- The newly founded Assynt Foundation has been looking at this in connection with the 40,000+ acres under its care; It could provide a useful distillation of many local thoughts and ideas.
- Verge moving should cease. Personnel being redeployed on golfing facilities (or bowling!). Woodland managers (copiers/fencers/loggers/chippers) should be employed and hired out to community owned woodland and estates alike. A School of Gaelic or traditional music could be based at Glen Canisp Lodge in Lochinver (also linked by electric bus) which would also have it's own wind generators. A fishing school could also be based there. The Council Rangers are wonderful! Keep them!
- Clean up Lochinver Bay – provide coastal access/viewpoints. Should be possible to walk the entire north/west coast, bringing business to isolated tourist businesses (Devon/Cornwall).
- I'd like to see industrial areas and such like kept tidy – the Culag Harbour area is a disgrace and damages the once thriving tourist industry and local economy. One local man, Mr R W Mackenzie, has dozens of machines and diggers abandoned all over the parish! These are eyesores and I would have thought a health and safety risk. Businessmen such as he should invest in proper premises for these vehicles.
- Maybe Windmills in our area, and derelict buildings to be looked into.

### **Melvich area**

- A beach level path from Melvich Sands to Portskerra jetty would be welcomed by the few tourists.
- The Puffin Colony between Reay and Melvich – I think should be protected.
- Safeguarding the land as it is now would be a great asset for Melvich as people come for the peace, walks and its beautiful beach. Let's not spoil it by adding lots more houses, industrial units etc.
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### **Port Vasgo area**

- As an outsider now settled in Portvasgo I am amazed that I had never heard or seen these parts despite travelling most of Scotland. Improvement and commercial development is a must. These parts of Scotland should be seen by potential visitors/incomers/tourists. There is a huge amount of potential here. No one appears to be interested in attracting investment or visitors.

### **Rogart area**

- I would like, as an angler, to see improvements done to the East End of Loch Buidhe as it is leaking through the original embankment and is very low in summer time, detrimental to angling in general. This would help the tourist industry as it is so accessible a Loch with help given to the angling association with a disabled adapted boat adapted if possible.
- A permanent site in Rogart for bottle bank etc. The present area though ideal may be lost if mart site is sold.
- Rhiloch An School – this nice old school is central to the parish; if it had improvements done to it of some sort.
- Achnagarron hut circles – map ref no. 734051. Achnagarron – two standing stones – map ref no. 732049.

### **Rosehall area**

- The landscape around Rosehall is unspoilt and the area is enjoyed by visitors for fishing, walking and bird-watching. Thus it is unsuitable for wind farms.
- The community has put in paths plus environmental info. Note the market that keeps existing jobs is fishing/stalking, therefore unspoilt is good!
- The Cassley Falls rival any others in the area and should be better known. This could be done without upsetting the salmon fishers who at present are the visitors to this river.

### **Scourie area**

- The Tourist Information Centre in Lochinver is very good with Highland Region Rangers available and displays on wildlife and geology. If Scourie had the same facility it would be a catalyst for further development and jobs.
- Better support from SNH for this national nature reserve

### **Stoer area**

- The ruined church at Stoer needs saving before it collapses. A Telford building. I expressed an interest in developing it as a private house and was REBUFFED by planners.
- Marine Heritage Park to include Eddrachilles Bay (extending from Stoer to Cape Wrath.) Long term reforestation of coastal area with restriction of deer to hinterland.
- Much work already going on in this area as funding for environmental activities far easier to come by than for housing and economic development.

### **Strathy area**

- At Strathy, I would like to see the dune system with its wonderful flowers, protected from quad bikes. The hills around the graveyard I would also like protected from quad bikes and other vehicles.
- I would like to see the whole North Coast designated SSSI and protected as we are seeing return of otters, red kites and recently sea eagles in Strathy area.
- The Shelby Lighthouse should house a nice café shop/restaurant come gift shop. One could even use

it as a B&B or hotel. It could become a major attraction, increasing Sutherland's profile. It could also house some sort of marine/wildlife exhibition. I moved here by choice and am still surprised how little developed tourist services are. And so are all my friends/family who visit us from abroad.

- I would like to be able to buy wood locally for my wood burning stove. I worry about the number of deer that roam freely at night and wonder who is responsible for them.

#### **Tongue area**

- I would like to see all land below Tongue main road/Varich Place/Burr's Shop protected under an area of outstanding beauty.
- Castle Varrich is in bad need of protection & renovation. It is a disgrace a building of its age is being left to fall down.
- No new development, but reuse of existing ones. Youth hostel at the Causeway. Mission hall in Tongue (to improve or adapt). Both are private, their future unknown. A golf course was proposed but disappeared in the planning. This was to be on unused croft land at Rhi-Tongue. The camping site is closed and is sorely missed. The youth hostel (also closed) if not reinstated could be considered as a potential site.
- No, the remoteness and minimal interference is what attracts people. Restoring the youth hostel facility in Tongue would help encourage environmentalist as would improve campsites.
- Balnakeil House – restored.

## **SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN: OTHER FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

### **OTHER COMMENTS**

Are there any other comments you would like to make on how you see the future of Sutherland in terms of land use development or safeguarding?

#### **General**

- I have thought that, because nobody seems interested in setting up an industry here – declare the area as a heritage zone and charge southerners coming to see what civilisation used to be like.

- I think that the Council do a good job of it.
- I have a number of unused potentials that other people would be welcome to take me up on. Ranging from thriller science fiction to developing the planets, I would be willing to oblige once winter is over and I am fully settled in hopefully.
- Sutherland should remain a rural area – that is what attracts tourism. Building should be closely monitored and any new builds should be detached – maximum 1 and a half storey, so that the area doesn't begin to look like an eyesore.
- You do a pretty good job!
- Give more support to Community Council.
- Somewhat alarmed by the group of travellers camped near Stoer. They should either build or move on.
- Important not to let or encourage the area to be a dormitory for commuters, by allowing too much planning permission. Protection from ugly developments.
- Yes the heritage centre was a waste of money. Why did the Council not bid on hunters and turn it into a sports centre.
- I would tax second homes heavily bringing fairness to locals who pay high prices for most things e.g. food, petrol etc, etc.
- Holiday/second homes to pay 100% Council Tax.
- We should safeguard against any more derelict buildings and derelict cars and caravans. I thought it was illegal to abandon a car these days. There are far too many in the Strathy area, which does not reflect well for tourists. We wish our 'postal address' was Sutherland!
- We need to prioritise land capable of providing local food production on a small scale. This will provide more fresh, healthy produce available locally and reduce food miles.
- Cut down on the big estates as an under use of land.
- More commercial / High Street stores should be encouraged to relocate.
- Absolutely no nuclear power stations!
- Different departments of Highland Council should be more aware of this corner. Inverness does not have a good idea about our area. It is a different way of life and offices/officers in Inverness cannot and do not appreciate this.
- Keep committee activity in check! People who join committees are not necessarily possessors of fine judgement!
- Ice house renovated for tourist and local development.
- I think I said enough!! Phone/tetra masts are going up left, right and centre with no thought of the local population!!
- I feel that the development of Sutherland should be towards the provision of tourist facilities, interests and protection of natural beauty of the area (i.e. no hidden pylons of any description) and encouragement of small industries.
- The planners to stop holding up development along with councillors. Council land that is set aside to have a price and planned date for sale, not to be re-sold unless on this plan of sale!
- In central Sutherland there are too many separate groups operating and planning is far from transparent. Cohesive planning is required.
- Tax holiday homes to generate revenue to put into communities.
- The planning system needs to be overhauled – small developments take far too long to be decided.
- Encourage land owners to develop land for housing and business.
- Safeguard what we have – status quo is often the best.
- Do we really have to have such a huge proportion of recent arrivals running everything. Skerray for example gets more like the Cotswolds every day.
- All our energy should be put into preserving our communities and not allowing developers to destroy our countryside and way of life.
- Immense care to preserve the existing atmosphere. I think Alan, Katie and Brian personally should

visit the area on a good dale and a large scale map.

- A general comment – the consultation should be Sutherland-wide and not confined to Golspie and Rogart ward.
- Any land developments to have the public involvement and the community benefits from. Help and shelter 24 hours for the elderly to be continued.
- Open up more land. Free the land for the needy.
- The planning consent decision should be conducted in a fair and unbiased manner.
- Land left to grow wild when people around are willing to put it to use for either decorative or horticultural usage.
- Its going the way of all future developments – to the dogs.
- I would like to see old Farm machinery and scrap cars removed from this and other areas of Sutherland.
- Would be happy to see good land use.
- At the moment I think planning in Sutherland is too strict. I worked in the building industry and Sutherland was always stricter than Ross-shire.
- Please don't attempt to change the Highlands for the true locals won't come back once they have gone away.
- Abandoned cars and caravans should be cleared up and any places where mess is (i.e. builders properties etc) should be cleared away, or if the offender does not do this in a given time then his council tax should be increased to meet the cost of the Council, carrying out this work. As there is going to be a problem with meeting electricity needs in the near future – no more street lighting should be put up. That which is already in place should be turned off during part of the night time to save fuel. Where new rooms have been built (i.e. supposed £12000 room added to the Bonar Library) for private consultation they should be used properly and not for mainly photocopy machine.
- People who keep properties and land in an unsightly mess should be given a time limit to clear it up. If they fail to do this then a body (Council or the like) should be appointed to do this and the cost should be met by the owner of the properties or land.
- There seem to be a good number of initiatives underway at present that are likely to improve the lives of people living in the area. If further development is envisaged it should be sensitive to the area.
- I phoned your office to query some of the figures in your 'Ward Profile' e.g. population of Rosehall 50!! Nonsense. What are you calling Rosehall? It is a scattered area, including Altas. Food shops – 3!! (1Ardgay, 1 Bonar, 1 Rosehall, 2 Lairg). GP – surely you mean Surgeries! When one sees mistakes it makes one question all the figures. I was delighted to receive a copy of the profile but.....P.S. I phoned the Brora Office (and will write today) regarding a road sign in Altas, which I should have directed attention to years ago, when it was erected. It said Tapachy (correct name Topachy) and points to Burnside or Middlehill, not Topachy which is beside the road!
- Need to safeguard our open wilderness spaces trust. Cover them with (kit) houses, while allowing increased facilities for walking or specialist groups to enjoy the natural and historic heritage.
- Windfarm, Superquarry.
- Sutherland is a vast area of land of outstanding beauty in the heart of Europe, yet takes no advantage of its unique advantages. There seems to be no coherent strategy or plan for a long-term future. I hope you will remedy this
- Would not like to speak as I have only just moved to area. But would like to be kept informed about progress on the local plan. Many thanks.
- Stop insisting on 1.5 harling 45 degree roof. Show some imagination on the use of different materials. Stop being draconian in planning issues and allow developments.
- Why are public toilets closed (eg Talmine) closed in the winter? Public health workers and others find this very unsatisfactory.
- Lands that are owned privately should be taken over for the benefit of the community.
- The obvious balance of a 'wild' 'free' environment along with provision of jobs and housing is a difficult balance to achieve, but one I am sure those drawing the local plan are anxious to reach.
- Speculators should be discouraged or rigorously controlled, local opinion should be canvassed for all large-scale developments.

- Don't try to make Sutherland into Middlesex.
- Try to do something about increasing amounts of litter and ungainly road signs.
- Kick out the Duke of Westminster. Kick out the Crofters Commission. Kick out National heritage.
- As I live on the very eastern edge of the central ward area map, it would be helpful to have the plan for the ward to the East.
- I think your timing of this very important consultation for feedback is not good being so near to Christmas. How about 3 months for feedback or 6 week minimum allowing for people who may be away and wanting to take part.
- The villages are looking dilapidated and untidy, ditto many of the crofts. An attractive area will encourage wealthier residents and tourists and create an upward spiral.
- I feel the unique, natural, dramatic surroundings should be protected and the natural resources we have used for more tourism. There is a lot of scope for encouraging visitors to visit and stay in the area – mountain bike trails, rock climbing, walking, bird watching, activity holidays, boating, painting and other crafts.
- The landscape, open space and tranquillity of Sutherland should be treasured and fostered. However, the population is very low and there should be scope to provide jobs that would increase it in a balanced way. Not just with retired people and holiday visitors.
- Protect the land by way of ensuring that plots of land are not sold indiscriminately for the purpose of building holiday homes.
- I think some of the local walks could be tastefully sign posted.
- Sutherland is just fine the way it is. Don't make it an urban jungle!
- Note reference – second house controversy. Big increase in the number of people living in an area (even for a short time) has a plus effect on the local economy.
- The Highlands are a magnificent resource that ought to be both developed and protected where necessary/applicable.
- Re-opening of youth hostel.

### **Population Structure**

- Medical services for the ageing population, private retirements homes – to maintain the community spirit.
- The future of Sutherland at present is as a retirement area with nothing to retain young people – as the population bar chart in the ward profile clearly shows. Land use development / safeguarding should be used to assist job opportunities for the younger age group – otherwise accept 'retirement area' status.
- We would like it made possible that the younger folk who have been born and grown up in this area, be able to come back once they have done the training or learning as the ability of the old folk to remain in their home area until they die.
- Influx of retired people – how are we going to look after them in 10-15 years when they are no longer able – will they go back to their origins – unlikely and I don't blame them!
- We are an area of mainly older people. Without good infrastructure, employment and housing there is no hope of keeping a younger generation here.

### **Altnaharra area**

- Don't build council houses in rural areas like Altnaharra, because this does not help the community in any way. As this is only attracting Doll or retired people, as there is no employment available and this would be a disaster.

### **Ardgay area**

- Ardgay - Railway area in close proximity to station in need of tidying. Vacant ground opposite sheltered houses and children's playground not kept tidy in keeping with surrounding area.
- Since the opening of the Dornoch Bridge, Ardgay has been affected, therefore I feel its very important to help develop Ardgay as much as possible, both in housing and heritage and economic development.

### **Bettyhill area**

- Parking in Gordon Terrace is unacceptable during school opening, as Teachers park and block drives and access to houses.
- We would also like 30mph zones extended together with footpath improvement or provision.
- Strathnaver is perfect as it is and requires no economic tinkering. I have no view on what should happen elsewhere in Sutherland.

### **Bonar Bridge area**

- Bonar Bridge needs to develop more land for housing and recreation and industry to keep people in the area. Sites should be used for holiday homes. I would like to receive a plan.

### **Brora area**

- Any further development would need road upgrading, as we live on the main A9 in the centre of Brora. The increase of traffic and the size of lorries is noticeable.
- I believe far too many retail outlets are closed and shuttered. Buildings in Fountain Square are unkempt leaving Brora with a poor first impression to visitors and business investment. Local transport is poor. I fear wind farms blotting our landscape.
- I am being forced to sell my property after 25 years because I am not allowed to sell approximately .25 acre of my .5 acre, as the massive garden is affecting my health. I don't not want to sell my house or leave this spot. I would not be needing a new access either. The unfairness of the situation is well against individuals like myself – look at the activity of the 'animal feeding' business, the passing of a massive plan for the old hunters mill site and yet another for several houses at the beginning of the village. We citizens often have a very real need which your inflexibility makes life very difficult for us.
- Care needs to be taken to encourage industry. (Battery factory, medical factory – clean air for example). The young need to be retrained as Brora is in danger of becoming a dormitory for Inverness or worse – a retirement centre.
- Loch Brora and the river are a huge expanse of inland water currently used solely for fishing only. Under strict controls this area could be developed greatly for locals and tourists.
- In addition to the above I would like to see industries encouraged that could provide upward mobility employment for youngsters to help stay in the area and be reminded of their heritage.

### **Dornoch area**

- Dornoch, to keep its character, a huge factor for the kind of tourism and interest it generates, must develop along Loncanore towards Embo. Development near the School will spoil the entrance to the town as will development along the road to ?
- Dornoch should expand north between Poles Road and Embo Road. Care must be taken that the style and character of new housing enhances the look of the town and doesn't detract from it. The emphasis of the town at the Meadows needs very careful planning. The usual bungalow, cul-de-sac type of development will not do.
- New housing should be encouraged in the periphery of Dornoch. Not further out. People who live in the country want it kept. People who live in the towns enjoy the country as it is.
- Don't destroy the 'essence' of Dornoch
- People need somewhere beyond that is exclusive, Dornoch is losing this cache.
- Lack of parking areas in Dornoch.
- With the young being drawn away we can become an old folk's home ( a rather snobby one if I may say) or look around the world to see what draws majority crowds in a subtle and proper manner i.e. no Blackpool type attractions/arcades etc. But certainly family orientated. A walk in the country is nice but is a one off thing as is Dornoch I feel.
- The land should be as set out and the road from Dornoch to Embo upgraded as promised for many years.
- There is an old wooden shed in Dornoch Square, Castle Street. This old shed should not be in the Conservation Area. This old shed is of no use to anyone. Dornoch residences with this shed removed.



- What attracts people to living in Dornoch? Golf/quality of area/peace and quietness/law abiding people/Christian values still prevail/good education/clean air/out of the rat race. Who lives in and visits Dornoch? Retired people / Professional people/ Craft and trades/ self employed/ hotel staff and catering. Problem areas? Lack of employment/affordable housing (for first time buyers)/facilities for the young/shortage of quality homes for retired people/lack of population to support local trades and future development. Possible focus for the development of Dornoch – attract more retired people/golfers and visitors who stay for more than two hours/young people to stay in Dornoch/increase population by at least another 500/preserve and develop what attracts people to Dornoch. Facilities needed – swimming pool and sports hall attached to the school available for community use/more housing for first time buyers/more quality housing for additional retired people/craft centre and gallery for Sutherland in Dornoch. Possible areas with potential – airstrip/sea and coastline/golf e.g. academy/ jetty at Embo/ outdoor pursuits/ beauty of Sutherland/sea fishing.
- My new fear in developing land for too many houses around Dornoch is that the centre of the town is already choc-a-bloc with cars.
- I would not like to see Dornoch become a busy place, this would spoil it, but on the other hand maybe Dornoch needs to move on.
- I believe the Dornoch Firth area benefits hugely from its unspoilt landscape and limited areas of housing. I would strongly support efforts aimed at preserving its character. I would like to see traditional 19<sup>th</sup> Century stone bridges, especially on back roads, preserved as point of local cultural/environmental heritage, rather than replaced on purely cost grounds (e.g. @ Cuthill.)
- Dornoch is a very unique Highland town, preservation of its culture, history and small local industries are essential, but it must not go down the same road as Inverness which has completely lost its Highland identity.
- Community ownership might be a way forward for the future if insufficient land is available. Littleferry has been destroyed in character by ribbon development of plots. This could have been safeguarded as a heritage site with more sensitivity in development of housing.
- I feel Dornoch is being overdeveloped, any speculative operations purely based on land and house prices, without proper planning or an overview of need. Very few people moving to Dornoch are coming for work.
- The Dornoch bridge caused a serious downturn in through trade. The upgrade of the A839/837 is essential. Note strong pressure for Dornoch rail bridge.
- Archaeology Dept. involvement in any work involving digging in the area of Old Dornoch (conservation area). Dornoch is the only settlement in E Sutherland with continuous occupation on the same site since at least early 8<sup>th</sup> Century to the present.
- Dornoch Firth and the countryside on both its shores is arguably one of the most beautiful areas in Europe. Your own ‘profile’ indicates that the area deserves careful and sympathetic planning. Keep Dornoch Firth and its environs green.
- All that made Dornoch attractive is slowly being destroyed. It may be too late to save it. Carpetbaggers & developers must be controlled.
- I am concerned at the way in which ‘Grannies Heilan Hame’ caravan park is encroaching on the village. It now runs all the way along the front, has put down an inappropriate concrete slipway as a path to the sands, has caravans for sale between Boston House and the village. The original development is screened from the village by trees but there is no screening for the newest development down by the yards.
- New development along Sutherland Road is way too big. The singles track road would be used to exit the A9 and can’t cope with that volume of traffic. Also it is used by locals and visitors for cycling and walking but would become unsafe.
- Infrastructure – water supply (can Lochs Laoigh/Lannsaidh meet future needs especially during a dry summer if town continues to expand? Unlikely!) Sewage – is new plant at links adequate? Before development! Dog Litter – Major problem in a town which depends on tourism. General Litter ditto.
- I would like Dornoch to be a vibrant place with shops and services operating all-year-round, rather than the “winter ghost town “ it sometimes seems to be. I would like it to be a place where people can live and work towards their future.

- Ageing population / second homes / retirement zones like Dornoch mean little attraction for families and young people – something needs to be done to change this.

#### **Durness area**

- There is a move afoot for the Durness Community to purchase the land around Cape Wrath Lighthouse to safeguard it for tourism. This should be encouraged financially and strategically.
- The population figures given in profile are wrong! They are far too low. The estimate in 2004 as on Highland Council's website was 482 (not 205) for Durness. I hope the rest of the statistics are right

#### **Golspie area**

- Golspie appears to be a village which is 'passed through' by tourists. Although the tourist season is limited and therefore services and housing improvements have to be done in mind of the residing population, an effort should be made to attract the visitor to visit the village. Therefore, a tourist information office, in an easily accessible place, such as next to the main car park in Fountain Road, Golspie, and decent public conveniences, I think would help.
- Existing unit on business park is not sympathetic. Important that we protect the countryside around Golspie as a resource for locals/ visitors especially Big Burn/Ben/Dunrobin Woods/Backies.
- Backies is a crofting community and should remain as, not turned into another village.
- The call centre building on the industrial estate has yet to come into use, having been built / converted 4 years ago. It has been maintained (heating & cleaning roof) well during that time and would provide excellent facilities for another use instead of using more land. This would also reduce public cost considerably.

#### **Kylesku area**

- Necessary to protect birds and seals as they are special to this area and a major attraction to tourists who always ask about them. This means limiting fishing activity. The population decline on Handa is a warning

#### **Lochinver area**

- I have already stated the main problem with housing. I think the purchase of housing to be used as holiday homes should be strongly discouraged. In Lochinver I know of three young couples who have tried and failed to buy houses which have been bought as holiday homes. One man living in the village for 3 years now owns approximately 10 houses – this is an outrage. Small communities such as Lochinver will die unless young people are able to live, work and prosper. The Council should be addressing this potential disaster now! For obvious reasons I have declined to provide my name and address. However I would like to offer my thanks for the opportunity to voice my concerns which I know I share with the majority of villagers in Lochinver. I really hope these comments are considered carefully and even acted upon constructively – perhaps the Community Councils could and should be involved in preserving small and fragile communities as I have stated above.
- Sutherland has many problems I know but the Council does not help. Houses are being sold for so much money noone local can buy them. Holiday homes require less provision of facilities by the Council so the road maintenance squad is reduced and the Assynt Centre is under threat so there are less jobs and less reasons for someone to move here to live. The Council should actively help Sutherland instead of actively taking away what little we have.
- A falling population, closure of Knochnan school, attempted closure of Assynt Centre, loss of fishing related employment suggests the future of Assynt continues to be economically unsustainable. Further 'safeguards' wont help, we need affordable housing and new jobs.

#### **Lairg area**

- Younger people do not see a future in the area of Lairg for them so I believe sports centre with gym and pool with new houses being built and near rail link will increase good living with good connections to city.

- In Lairg are does Highland Council want the future of Sutherland to be that of private speculators using this vast area for private usage, or to safeguard the future of Sutherland and the generations to follow, maybe giving devolved power to local Community Councils in issues of investment and planning, acceptable to local voting residents.
- Please can Mr Ferry Flynn be forced to do something with the hotel in Lairg. It is so sad to see its decay. Plus – Lairg needs a hotel and related restaurants/bars urgently.
- Cemetry parking is poor in Lairg and Rogart.
- There are more parts of Sutherland than the Dornoch Firth area – the East coast seems to have had the bulk of investment over the past 30 years – just look at what has happened to Lairg in the past 30 years – very sad.

#### **Portskerra area**

- Crofting land should be safeguarded. We do not wish our community to become a large housing scheme and the character of the village destroyed.

#### **Rogart area**

- The natural peace and beauty of Rogart countryside is one of the main attractions bringing tourists back every year.
- Rogart could take any further housing to alleviate pressure of restricted space for development in Golspie. The character of Golspie should not be further eroded by poor planning decisions. The coast line is important to preserve with poor development not permitted.
- Because of a housing need we are hoping to make some land available near the village.

#### **Scourie area**

- Need for local doctor's house to become community owned in order to retain the facility for changing doctors.

#### **Rosehall area**

- There are vast areas of Forestry around Rosehall and to the west. The road from Rosehall to Invershin needs to be upgraded to help this vast resource reach its markets by a direct route.
- Affordable housing for the young is much needed in Rosehall area.  
Altass shall not have more houses as road system cannot take it

#### **Tongue area**

- The old county depot appears to attract attention of would be developers. The present building should have been demolished years ago, but remains an eyesore with its rusty diesel tanks posing a future problem. The site has drainage and pollution problems.
- I can only speak for our area, but I feel Tongue is an unique area on the North coast and as such should be treated as such (carefully) as I feel in years to come tourism will become a large thing here if done correctly and gently.

