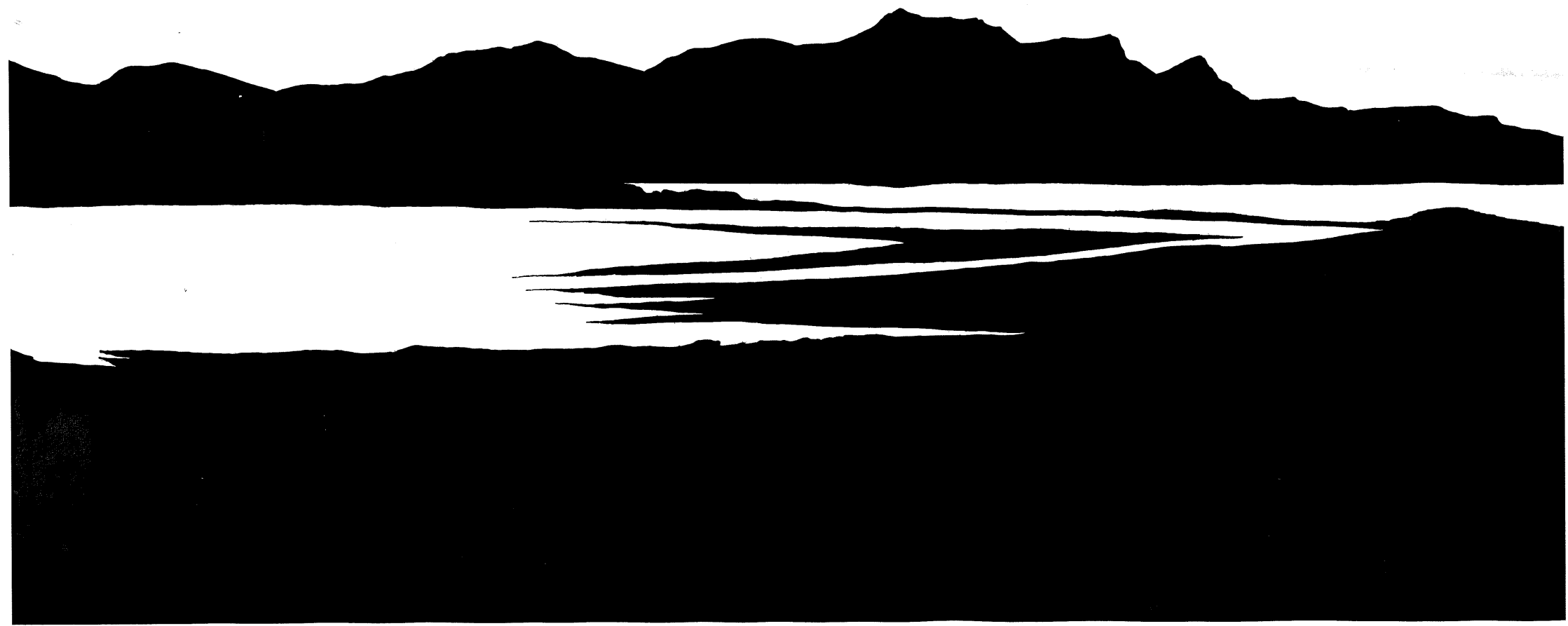


*Tongue  
& Farr Local Plan*

ADOPTED PLAN OCTOBER 1995

PLANNING DEPARTMENT HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



## ***Introduction***

The Regional Council has decided to prepare a Local Plan for Tongue and Farr. This will replace the existing Plan adopted in 1979.

## ***Purpose***

The main task of the Plan is to identify the best uses for all land in the area. These policies will then be used to help the Council decide on individual planning applications.

It also shows the Regional Council's own priorities in terms of roads, water and drainage, education and social provision. Where known, the Plan sets out proposals from other public bodies and agencies dealing with services such as housing, recreation and economic development. The dates and costs shown against these schemes are liable to change as programmes and resources are revised in future years.

## ***Timescale***

The Plan deals with the period 1992-2002. However in certain circumstances it looks further ahead to help set out a wider framework for future development and conservation.

## ***Format***

The Plan comprises the following sections:-

- Strategy
- General Policies
- Tongue
- Bettyhill
- Melvich-Portskerra
- Melness and Altnaharra
- Strathy and Armadale
- Skerryay

## **Procedure**

This Plan was adopted by Highland Regional Council at their meeting on 19 October 1995.

# Strategy

The Council's strategy for the area is based upon consideration of the National Planning Guidelines, prepared by Central Government, together with the Highland Region Structure Plan, approved by the Secretary of State in November 1990. These documents set the national and regional context of the Plan.

## SETTING

The Plan area extends to 144,000ha, from the Caithness boundary in the east to Ben Hutig A'Mholne in the west. To the north lies the Pentland Firth, whilst the southern margins are dominated by Ben Klibreck and the Knockfin Heights. One of the most remote and inaccessible areas of mainland Britain, there are few parts of the Region where the way of life and land use pattern are so clearly linked to the landscape. The interior is characterised by rugged peat and heather moorland with extensive bog areas and numerous lochs. These contrast with the impressive mountains of the south and west. The milder coastal strip



*The outstanding local environment: Ben Loyal from Ribigill*

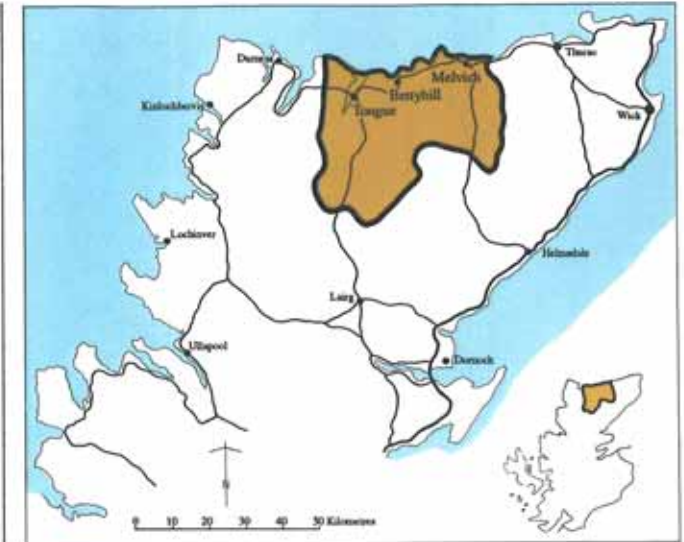
and two major Straths, Naver and Halladale, comprise the best living and working environment and provide the main communication routes. The bulk of the population live in small crofting townships on the coastal margins. The economy is heavily dependent on local resources, with jobs concentrated in crofting, forestry, estate works and tourism. Agriculture and crofting are vital in

sustaining the economy and the way of life. The income from crofting, supplemented by other employment, has allowed families to remain in the area, supporting local services. The famous fishing rivers, notably the Naver and the Halladale are major assets as are the estate deer forests, immensely important as a source of employment and social stability. Other forms of sport and recreation, notably hill climbing and walking are also popular and make a significant contribution to the local economy. Over the last decade, forestry has become a major and dynamic land use with substantial moorland areas now planted. However, recent changes in fiscal incentives have substantially reduced commercial monoculture planting, although new opportunities are now arising. The areas outstanding natural heritage is recognised by the many conservation designations, including the Kyle of Tongue National Scenic Area. Sites of Special Scientific Interest cover a substantial part of the Plan area.

Many of these are of international importance, designated as Special Protection Areas and wetland sites under the Ramsar Convention. The social and cultural heritage is enormous, notably in relation to archaeological remains and the history of the Clearances. However, the area is severely disadvantaged by poor communications, especially the extensive network of single track roads, and distance from the main centres.

## ENVIRONMENT

The magnificent local environment is vital to the future of the area. This has several components:-  
**Landscape:** From the dramatic mountains and coastline to the extensive straths, the scenery of Tongue and Farr is an outstanding asset, the key factor in attracting visitors to the area.  
**Nature Conservation:** The peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland represent probably the greatest expanse of blanket bog in



*Above : Location Plan*

the world and are of major international importance. A significant proportion are within the Plan area. The bogs support breeding populations of nationally rare birds, qualifying for protection under EC legislation. Many of the bogs are candidate Special Protection Areas/Ramsar sites. Scottish Natural Heritage has a rolling programme of survey and site assessment of the whole of the peatland area with a view to designating further SSSIs. Approximately 73,000ha. are likely to be notified in accordance with the Secretary of State for Scotland's decision in 1988. The area is also renowned for its soft coastal fringe, with magnificent beach and dune systems.

**Cultural:** The substantial cultural heritage ranges from the extensive archaeological remains through the history of the Clearances to the present day crofting lifestyle. The Gaelic language and culture, together with its Norse counterpart, is also an integral part of the area's heritage. Improved interpretation of

this resource would bring benefits by enhancing visitor appreciation and awareness. A recent report, "Development Opportunities in the Natural Environment", highlights a variety of prospects.

The Council's objective is to ensure the sustainable use of the area's resources by seeking an acceptable balance between economic development, the safeguarding of the natural and cultural heritage and the long term well being of the community.

## POPULATION

The people of Tongue and Farr are its greatest resource. However, changing economic and social circumstances over the last century have led to major population decline. The present figure of 1650 is a fall of 12% since 1971 and over 50% from 1891 (Fig. 1). Government projections show an overall increase of 1% for Sutherland District as a whole up to 2001. With a quarter of the population above retirement age



*Visual resource: Kyle of Tongue NSA*

and continued out migration, the figure for the Plan area is likely to show a significant decrease. This trend can only be reversed through an increase in employment opportunities.

The Council's objective is to reverse population decline by enhancing housing and job opportunities.

### POPULATION 1971 - 2001

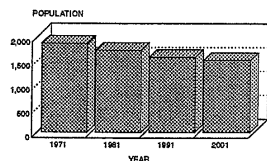
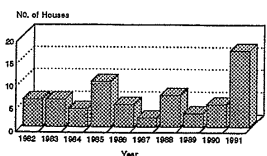


Figure 1

### HOUSING

The total housing stock comprises some 900 dwellings, a significant proportion of which are either holiday homes or vacant. Demand over the last ten years has been low with only six houses completed each year (Fig. 2). Forecasts suggest that this will fall to five per annum over the next decade. The proportion of rented housing has declined in recent years with a reduction in the numbers of houses completed and the consequences of the right to buy

### Housebuilding 1982 - 1991



Source: District Council Complete Certificates

Figure 2

legislation. Much of the existing District Council stock is family housing, whereas the demand in the future will be for smaller houses for single persons and sheltered accommodation.

The Council will ensure sufficient housing land is made available to meet the anticipated needs and demand, allow for a range of housing and to provide a choice of sites.

### ECONOMY

Prospects are difficult and uncertain, particularly with the rundown of Doureay. Existing employment is heavily biased towards the primary sector, a sector that is extremely vulnerable to external political and market forces. It is important therefore that new employment opportunities are pursued together with safeguarding existing jobs. In particular, there is a need to protect croftland, crucially important in maintaining the economy and traditional way of life. The remoteness of the area is the major limiting factor, restricting the market available and the labour pool. Opportunities must also complement and integrate with the existing crofting lifestyle and the unique natural environment. This rich natural resource base has the potential to attract considerable visitor interest to the economic benefit of the area. Heritage led initiatives are perhaps the best way forward. Work\* by the Regional Council and Scottish Natural Heritage has identified a variety of opportunities, from field and interpretive centres through specialised holidays to simple walks and trails. Scope also exists to promote the expansion of sport and recreation in the Plan area, for example through specialist holidays in walking, climbing, bird watching, water sports and other outdoor pursuits. With effective management and planning these activities can be integrated with the local

environment. There are also considerable opportunities in forestry. Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise, with Scottish Natural Heritage and the Forest Authority have set up the North West Sutherland Native Woodland Initiative. This aims to enhance the resource itself and the local environment, and in the longer term, skills, training and job opportunities. Crofter forestry also offers potential, for example in Strathnaver. The promotion and interpretation of the Gaelic and Norse heritage provides another significant opportunity. New initiatives are underway to revitalise the economy and improve existing basic facilities. The North West Development Programme funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise is helping both to develop the agricultural base and encourage diversification. The Peatland Management Scheme funded by SNH is of benefit to local people as well as helping to safeguard the internationally important blanket bogs. More locally, North Sutherland Community Action Development are promoting various schemes for the social and economic development of the area. Such community initiatives are one of the keys to securing the long term prosperity of the area.

The Council will enhance job prospects through:-

- encouraging community initiatives;
- supporting diversification of activities at Doureay;
- encouraging agricultural diversification;
- promoting sites for small tourist related and service businesses;
- supporting opportunities in the natural environment; and
- safeguarding, where possible, local jobs.

### SERVICES

The main communities provide a limited range of services for their residents and the landward area. These cater for immediate needs and necessities, however the main shops and health and welfare facilities are located outwith the Plan area in Caithness. The low population, difficult terrain, dispersed settlement pattern and poor transport links create substantial problems for the provision of services. A decline in both public and private services is apparent with the closure of local

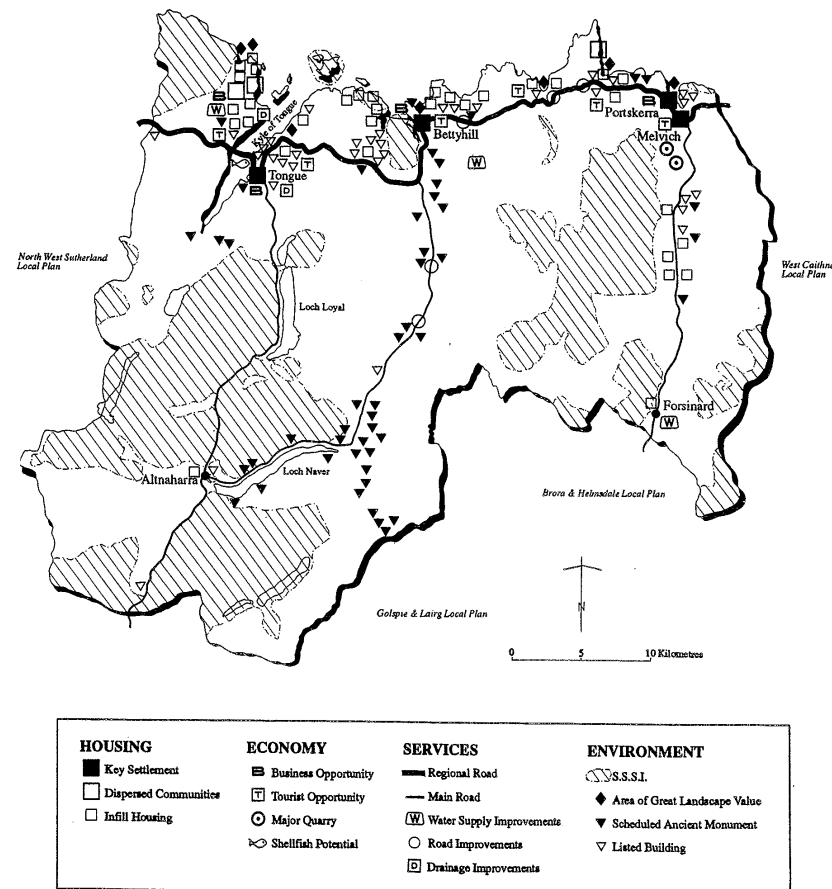
shops and schools. Unless employment opportunities are increased and the population trend reversed this situation will continue. The poor road network serving the area is a severe disadvantage. The majority is single track with consequent time delays and increased transport costs. These can have important consequences for the development of marginal resources. Public drainage systems serve only the main townships. Development elsewhere is served mainly by septic tanks and soakaways. Minor pollution problems have occurred,

but these should not inhibit further development. Major upgrading of the public water supply is programmed by the Council.

The Council's priority is to improve key infrastructure and sustain a range of services sufficient to meet the basic needs of the area's population, including twin tracking of the A836.

\*"Interpretation of the Natural Environment in NW Sutherland" : Angela MacKay

### KEY DIAGRAM



# 1 General Policies

The following general policies will apply throughout the Local Plan area, or where specifically referred to otherwise in the Written Statement and on the Proposals Map.

## Development Control Policies

1.1 The Council has approved a number of general development control policies through the Highland Region Structure Plan which will apply *throughout* the Local Plan area. Specific details are contained in the separate document included as an annex to the Plan as follows

- Housing
- Caravans and Sub-Standard Residential Accommodation
- Display of Advertisements
- Display of Advertisements - Countryside
- Mineral and Peat Extraction
- Waste Disposal
- Control of Roadside Development
- Areas of Great Landscape Value
- Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes - Policy and Guidelines

Supplementary policy guidance will apply where there is specific reference on the Proposals Map and Written Statement as local circumstances dictate.

## Housing

### Housing in the Countryside

1.2 The Council has adopted a general policy for the Control of Housing in the Countryside (RS1). This will be applied throughout the Plan area except in the main settlements and sites identified for other uses.

1.3 The Council will encourage the development of single houses in the countryside except where severe road safety, servicing, heritage or amenity constraints exist.

Appropriate standards of siting and design will be required. (RS 1.2 Fragile Countryside Areas).

1.4 The Council has produced a guide for the development of housing in the countryside setting out best practise for new houses. Applicants will be encouraged to use the guide in siting and designing their houses.

1.5 Within existing dispersed communities (listed below), single houses will normally be acceptable subject to detailed siting and design. Tightly knit groups of houses which are contrary to the established development pattern should be avoided although replacementcroft houses close to the existing dwelling will be acceptable. A reasonable separation distance in accordance with the existing settlement pattern should be maintained. (Policy RS 1.4.1)

- (a) Strathy Point
- (b) West Strathen
- (c) Achnahuaigh



*New housing at Bettyhill*

### Infill Housing

1.6 The Council has adopted a policy for the development of housing in rural townships and villages (RS2). For sites in or immediately adjacent to villages or other groups of houses, permission for well sited and well designed houses will normally be given favourable consideration. This policy will apply to the following settlements:-

- (a) Farr
- (b) Kirtomy
- (c) Swordly
- (d) Port Vasgo
- (e) Midfield
- (f) Achinver
- (g) Scullomie
- (h) Blandy
- (i) Coldbackie
- (j) Dalhalvaig
- (k) Croick

- (l) Upper Bighouse
  - (m) Trantlebeg
  - (n) Trantlemore
  - (o) Forsinard
  - (p) Crask
  - (q) Clerkhill
  - (r) Baligill
- (See insets 12 to 30).

### Affordable Housing

1.7 In selected areas where there is local pressure and need as agreed with the District Council and Scottish Homes, the Council will expect to enter into Section 50 or similar Agreements with owners or developers of private housing land to ensure that an appropriate proportion of plots or dwellings therein are available in perpetuity as low cost accommodation for local persons. There is little likelihood that the policy will be applied within the Plan area.

## Rehabilitation and Conversion

1.8 The Council will encourage proposals for the conversion and restoration of redundant buildings subject to:-

- the buildings being substantially complete;
- the buildings being of appropriate dimensions for modern living conditions without major enlargement;
- satisfactory access and servicing arrangements;
- maintenance of the original proportions and character of the buildings;
- the character and setting of each such building being respected in proposals for the layout of its site, including treatment of boundaries and accesses and the design of any ancillary buildings, including garages; and
- compatibility with neighbouring uses, amenity and nature conservation and other heritage interests.

## Energy Efficiency

1.9 In the interests of energy conservation, the Council will encourage the use of energy efficient designs and materials in the construction of new houses. (See also para. 1.59).

## Improvements / Modernisation

1.10 The Council encourages the repair and upgrading of older housing stock, subject to good design including sympathetic choice of external finishes and careful treatment of windows and other openings. The impact of proposals on access, daylighting and privacy of adjoining householders will be material.

## Economy

### Agricultural Land

1.11 The Council will safeguard croft and agricultural land where it is important to the viability of a farm unit, croft or the local agricultural economy.

### Agricultural Diversification

1.12 The Council will encourage diversification, innovative land management and development schemes embracing specialised farming, small woodlands, tourist and recreational provision subject to compatibility with neighbouring uses, amenity and nature conservation and other heritage interests.

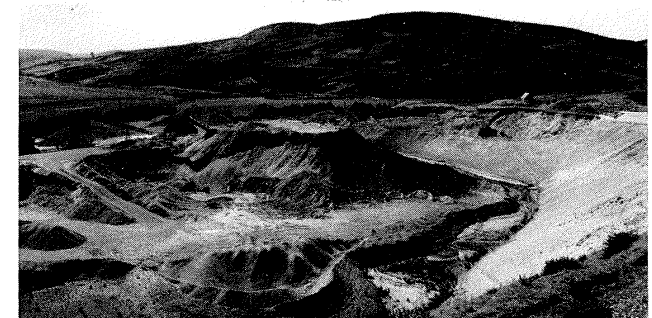
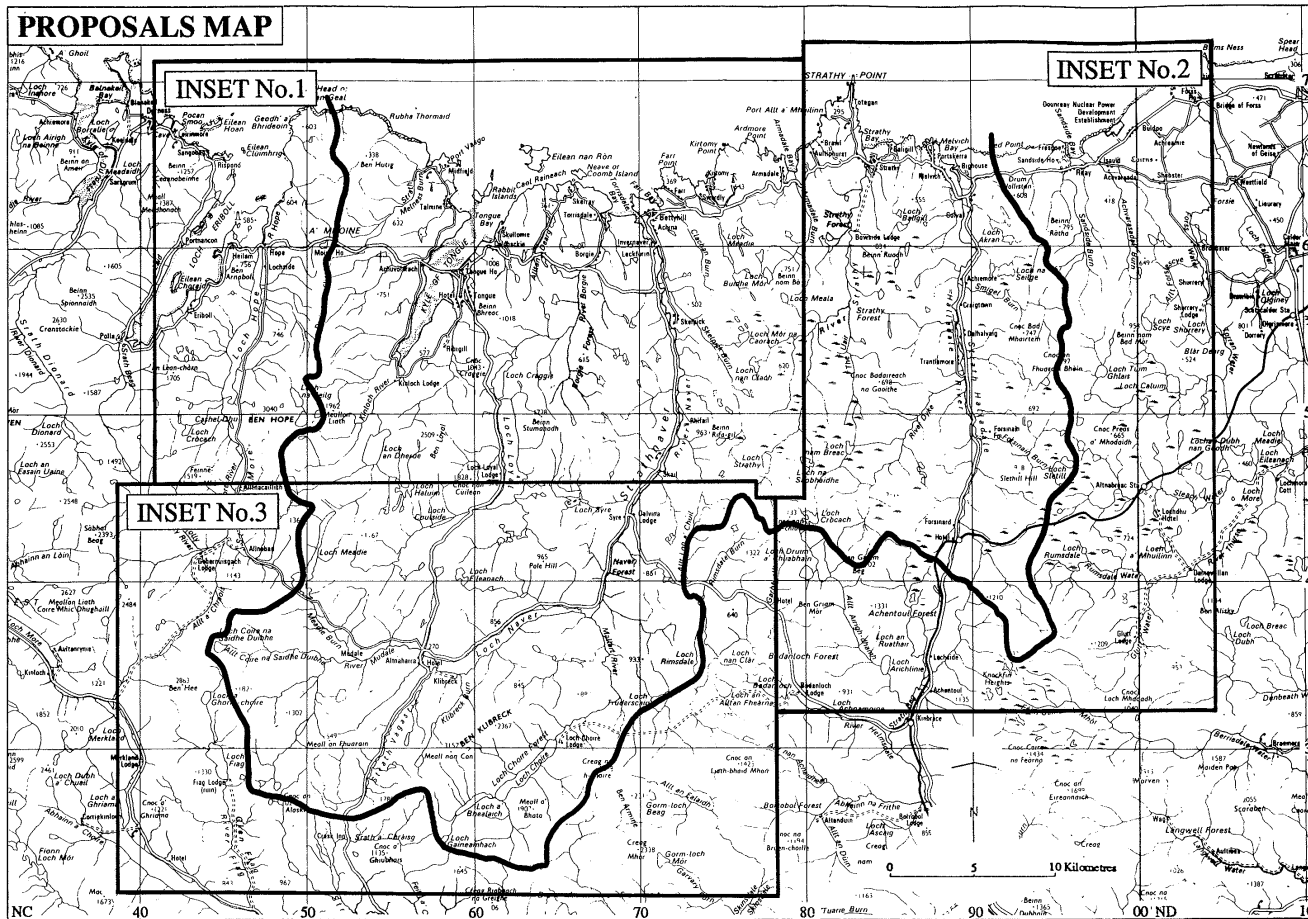
### Sporting Interests

1.13 The Council will encourage measures to develop sport and recreational activities, including



*Croft land at Midtown: agricultural diversification is encouraged*

# PROPOSALS MAP



**Sand and gravel: an important economic resource**

water users, recreation and nature conservation interests, design and amenity, site servicing and management, together with discharge standards, which applicants will require to satisfy. Farms will be restricted to one smolt unit per tributary river and the use of native stock. In considering proposals the Council will seek to ensure the use of native stock and substantial separation between farms in the interest of reducing disease, pollution and over-development. Acceptable distances will depend on local circumstances, species and management agreements. There will be a presumption against development of Loch Loyal and Loch Naver in the interests of

landscape conservation and proposals likely to affect established fishing interests.

### Fishing

**1.18** Small scale static gear fishing is undertaken from several harbours. The Council will encourage further expansion of the industry subject to the proper management of the resource.

### Dounreay Rundown

**1.19** The Council are initiating a wide range of measures aimed at reversing or reducing the effects of the decision to run-down the Dounreay Nuclear Establishment in

angling, game shooting, deer stalking climbing, walking and cycling, which do not adversely affect nature conservation interests or the appearance or other use of the countryside.

### Mineral Workings

**1.14** The Council will apply their Development Control Policy No.5 (Control of Mineral and Peat Extraction) throughout the Plan area. There will be a presumption against extraction

- from beaches;
- within SSSIs, the NSA, AGLVs and areas of archaeological importance
- where important angling interests will be adversely affected;
- where the local road network is not capable of accommodating substantial heavy vehicular traffic unless the necessary works are wholly funded by the developer; and

- within 400m of a habitable dwelling.

Elsewhere specific sites will be subject to assessment of environmental impact, servicing and safety aspects together with secured provision for rehabilitation. Opportunities may exist for recreational uses on completion of workings.

### Fish Farming

**1.15** Marine conditions on the north coast do not favour the establishment

of commercial sea water farms. However, the Council has adopted a General Policy for the Development and Control of Marine Fish Farming and this will be applied throughout the Plan area.

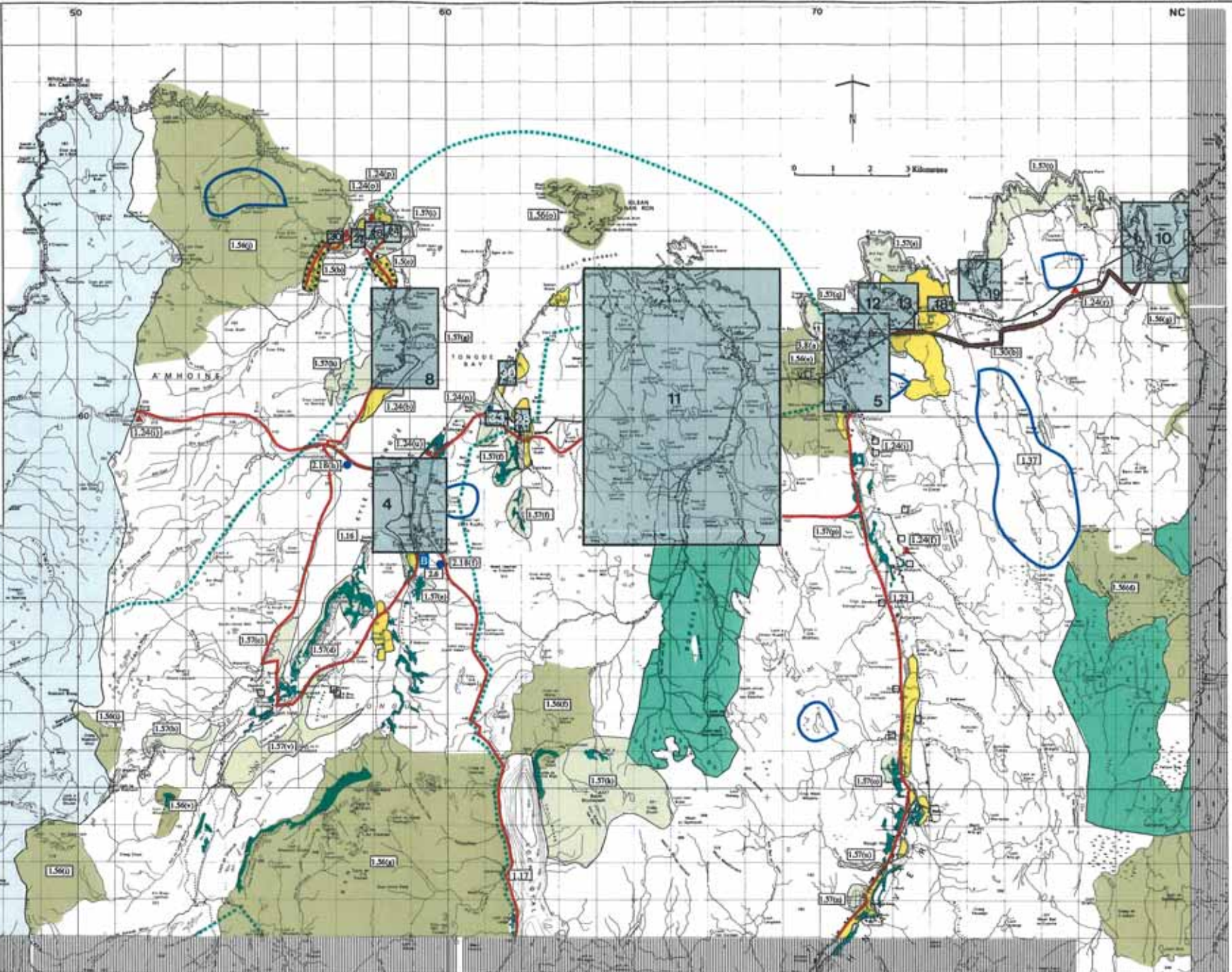
**1.16** There is scope for the development of oyster beds in the Kyle of Tongue, where a seabed lease has previously been granted.

### Fresh Water Fish Farms

**1.17** The Council has identified a range of criteria in the Structure Plan covering the protection of existing

# INSET No.1

- HOUSING**
- Fragile Countryside
  - Dispersed Communities
- ECONOMY**
- ▲ Tourist Facility
  - Business / Industry
- SERVICES**
- Water Supply Safeguarded
  - High Voltage O/H Electricity Line
  - Roads
  - Road Improvements
  - Bridge Improvements
- ENVIRONMENT**
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
  - Local Nature Conservation Area
  - National Scenic Area
  - Commercial Forestry Safeguard
  - Agricultural Restraint
  - Woodlands
  - Scheduled Ancient Monument
  - Environmental Improvements
  - Area of Great Landscape Value



Based on Ordnance Survey Maps with the Permission of the Controller HMSO.



**Mobile library: need to sustain community facilities**

an effort to enhance alternative job prospects.

**Tourism**

1.20 Tourism is a key sector in the economy with significant opportunities for growth. There is a need to promote expansion in the context of a framework to ensure that both public and private money is properly harnessed. The Council will pursue a strategy as follows:-

- support the development of tourist accommodation and facilities within or immediately adjoining Bettyhill, Tongue, Melvich, Portskerra, Talmine / Melness, Armadale and Strathy;
- elsewhere small scale accommodation, more appropriate to the landscape, will be particularly encouraged;
- promote low key facilities throughout the landward area, including viewpoints, small car parks, interpretation and B and B accommodation;
- encourage the expansion of specialist holidays, including walking, climbing, nature study, angling and sailing; and
- ensure that new development is properly located in harmony with the landscape and, where appro-

appropriate, with the scale and character of local buildings.

1.21 The Council will encourage efforts to promote and raise the profile of Gaelic through:-

- the provision of bi-lingual or Gaelic only signs, including place and street names;
- promotion of Gaelic tourism, for example: bi-lingual brochures and leaflets, establishment of Gaelic learning holidays, production of information and guides on the area's Gaelic heritage;
- encouraging links between the Gaelic heritage and the environment. This could take the form of local nature/heritage trails with features of interest identified in Gaelic.

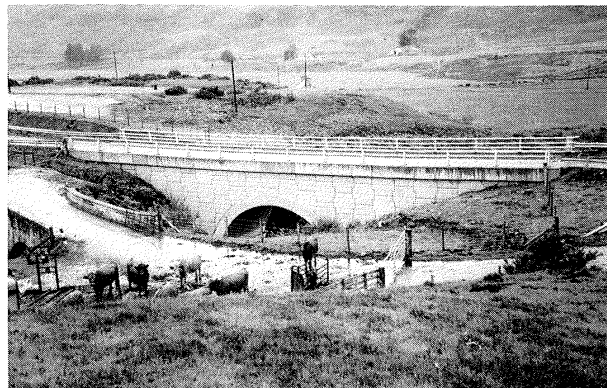
1.22 The Council will seek to work with Scottish Natural Heritage and other interested parties to examine the potential for providing and promoting walks and trails around the main communities.

1.23 The Council intend to provide a Strathnaver archaeological trail commencing in 1998/99 at a cost of £45,000.

**Interpretation**

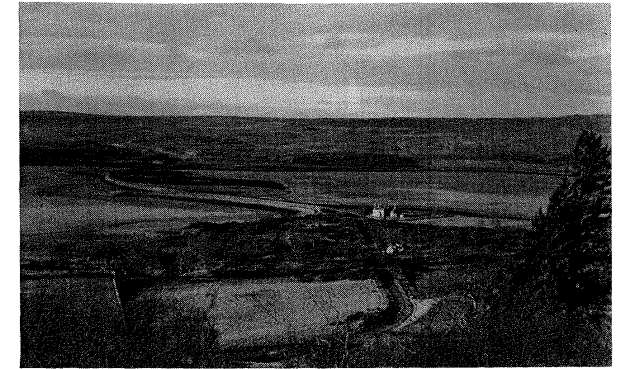
1.24 Opportunities also exist to promote other aspects of the cultural and natural heritage of the area, particularly: wildlife, crofting history, geology and nature conservation. Subject to proper safeguarding the archaeological sites, opportunities might include:-

(a) Rosal	Improved access, parking and interpretation, possibly including a new bridge across the Naver from the main road at the Gloomy Memories Cairn
(b) Tongue Bay	Heritage trail
(c) Strath Halladale	
(d) Gloomy memories Cairn	
(e) Syre Cairn	
(f) Skelpick Cairn	Improved access/interpretive facilities
(g) Langdale Broch	



Ongoing bridge improvements: new crossing at Smigel Burn

(h) Strathy Point	
(i) Achcoillena borgie	
(j) Smigel Mill and Bridge	
(k) Strathy	
(l) Mhoine House	Interpretive Centre
(m) Skerry	Croft restoration and demonstration
(n) Coldbackie Beach	AGLV
(o) Midfield	AGLV/improved parking facilities
(p) Achiniver	
(q) Melvich	
(r) Druimbashie	
(s) Bettyhill	Viewpoints
(t) Borgie	
(u) Tongue	



**Past road improvements: Tongue causeway**

1.25 The Council will seek to work with the appropriate agencies to identify suitable projects for interpretation.

**Signposting**

1.26 The Council will promote a co-ordinated advance signposting scheme for the Plan area to identify tourist attractions and avoid potential clutter of private signs. Gaelic names could also be included. (see para. 1.21). The Council will seek financial contributions from other public agencies.

**Small Business**

1.27 The Council will continue to foster small businesses. Applications for small businesses in residential areas or in single domestic properties will normally be acceptable where they are of compatible scale and access requirements, do not cause nuisance and can achieve suitable parking and storage arrangements within the curtilage.

**Community**

**Community Facilities**

1.28 The Council will seek to enhance the provision of community facilities where local need exists, through:-

- joint public/private ventures;
- funding initiatives;
- identification of sites; provision of advice.

1.29 In considering planning applications for buildings to which the public might normally require entry, the Planning Authority will draw the requirement to provide access for the disabled to the attention of developers.

**Services**

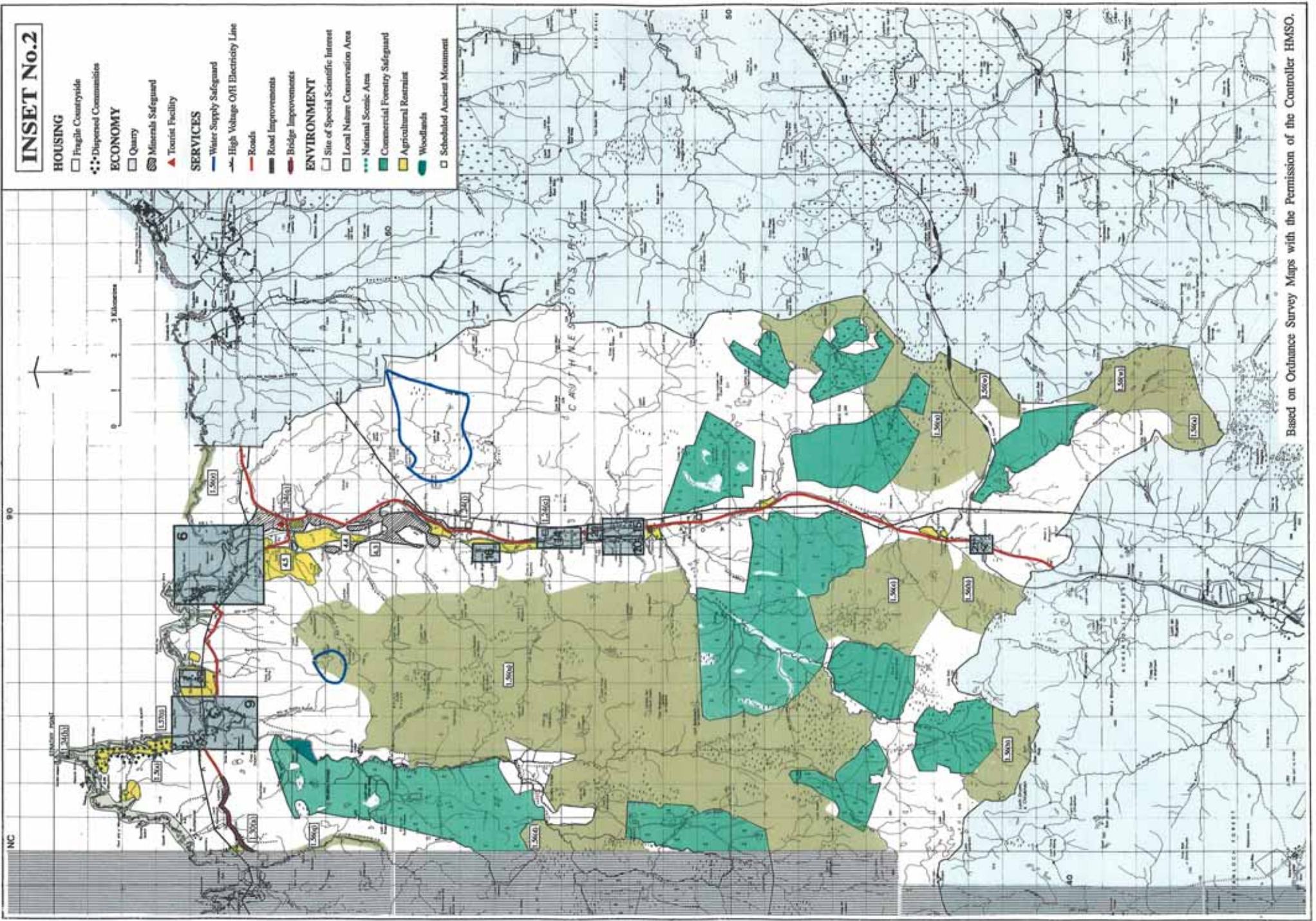
**Strategic Road Network**

1.30 The Council intend to improve the A836 as follows. Details of the alignments have still to be agreed.

Location	Year	Cost
(a) Lednagullin-Benannie	1996/98	£2m
(b) Farr-Kirtomy	1999/2000	£1.9m
(c) Kirtomy-Lednagullin	Later Years	£3m

1.31 The Council's longer term priority is to upgrade the A836 to twin track standard throughout its

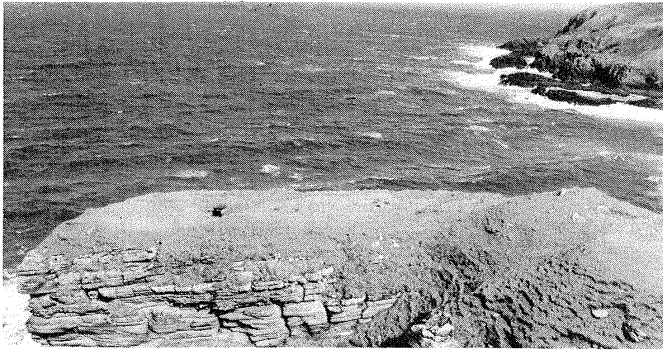




**INSET No.2**

- HOUSING**
- Fragile Countryside
- ⋄ Dispersed Communities
- ECONOMY**
- Quarry
- ⊞ Minerals Safeguard
- ▲ Tourist Facility
- SERVICES**
- Water Supply Safeguard
- High Voltage O/H Electricity Line
- Roads
- Road Improvements
- Bridge Improvements
- ENVIRONMENT**
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Conservation Area
- National Scenic Area
- Commercial Forestry Safeguard
- Agricultural Restraint
- Woodlands
- Scheduled Ancient Monument

Based on Ordnance Survey Maps with the Permission of the Controller HMSO.



Potential wave energy resource

length, subject to overall Regional priorities and resources.

#### Forest Access Roads

1.32 The Council in conjunction with Forest Enterprise has identified a programme of road improvements to meet the known timber extraction requirements of the Plan area.

Location	Year	Cost
(a) Lairg - Altnaharra	2000	£860,000
( b ) Altnaharra - Syre	Later Years	£1.55m
(c) Syre - Garbhalt	Later Years	£1.06m

#### Structural Renewals

1.33 The Council intend to carry out repair and maintenance work on the Vagastie bridge in 1988/89 at a cost of £45,000

#### Other Roads

1.34 The Council will continue to carry out minor improvements as funds permit by way of limited widening and double tracking, provision of longer passing places and construction of footpaths in villages.

#### Public Transport

1.35 The Council will endeavour to sustain public transport in the area at a level to meet the basic needs of the population.

#### Car Parking

1.36 Adequate provision must be made for car parking in all new developments in accordance with the Council's Guidelines.

#### Water Supplies

1.37 The Council propose to integrate the existing separate water supply systems into one centralised scheme for the North Coast based on Loch Meadie. The first phase will commence in 1997/98 with the construction of a new intake, reservoir and pumping station at a cost of £430,000. This will serve the area from Bettyhill to Armadale. Phase 2 will commence in 1998/99 at a total cost of £365,000 with the construction of a treatment works. The system will be extended to Tongue and Melvich in future years, but no money is programmed at present.

#### Drainage

1.38 The Council will require full details of soakaway test results in support of applications, together with precise plans of proposals and evidence that the necessary ground is within the control of applicants.

#### Treatment Works Safeguarding

1.39 A strong presumption will be maintained against permanent development within safeguarding areas around sewage treatment works. These normally extend to 90m but depend upon the size of the works. Public septic tanks require a smaller safeguard distance. There will be a presumption against development within 25m of the public septic tank at Coldbackie.

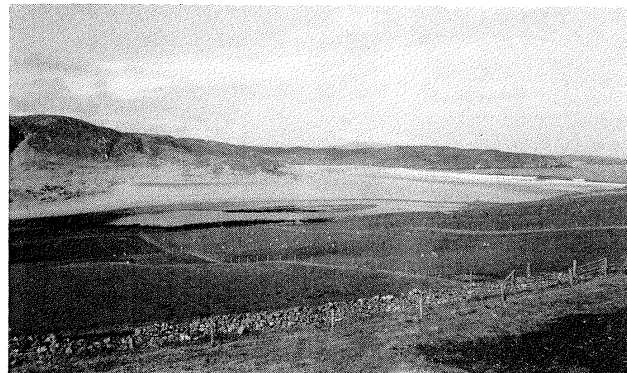
#### Water Catchment Areas

1.40 The Council will safeguard water catchment areas as shown on the Proposals Map from development likely to prejudice existing or future supplies.

#### Electricity

1.41 The Council will encourage development of alternative energy schemes where these provide economic benefits and are environmentally acceptable. 1.42 Wind power is likely to have most potential. However the need to safeguard the landscape constrains development opportunities. Proposals for wind farms should:-

- be located outwith the National Scenic Area, the coastal fringe, AGLV's, areas of nature conservation value, historic and archaeological importance;



Need to safeguard SSSIs: Invernaver

- ensure substantial separation distances from dwellings ( not less than 400m.)
- ensure substantial distance from a road and footpath (not less than 100m.)

All proposals will require submission of a formal Environmental Assessment.

1.43 The coastline of the Plan area has a significant wave energy resource, which may have potential in the longer term. Proposals for harnessing this resource must be compatible with local interests, including visual amenity, fishing, nature conservation and other heritage interests, and recreation and should preferably be located outwith the NSA. Proposals will require submission of a formal Environmental Assessment. 1.44 A presumption will be maintained against building development within 6.5m of the outermost conductors of high voltage electricity transmission lines. 1.45 Proposals to reinforce or route supplies through the Plan area will be subject to detailed assessment of their landscape impact, including undergrounding of lines in sensitive locations and impact on nature conservation interests.



Heritage resource: Strathnaver museum

#### Telecommunications

1.46 The Council will consider favourably proposals for the erection of radio masts and other telecommunications structures provided:-

- existing masts cannot be shared;
- existing services are not interfered with;
- the operator is licensed (except in domestic circumstances);
- visual amenity and nature conservation interests are not significantly affected;
- the proposal forms part of a network (except in domestic circumstances);
- redundant masts and equipment are removed.

#### Waste Disposal

1.47 In accordance with Development Control Policy No. 6, the Council, in determining waste disposal proposals will consider the effects on amenity, wildlife, access, nuisance, safeguarding of existing interests and pollution.

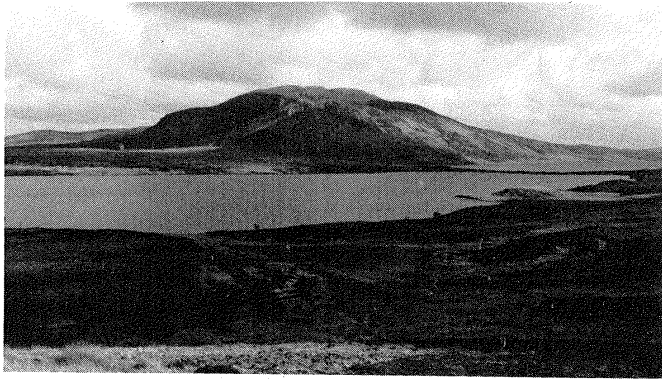
#### Environment

#### Forestry

1.48 The Council will encourage the development of forestry in accordance with the Indicative

Forestry Strategy. There is substantial scope for new planting and regeneration of native woodlands in the Plan area. However the traditional open character of the landscape and the substantial wildlife interest requires a sensitive approach. In particular:-

- Crofter forestry offers a means of economic diversification, provides shelter and can enhance the setting of communities. It will be encouraged in appropriate locations with suitable species within and around crofting townships.
- The Council will encourage the management and extension of birch and other woodlands for their landscape and nature conservation value, particularly within the major straths.
- Planting in the vicinity of Ben Loyal and Loch Loyal and to the south and west of the Kyle of Tongue should be primarily for nature conservation and landscape enhancement purposes.
- Commercial afforestation schemes which involve land identified on the Proposals Map for nature conservation, amenity woodland, archaeology or water catchment areas are unlikely to be acceptable.
- Proposals should avoid blocking important views, particularly from the roadside, across open water and along the coastline, in areas of predominantly open



*Loch Loyal, protection of important views is a priority*

landscape character and also avoid breaking prominent sky-lines.

- Proposals should safeguard the important local angling interests.

**1.49** The Council will support forestry proposals which meet Woodland Grant Scheme standards laid down by the Forest Authority and which provide recreational and public access opportunities and overall landscape enhancement.

**1.50** The Council will maintain a presumption against development within commercial woodlands or within 20m of their margins, in the interests of safety and amenity.

#### **Woodlands**

**1.51** The Council will safeguard existing groups of trees and established woodland areas which are important landscape, wildlife and recreational features. These include specimen exotic trees, together with significant areas of ancient and semi natural woodland. Management Agreements and other measures which ensure continuity and regeneration will be encouraged.

**1.52** The Council will have regard to Scottish Natural Heritage's Inventory of Long Established and Semi-Natural woodland sites when considering proposals for development and land use change.

**1.53** In appropriate circumstances, Tree Preservation Orders will be made over trees threatened by development or other pressures.

**1.54** New development should not be sited within 20 metres of the trunks of trees or within 10 metres of their canopy, whichever is the greater.

**1.55** The Council will require additional tree planting, preferably using indigenous species, within and around areas of new development where appropriate.

#### **Nature Conservation**

**1.56** There will be a presumption against development which would have a significant detrimental affect on any of the following designated conservation sites:-

- (a) Knockfin Heights \*
- (b) Ben Griams \*
- (c) Forsinard Bogs \*
- (d) Strathy Bogs \*
- (e) Invernaver
- (f) Cnoc na Moine \*
- (g) Ben Loyal \*
- (h) Ben Klibreck
- (i) Ben Hope
- (j) Ben Hutig
- (k) Druim nam Bad \*

- (l) Bad na Gallaig \*
- (m) Cnoc an Alaskie \*
- (n) West Halladale \*
- (o) Eilean nan Ron
- (p) Aird Torrisdale
- (q) Armadale Gorge
- (r) Red Point Coast
- (s) Altnaharra
- (t) Loch Meadie Peatlands \*
- (u) Sletill Peatlands \*
- (v) Carn a'Mhadaidh
- (w) Rumsdale Peatlands \*

\* Denotes candidate Special Protection Areas/Ramsar Sites which relate to birds and their habitats.

**1.57** The Council will have regard to the local nature conservation value of the following areas when considering proposals for development:-

- (a) Allt a'Ghlas-Locha
- (b) Meallan Liath
- (c) Kinloch Saltmarsh
- (d) Garb Cnoc wood
- (e) Rhian Bridge
- (f) Coldbackie-Blandy-Alltan na Creige
- (g) Ard Skinid
- (h) Melness
- (i) Port Vasgo-Strathan
- (j) Strathan Skerray
- (k) Beinn Stumanadh
- (l) Loch Syre Islands
- (m) Coill Ach a'chuil
- (n) Skaill Wood and Burn
- (o) Chealamy Crag and Loch
- (p) Apigill
- (q) Ard Mor, Bettyhill
- (r) Farr

- (s) Ard Farr
- (t) Strathy Coast
- (u) Skaill Burn
- (v) Fair na h'Iolaire
- (w) Melvich Bay

#### **Open Water**

**1.58** There will be a presumption against development on the seaward and lochside flanks of public roads where there is an outlook across open water, except where it is essential for the working of the land concerned.

#### **Open Land**

**1.59** Open landscapes with north facing aspect above 125 metres altitude are visually and climatically exposed and the Council will normally presume against residential development which is not essential for occupational reasons.

#### **Historic Buildings**

**1.60** The Council will presume against development which would adversely affect the character and setting of all listed buildings.

#### **Archaeological Sites**

**1.61** Scheduled Ancient Monuments, together with other recorded sites and areas of archaeological significance and their setting in the landscape, will be protected from development. Where appropriate, resources should be found to enable recording and preservation. The Council will also encourage public access and interpretation in suitable cases.

**1.62** The Council will ensure that where preservation of archaeological sites is not feasible, provision is made for excavation recording prior to development commencing through planning conditions or Agreements as appropriate.

#### **Recreational Areas**

**1.63** The Council will protect important recreational areas from encroachment or loss by development.

#### **Rights of Way**

**1.64** The Council will safeguard claimed rights of way from development and obstruction.

#### **Landscape Conservation**

**1.65** There will be a presumption against proposals for development or land use change which would have a significant detrimental effect upon the Kyle of Tongue NSA.

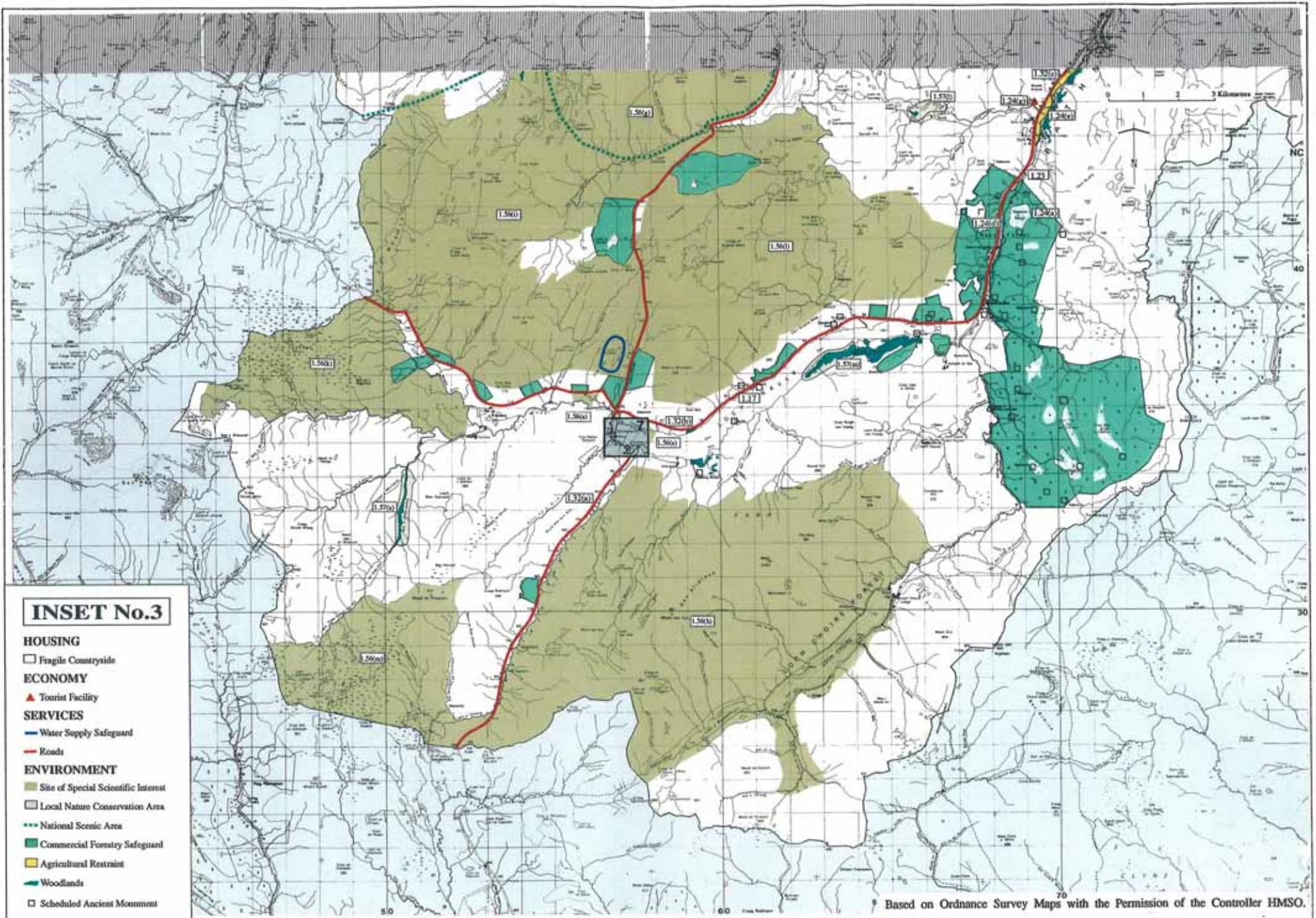
**1.66** The Council will seek to conserve other areas of landscape importance characteristic of the Highland landscape including waterside land, and fresh water systems, open areas above the tree planting limits, the coastal zone, major straths and scenic views particularly from the main tourist routes. Development proposals will be considered carefully in respect of their impacts on conservation and the environment. Where this is likely to be significant an environmental assessment will be required.

#### **Existing Uses**

**1.67** Applications for development in areas not covered by policies or proposals will be considered on their merits. In such cases the Council will normally seek to ensure consistency with the pattern of existing uses in the area concerned.



*Built Heritage (Former Tongue Manse)*

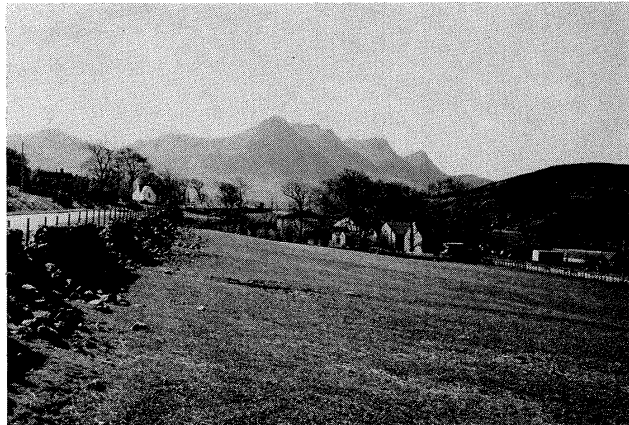


# 2 Tongue

Tongue is located on the eastern shores of the famous Kyle of Tongue. The village enjoys a beautiful setting with the extensive policy woodlands and agricultural land creating a parkland appearance. This contrasts sharply with the surrounding moorland. Braetongue retains the older crofting pattern and has an attractive outlook across the Kyle. The village is the local centre for the surrounding crofting hinterland based primarily on the local store, a key business for the whole community, which has potential for further expansion. Outwith crofting and agriculture, jobs are mainly in the services, together with small scale contracting, forestry and estate work. Prospects for the future lie mainly in supporting and consolidating these jobs. The outstanding environment and the basic service infrastructure, suggest that scope exists to expand the tourist sector.

## Development Factors

Expansion of the village is constrained by the surrounding agricultural land, the outstanding policies of Tongue House and the need to protect the extensive views across the Kyle of Tongue. Together with the steeper ground to the east, these factors restrict development opportunities to the south of the village.



*Vital local resources: village store, agricultural land and outstanding landscape*

## Principles

The main planning considerations in Tongue are:-

- safeguarding agricultural and croft land;
- protecting the unique setting of the village and the Kyle of Tongue National Scenic Area;
- restricting development between the A836 and the Kyle of Tongue;
- identify opportunities for further tourist development;
- maintaining the traditional settlement pattern at Braetongue; and
- ensuring that future development is well related to existing houses and services.

## Policies And Proposals

### HOUSING

**2.1** The District Council propose to construct 5 houses in Tongue post 1996. Land off Varrich Place would be suitable subject to an appropriate landscaping / tree planting scheme which should be implemented as soon as possible.

**2.2** Housing Policy RS4 will apply to 0.1ha. adjacent to the Doctors Surgery.

**2.3** 1.5ha. of land to the south of the village is identified for further housing subject to:-

- Single access from the village road. A maximum of four houses will be allowed taking access from Loyal Terrace.

- Layout taking maximum advantage of the rising ground and views to the west.
- Houses being generally oriented north-south.
- Appropriate landscaping, including planting on the eastern and southern boundaries.
- Set back from the public road.
- Improvements to the water supply

**2.4** Housing Policy RS2 will apply to infill sites at both Tongue and Braetongue.

## ECONOMY

### Business Industry

**2.5** The Council has recently completed small craft workshops on the glebelands to the north of the Tongue Hotel.

**2.6** In the longer term the Council is considering relocating the roads depot at the Inchverry Burn. The site has potential for a small light industrial development, subject to compatibility with adjacent residential amenity.

**2.7** Scope exists for the conversion of existing buildings to craft workshops. Opportunities include:-

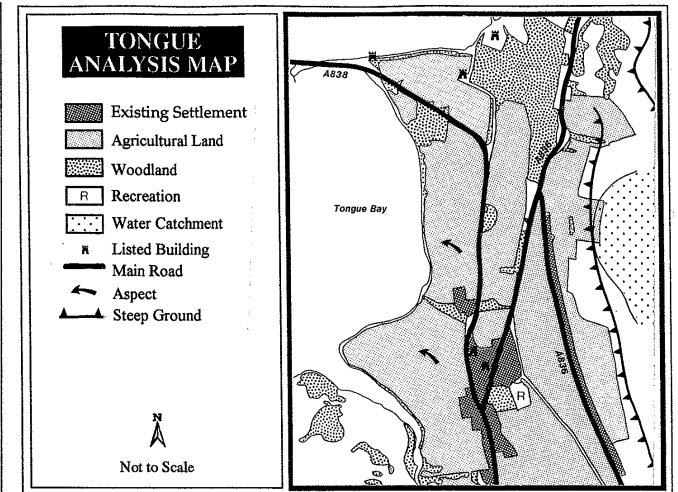
- (a) outbuildings at the former manse;
- (b) outbuildings adjoining the Tongue Hotel.

These premises are also suitable for conversion to holiday accommodation or other tourist facility. The manse outbuildings have planning permission for conversion to a restaurant.

### Commerce

**2.8** The outbuildings at Burr's Stores have potential for several commercial uses including:-

- small tearoom/restaurant for which planning permission has been granted;



- bakery;
- shop extension; and
- tourist accommodation.

The existing access should be used.

### Tourist Accommodation

**2.9** 0.25 ha. adjacent to the former manse would be suitable for a small chalet development, compatible in design with the existing listed buildings.

## COMMUNITY

### Recreational Facilities

**2.10** The Council will safeguard both the playing field at the school and the play area adjoining Varrich Place.

### Golf Course

**2.11** Land between the A836 and the Kyle of Tongue has potential for the development of a 9-hole golf course. Community interests in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Agency should prepare a feasibility study into the concept. Proposals should give consideration to ensuring compatible agricultural use where possible.

## SERVICES

### Drainage

**2.12** The Council intends to provide a public drainage scheme for Braetongue commencing in 1995/96 at a cost of £205,000. This will include the construction of a new sewage treatment works at Tongue to cater for the whole village.

### Treatment Works Safeguarding

**2.13** There will be a presumption against development within 25m of the existing public septic tank. This will increase to 90m on completion of the new works.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Conservation

**2.14** The Council will safeguard the fine amenity woodlands, open agricultural land and attractive open approaches which contribute to the overall character of Tongue. In particular a presumption will be maintained against development which has an adverse effect upon or is unsympathetic to the following except where there is an essential agricultural requirement:-



*Footpath to Castle Varrach*

- (a) The fabric and setting of Tongue House, St. Andrews Church and former manse, (Listed Buildings).
- (b) The better farmland and croftland at Tongue Mains and Braetongue, important to the village setting, farm viability and the local economy.
- (c) Amenity woodlands, particularly around Tongue House.
- (d) The open space to the south of the church except for appropriate recreational uses and enhancement of amenity, to safeguard the setting of the Listed Buildings.
- (e) Open ground on the approaches to the village.
- (f) The outstanding views across the Kyle of Tongue from the A836.
- (g) Tongue House Gardens (include in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland).

**Agricultural Land**

2.15 Prior approval will be required for the erection or significant extension of agricultural buildings

within the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 on the areas shown on the Proposals Map.

**Public Park**

2.16 Further to the above potential exists to create a small public park incorporating tree planting, landscaping, seating, footpaths and open leisure facilities such as a tennis court or bowling green although the slope may restrict some uses. The Council will ensure that such development does not affect the setting of the Listed Buildings. In particular, there will be a presumption against development within 25m of the church.

**Footpaths**

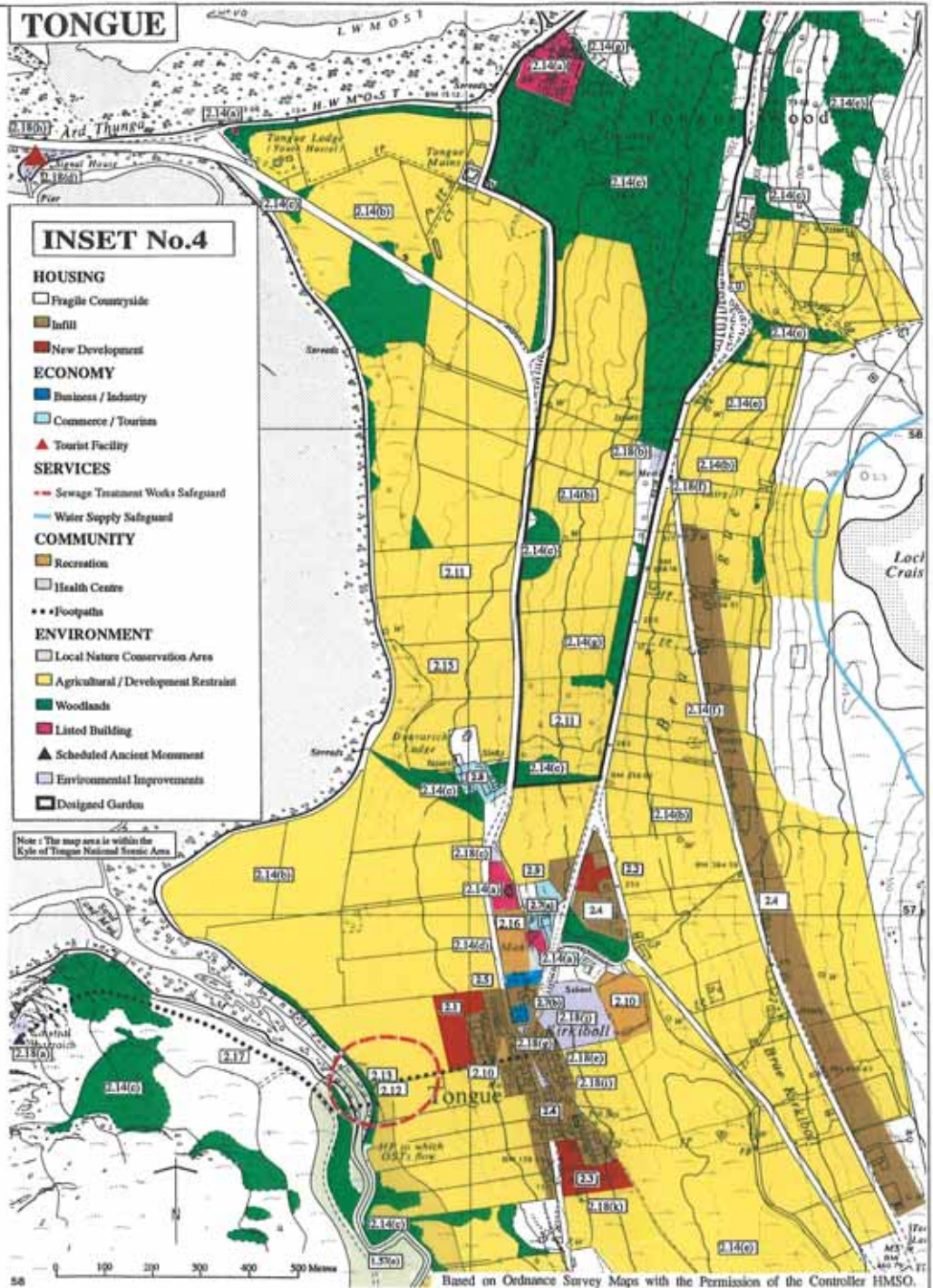
2.17 Maintenance work has recently been completed on the Castle Varrich footpath. Scope exists to create a wider footpath network around the village, possibly including interpretation of wildlife scenery and history.

**Environmental Improvements**

2.18 The environmental improvements listed below will be encouraged:-

- (a) improved signposting, path improvements and interpretation at Castle Varrich;
- (b) upgrading of the picnic site adjoining the war memorial, including undergrounding of overhead lines;
- (c) surfacing of the Church car park;
- (d) upgrading of the eastern car park and interpretation of views/landscape on the causeway;
- (e) landscaping of ground around the new public toilets;
- (f) formalising the car park/viewpoint at Braetongue;

- (g) repair and maintenance of stone dykes and hedges which are a feature of the village;
- (h) creation of a small walkway together with a picnic site at the western car park on the causeway;
- (i) improved planting and signposting at the existing public car park opposite the Ben Loyal hotel;
- (j) replanting of the coniferous block adjacent to the school with broadleaved species when felling is proposed; and
- (k) new planting with appropriate species at suitable locations in and on the margins of the village. Grant aid may be available from the Forest Authority.



Located on a rocky headland overlooking the mouth of the River Naver, Bettyhill is the main service centre for a number of crofting communities perched along the coast. Exposed to the winds from the Pentland Firth, the village nevertheless enjoys a beautiful setting adjoining the superb beaches of Farr and Torrisdale. The village developed in the more sheltered areas below Ard Beag, and has since spread out from this original nucleus. Growth has been very modest over the years and future demand is unlikely to exceed more than one or two houses each year.

Dounreay is the most important full time employer and future economic prospects depend very much on how well the both the public and private sectors cope with the run down. Other jobs are generally in the primary or service sectors and tend to be seasonal or part-time. The safeguarding and consolidation of these jobs is vital, to help secure local services and facilities.

Opportunities for expansion are limited but the location, outstanding environment and present facilities suggest that the village's role as a tourist centre can be continued and expanded.

### Development Factors

The old cliff line to the south of the A836, the better croftland at Newlands and alongside the Naver, the higher ground to the north and the difficult ground conditions are the major constraints. Development

# 3 Bettyhill



*Bettyhill: a major local service centre*

opportunities comprise mainly infill therefore, allowing for the consolidation of the present scattered village form. Care in the selection of sites, together with a village planting scheme, could provide mutually beneficial shelter and enhance amenity.

### Principles

The main planning objectives for Bettyhill are:-

- safeguarding the better agricultural and croft land;
- protect the outstanding beaches;
- safeguard the special landscape character of the National Scenic Area;
- safeguard the important nature conservation sites;
- improve opportunities for tourist development;
- identify potential interpretation opportunities; and
- identify further housing land.

### Policies And Proposals

#### HOUSING

3.1 The following sites are allocated for housing where Policy RS4 applies:-

- (a) 0.75ha. to the north west of Gordon Terrace.
- (b) 0.3ha at Munro Place in the ownership of the District Council.

#### Infill

3.2 Housing Policy RS2 will apply to infill sites at Dalcharn and Invermaver.

3.3 Housing Policy RS2 will apply to infill development taking access from the Farr Bay Road or the U178.

3.4 Development elsewhere in the village is restricted by the poor road network. There will therefore be a presumption against further housing

development until such times as improvements are carried out.

3.5 There will be presumption against housing development at Newlands in the interests of road safety, except where there is a proven agricultural requirement.

### ECONOMY

#### Tourism/Commerce

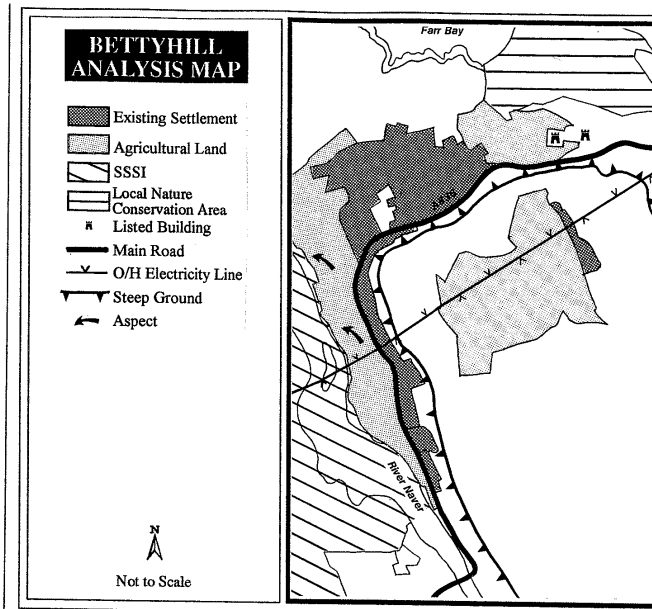
3.6 The Council will encourage commercial or tourist related businesses on the following sites:-

- (a) The existing caravan site where the erection of chalets would be suitable.
- (b) Expansion of existing facilities at the Farr Bay Inn.

#### Tourist Facilities

3.7 An interpretation centre covering the natural and cultural history of the area would be of benefit to the local economy. In conjunction with a ranger service, such a centre would be a major attraction. The Council will encourage the appropriate public agencies to investigate the potential for such a scheme. Possible sites include:-

- (a) the croft house below Dalcharn; and
  - (b) adjacent to the existing Tourist Information Centre.
- 3.8 Other opportunities for interpretation include:-
- (a) the ice house at the pier;
  - (b) Farr beach, especially the dune ecosystem; and
  - (c) the cultural and natural heritage.



### Telecottage

3.9 The Council, in conjunction with Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise, is funding a telecottage adjacent the village hall. This provides an opportunity for local people to gain access to computers, fax machines and other electronic media.

### COMMUNITY

#### Recreation

3.10 The Council will safeguard the playing fields and play areas adjacent to the school.

3.11 The local community, through the Tongue and Farr Sports Association, have constructed a new swimming pool in the grounds of the Secondary School. The Regional Council has contribute £175,000 towards the project.

#### Doctor's Surgery

3.12 The local GP intends to provide a new surgery in Bettyhill. Sites are under consideration at present.

### Local Walks

3.13 Potential exists to improve local walks and create others. Possibilities include:-

- (a) access to Invernaver, which the Council will examine in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage.
- (b) circular walk from Farr Bay around the coast to the pier and icehouse; and
- (c) the footpath from Farr beach to Farr and Ard Beag.

### SERVICES

#### Drainage

3.14 The Council has recently upgraded the public drainage system with a new septic tank at Cattlefield. In order to safeguard amenity, there will be a presumption against development within 25m of the tank.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Conservation

3.15 A number of features contribute to the fine setting of Bettyhill, particularly the fine beaches and open croftland. There will be a presumption against development which has an adverse effect upon or is unsympathetic to the following except where there is an essential agricultural requirement:-

- (a) The extensive croftland at Dalcharn, Newlands and Clachan.
- (b) The setting and fabric of Strathnaver Museum and the Farr Bay Inn (Listed Buildings). Extension of the former will be resisted, although there may be potential for further development at the Inn subject to the proposals respecting the integrity and setting of the property.
- (c) Views of Invernaver from the A836.
- (d) The setting and approaches to the village.
- (e) Farr beach and dune system which the Council designates as an Area of Great Landscape Value.

### Agricultural land

3.16 Prior approval will be required for the erection or significant extension of agricultural buildings within the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 on the areas shown on the Proposals Map.

### Environmental Improvements

3.17 The Council will encourage the following environmental improvements:-

- (a) improved footpath access to the beaches;

- (b) new signposting at the entrances to the village;
- (c) planting at the caravan site;
- (d) improvements to the car park at the tourist information centre/restaurant/craft shop;
- (e) boardwalk access to Farr beach from the cemetery carpark;
- (f) planting of land to the rear of the toilets in association with the adjoining District Council housing;
- (g) planting/landscaping of land at Gordon Terrace;
- (h) formalise the car park opposite the Post Office together with the erection of a close boarded fence to screen the adjacent yard; and
- (i) creation of a car park, picnic site and viewpoint at Dalcharn to the west of the A836.

Grant aid and advice may be available from the Forest Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage for planting schemes.



## INSET No.5

### HOUSING

- Fragile Countryside
- Infill
- New Development

### ECONOMY

- Commerce / Tourism
- ▲ Tourist Facility

### SERVICES

- Sewage Treatment Works Safeguard
- Water Supply Safeguard
- High Voltage O/H Electricity Line

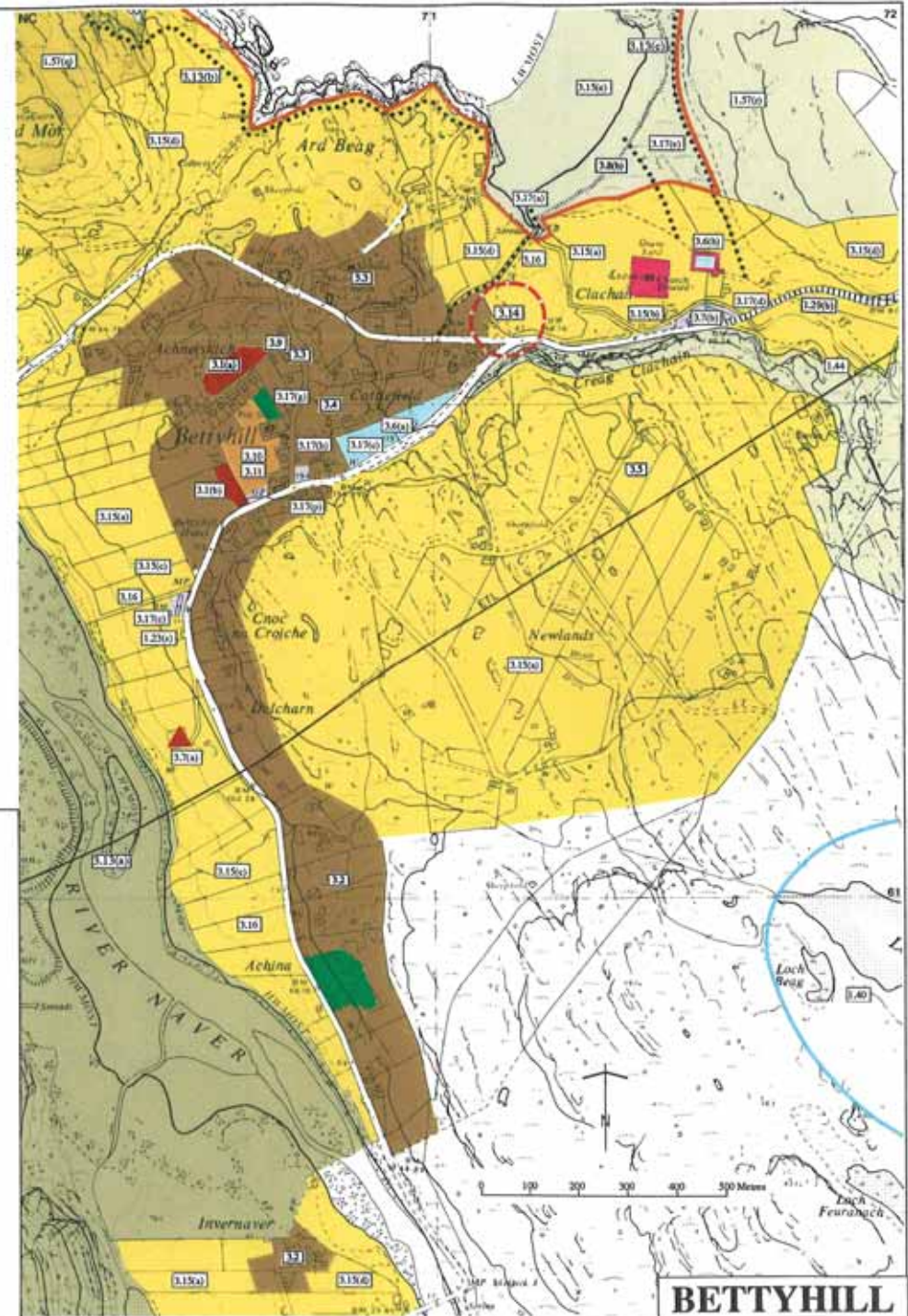
### ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

### COMMUNITY

- Recreation
- Footpaths

### ENVIRONMENT

- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Conservation Area
- Agricultural / Development Restraint
- Woodlands
- Listed Building
- Area of Great Landscape Value
- Environmental Improvements





# 4 Melvich & Portskerra

Situated on the western shore of Melvich Bay, the townships of Portskerra and Melvich (population 500) enjoy fine easterly views towards the sea cliffs and beach. Both occupy higher ground between the moorland and better agricultural land. This has created an elongated settlement form stretching for over 2km. Housing pressures have been limited. Only one or two houses are built each year. Scope exists for further development within this traditional linear settlement pattern. Although basically crofting settlements, many people work outwith the area at Dounreay. The rundown will have a significant impact and new jobs are vital therefore to sustain population and services. Opportunities exist to improve the prospects for tourism, but significant numbers of new jobs are unlikely to arise.

## Development Factors

The better croftland to the east of the townships is the main constraint on development together with the need to restrict further elongation of the village away from the main community facilities.

## Principles

- The main objectives are to:-
- safeguard crofting and agricultural land;
  - allow for new development within the existing settlement pattern;



*Melvich: Outstanding visual and heritage resource*

- promote business opportunities;
- ensure the proper development of sand and gravel resources;
- promote a scheme of environmental improvements; and
- maximise benefits from tourism.

## Policies And Proposals

### HOUSING

#### Townships

4.1 Housing policy RS4 will apply to 1ha. of land adjoining the police station subject to:-

- a single access from the A836;
- submission of an overall layout plan; and
- an appropriate planting scheme.

4.2 Elsewhere Housing Policy RS2 will apply to infill development. There will be a presumption against development outwith the established settlement pattern in order to

safeguard croft land and sea views, except where there are essential operational requirements.

### ECONOMY

#### Minerals

4.3 The Council will safeguard the strategic sand and gravel deposits in Strath Halladale from sterilisation by inappropriate development.

4.4 There will be a presumption in favour of sand and gravel extraction from Strath Halladale subject to:-

- general policy 1.13
- no significant adverse effect on residential property, tourism, leisure, recreation, wildlife, natural heritage or the environment;
- the existing available reserves and the need to maintain a ten year supply;
- no significant adverse effect on the River Halladale;

- reinstatement to beneficial agricultural use or amenity tree planting; and provision of a financial bond to secure reinstatement.

4.5 The Council will resist further expansion of Kirkton quarry and will seek full reinstatement in accordance with the conditions of the planning permission.

### Tourism - Accommodation

4.6 The Council will encourage the provision of small scale chalet schemes within the townships. Potential sites include:-

- (a) the expansion of the existing facilities at Melvich; and
- (b) adjoining Melvich Hotel;

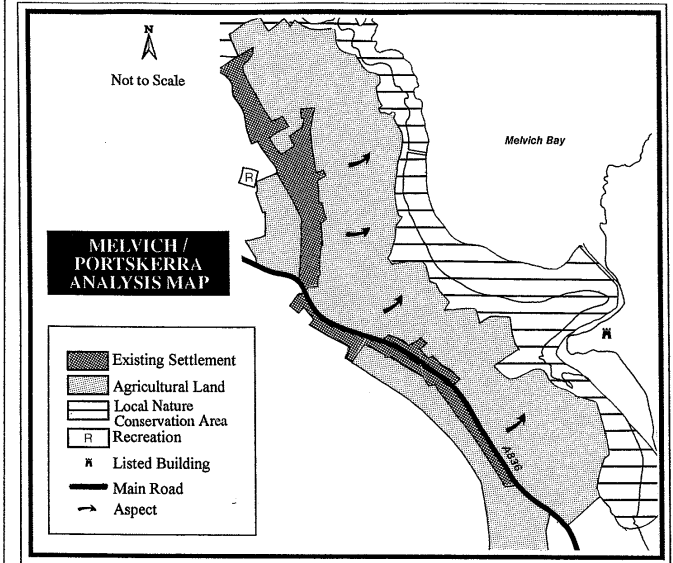
4.7 The Council will encourage the conversion of the old disused cottages to the west of the A836 for tourist accommodation subject to access and servicing considerations.

### Tourism - Visitor Facilities

4.8 Melvich possesses a very fine beach with impressive dune features and sea views. The beach is reached by a rough track from the A836. The Council has recently constructed a car park to improve access to the beach.

4.9 Other opportunities exist to improve the tourist infrastructure including:-

- (a) footpath improvements;
- (b) composite advance signs;
- (c) erection of a tourist information sign at the car park adjoining the public toilets; and
- (d) interpretation of landscape/crofting.



### Business Industry

4.10 Land is required for small scale light industrial uses. Development will be restricted to Class 4 of the Use Classes (Scotland) Order 1989. Land adjoining the police station or along the Portskerra Road would be suitable.

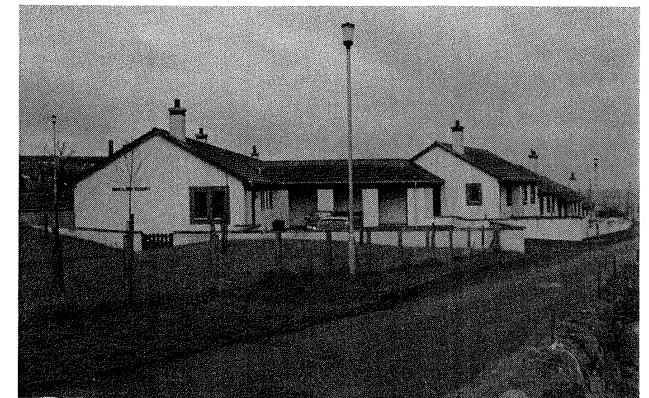
### COMMUNITY

#### Recreation

4.11 The football field and play area at Bayview Avenue are safeguarded for open space and community use.

#### Portskerra Harbour

4.12 The Council will upgrade Portskerra Pier, including the



*Infill housing at Portskerra*

construction of a cranked end, as resources permit.

### Doctor's Surgery

4.13 The local GP intends to provide a new surgery at Melvich. Sites are under consideration at present.

### SERVICES

#### Treatment Works Safeguarding

4.14 There will be a presumption against development within 25m of the public septic tank at Portskerra.



The superb beach at Melvich

### ENVIRONMENT

#### Conservation

4.15 There will be a presumption against development which adversely effects or is unsympathetic to the following except where there is a proven agricultural requirement:-

- (a) The extensive croftland, especially to the east of the townships.
- (b) The small conifer plantation adjoining the Melvich Hotel.
- (c) The fabric and setting of Big-house (Listed Building).
- (d) Melvich Beach and dune system which the Council designates as an Area of Great Landscape Value.

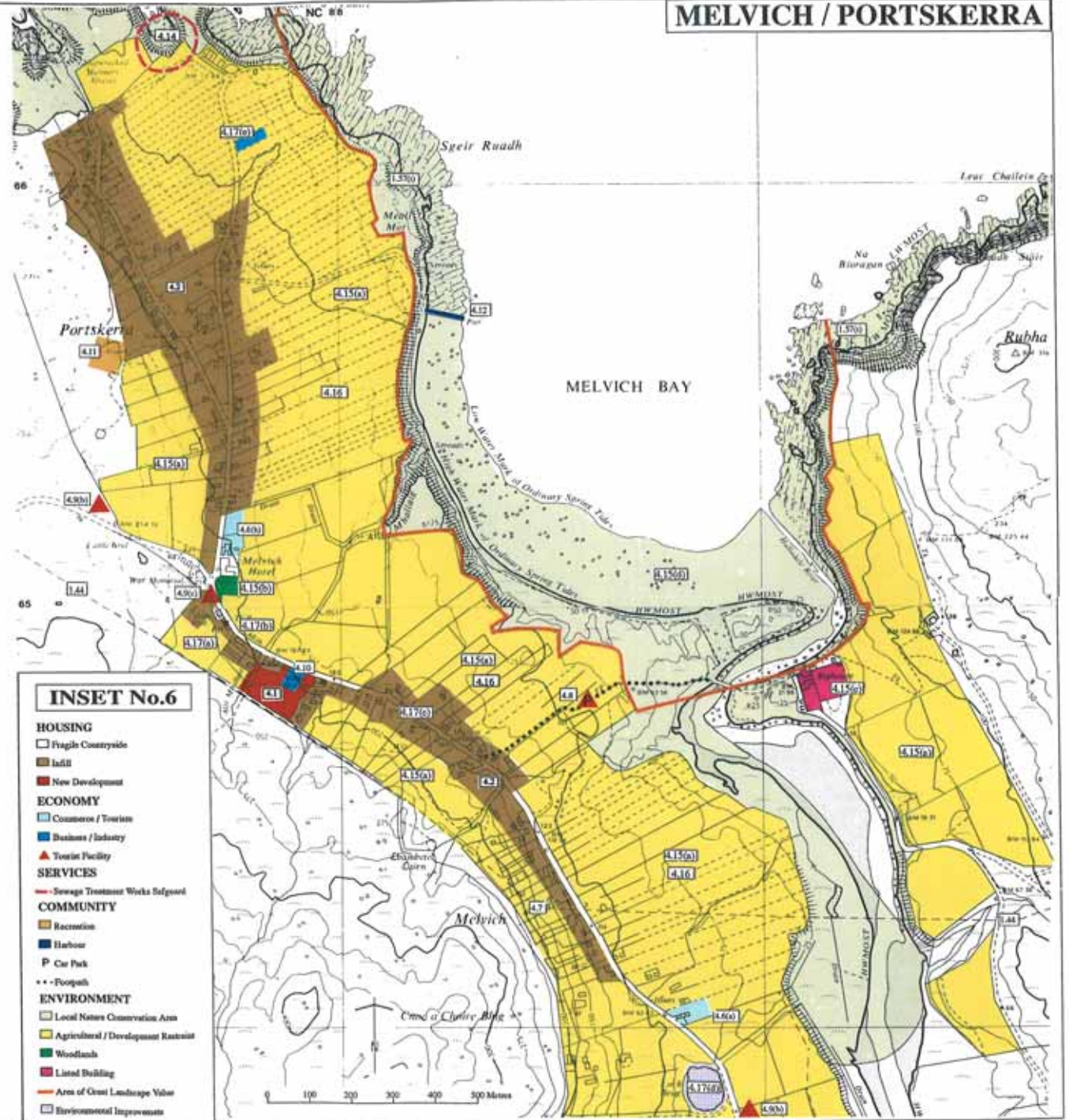
#### Croft Land

4.16 Prior approval will be required for the erection or significant extension of agricultural buildings within the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 on the areas shown on the Proposals Map.

#### Environmental Improvements

4.17 Melvich and Portskerra are the first stop for many tourists coming from Caithness or through Strath Halladale. It is important therefore that a good first impression is created. A scheme of improvements for both townships should be considered by community interests and appropriate statutory bodies including:-

- (a) a face-lift for the public hall;
- (b) provision of a new bus shelter;
- (c) repair and maintenance of stone walls;
- (d) enhancement of Loch Beag as a village feature including small car park, picnic tables and feature planting; and
- (e) screening of the contractors yard with close boarded fencing and/or planting.



# 5 Melness

The various townships located on the western margins of the Kyle of Tongue form the characteristic street pattern of many crofting communities. The population enjoy fine views across Talmine Bay and the Kyle of Tongue. The townships are tightly constrained between the coast, the better agricultural land and the poorer, steeper ground to the west.

The economy is strongly based on crofting, although the area also attracts a number of tourists, particularly to Talmine beach.

The small caravan site, together with several hotels and guest houses provide a good range of accommodation. Talmine pier, although in need of improvement, is another valuable asset, providing a safe facility for recreational sailing and local fishermen. Prospects depend very much on building upon the area's natural resources, especially the landscape and the crofting way of life. These must be fully safeguarded whilst providing for potential growth, particularly in tourism.

## Development Factors

Better croftland to the east, higher, steeper ground to the west are the main constraining factors on the growth of the townships. Together with steeper land within the communities these have restricted development to a narrow band along the main road. Future development is therefore mainly restricted to infill opportunities. Pollution of roadside ditches by septic tank effluent is a



*Talmine pier: a major community asset*

significant problem at Midtown and Skinnet.

## Principles

The main principles guiding the Plan are:-

- safeguarding the better agricultural land;
- conserving the valuable coastal landscape and the unique quality of the National Scenic Area;
- providing a framework for the expansion of the pier area; and
- maintaining the existing settlement pattern.

## Policies And Proposals

### HOUSING

5.1 Housing demand is very limited and can readily be accommodated within the existing settlement structure. Housing Policy RS2 will apply to infill development in the following townships:-

- Midtown
- Skinnet

- Talmine
- Melness

There will be a presumption against development outwith the established settlement pattern in order to safeguard the croftland and extensive sea views. Further development at Midtown and Skinnet will be resisted until a new public drainage system is installed, unless there is an essential agricultural requirement.

### ECONOMY

#### Harbour

5.2 Talmine pier is a major asset with significant potential. However, before this can be realised, improvements to the pier and back up land will be necessary.

#### Business Industry

5.3 0.2ha. of land is identified at the Roads depot for light industrial uses. Development will be restricted to Class 4 of the Use Classes (Scotland) Order 1989.

### Tourism - Accommodation

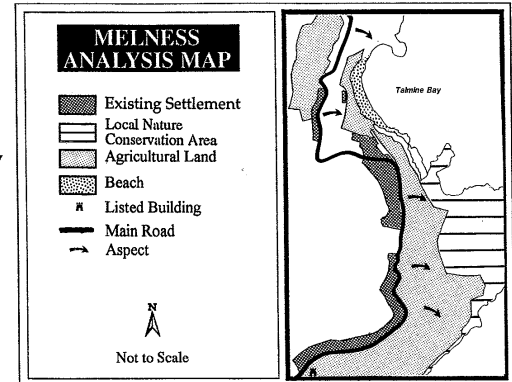
5.4 The Council will encourage the provision of small scale chalet schemes within the townships. Potential sites include :-

- (a) to the rear of the Craggan Hotel;
- (b) within the existing caravan park or on land immediately to the west and/or north.

### COMMUNITY

#### Play Area

5.5 There are no play facilities for children within any of the townships. The District Council should give consideration to the provision of a small equipped play area, possibly adjacent their housing at Cala Sona.



# 6 Altnaharra

The small township of Altnaharra enjoys an extensive open outlook eastwards across the River Mudale towards Loch Naver. The township adjoins several important SSSIs, notably Ben Klibreck. The few houses and local school are well sheltered by extensive conifer plantations, providing a fine amenity backdrop to the village.

Development pressures have been low with no houses built in the last ten years, a situation unlikely to change significantly in the near future.

## Development Factors

Opportunities for expansion are limited by the need to protect the better agricultural land, the views across to Loch Naver and the woodland to the west. These restrict development to the existing village envelope, although there are opportunities on the edges of the woods.

## Principles

The main objectives for the village are:-

- safeguarding the agricultural land;
- protecting the important nature conservation sites and amenity woodland; and
- identifying infill opportunities for housing.

## Policies And Proposals

### HOUSING

6.1 Housing Policy RS2 will apply to infill sites within the village. Woodland sites must ensure that buildings are as close to the road and outwith falling distance of adjoining trees. Tree felling should be minimised.

### ECONOMY

6.2 0.6ha. of land adjoining the hotel is allocated for future expansion of the hotel itself or for the erection of self catering accommodation.

### Tourist Facilities

6.3 The Council will encourage the provision of a viewpoint to the south of the Altnaharra Lodge, including small car park and interpretation.

### ENVIRONMENT

#### Agricultural Land

6.4 Prior approval will be required for the erection or significant extension of agricultural buildings within the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 on the areas shown on the Proposals Map.

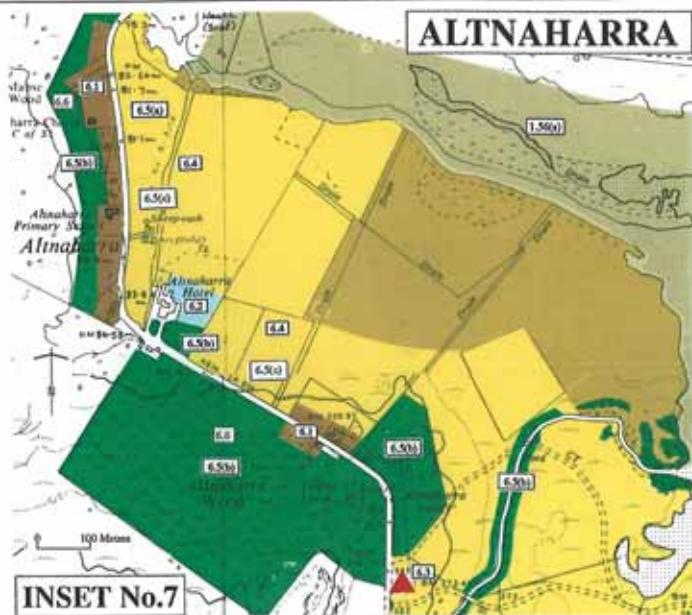
#### Conservation

6.5 There will be a presumption against development which adversely effects or is unsympathetic to the following, except where there is a proven agricultural requirement:-

- (a) the better agricultural land;
- (b) amenity woodland; and
- (c) land to the east of the road with views across to Loch Naver.

6.6 The Council will encourage the reshaping and replanting of the existing conifer plantations with appropriate species.

## ALTAHARRA



INSET No.7

### SERVICES

#### Treatment Works Safeguarding

5.6 There will be a presumption against development within 90m of the existing and proposed septic tanks.

### ENVIRONMENT

#### Conservation

5.7 There will be a presumption against development which adversely effects or is unsympathetic to the following except where there is a proven agricultural requirement:-

- (a) The extensive croftland, especially to the east of the townships.
- (b) The Corn Mill at Talmine (Scheduled Ancient Monument) which would benefit from interpretation.
- (c) Land on the seaward flanks of the coast road.
- (d) Amenity woodland.

- (e) The fabric and setting of Melness House (Listed Building).

#### Agricultural Land

5.8 Prior approval will be required for the erection or significant extension of agricultural buildings within the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 on the areas shown on the Proposals Map.

#### Environmental Improvements

5.9 The small beach at Melness is a popular attraction in the summer months. Difficulties are experienced however with cars parking on the adjacent grassed area which is gradually being eroded. Provision of a small parking area would relieve pressure on this green area and provide a much needed facility.

## INSET No.7&8

### HOUSING

Fragile Countryside

Infill

### ECONOMY

Commerce / Tourism

Business / Industry

Tourist Facility

### SERVICES

Sewage Treatment Works Safeguard

### COMMUNITY

Recreation

Harbour

Centre for the Elderly

### ENVIRONMENT

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Local Nature Conservation Area

Agricultural / Development Restraint

Woodlands

Listed Building

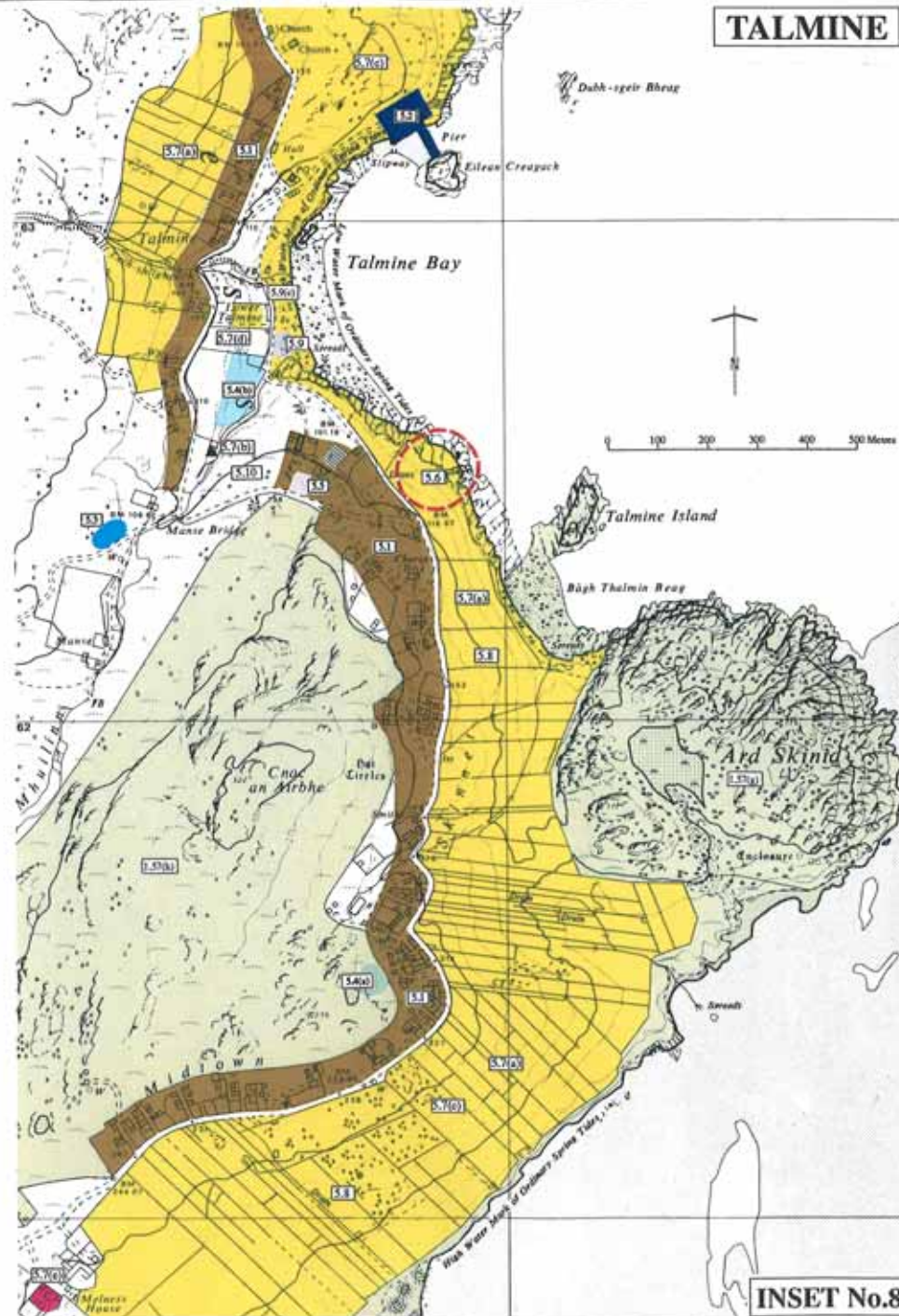
Scheduled Ancient Monument

### Tree Planting

5.10 To provide shelter and variety in the landscape, tree planting with appropriate species will be encouraged at suitable locations within the township.



## TALMINE



INSET No.8

# 7 Strathy

The small crofting community of Strathy is situated astride the A836 between Melvich and Bettyhill. Scattered in three major clusters overlooking the dune systems of Strathy Bay, the community is primarily based on crofting with limited employment in other industries.

Like the Plan area as a whole development pressures have been limited for many years and the population has been steadily falling. Prospects depend very much on safeguarding, promoting and where necessary diversifying the crofting economy. The natural attractions of the area - the impressive cliffs of Strathy Point, extensive views towards Orkney and wild plants of the Bay - suggest potential for further tourist expansion.

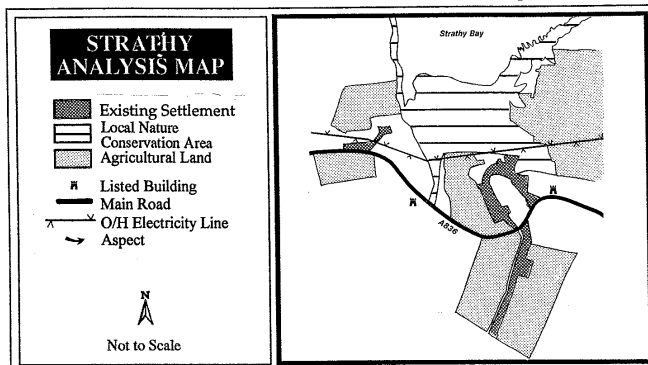
## Development Factors

Development opportunities throughout the community are restricted by the need to safeguard the best crofting ground and the beach and dune systems to the north. The steeper sloping land to the west of the Bay and open moorland to the south of the A836 are further constraints. Potential development sites therefore comprise mainly infill in accordance with the existing traditional settlement pattern.

## Principles

The main planning considerations at Strathy are:-

- the need to safeguard croftland;
- safeguarding the important nature conservation sites;



- the protection of the beach and dune environment;
- ensuring development is compatible with the traditional settlement form; and
- identification of potential tourist opportunities.

## Policies And Proposals

### HOUSING

7.1 Housing policy RS2 will apply to infill development at Strathy south and at Clashmelligill.

### ECONOMY

#### Commerce / Tourism

7.2 0.5ha. to the east of the Strathy Inn has potential for the development of tourist related uses, including extension of the Inn, erection of self catering accommodation, coffee shop or similar facility subject to access and servicing considerations. Proposals must be compatible with the character of adjoining buildings. A caravan site would not be appropriate because of the prominent nature of the site.

### Car Parking

7.3 A small car park adjacent to the beach would be appropriate to cater for visitors and those using the cemetery. Interpretation of the beach, dune system and local wildlife would also be of benefit. This should be linked to the provision of signposting.

### COMMUNITY

#### Burial Ground

7.4 Sutherland District Council intend to extend Strathy burial ground in 1995/96 at a cost of £150000.

#### Village Hall

7.5 The local community intend to upgrade the village hall in 1996. The Council will encourage its use for tourist related activities such as an Interpretive/Exhibition Centre/tearoom, subject to proper servicing.

#### Slipway

7.6 Consideration should be given by local interests and appropriate

public bodies to the provision of a slipway

### Footpaths

7.7 The main footpath access is to the beach, notably from Strathy bridge. The Council will give consideration to improvements to this path, together with better signposting.

### Signposting

7.8 The beach and adjoining viewpoint are badly signposted at present. The Council will give consideration to erecting suitable direction signs from the main road.

### Public Toilets

7.9 The District Council should give consideration to the provision of public toilets as resources permit.

### SERVICES

7.10 There will be a presumption against development within 25m of the existing public septic tank.

### ENVIRONMENT

#### Conservation

7.11 There will be a presumption against development which adversely effects or is unsympathetic

to the following except where there is a proven agricultural requirement:-

- (a) The better in bye croftland.
- (b) The fabric and setting of the two Listed Buildings.
- (c) Strathy beach and dune system which the Council Designates as an Area of Great Landscape Value.
- (d) Safeguarding the fabric and setting of the Priest Stone.

# 8 Armadale

Located on the western shores of Armadale Bay, this small crofting community enjoys a fine aspect and setting. The bay and adjoining gorge are important conservation areas supporting a wide variety of plant and wildlife. Growth has been limited for many years with few development pressures which have been accommodated within the existing settlement pattern.

This situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

## Development Factors

The prime constraints on further growth are the surrounding croftland and beach habitat. These restrict development to the existing village envelope.

## Principles

The main planning objectives for Armadale are:-

- protecting the better croftland;
- safeguarding the important nature conservation sites;
- promoting a site for small business; and
- maintain the existing settlement form.

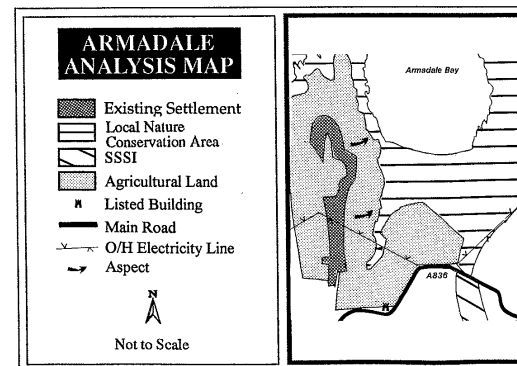
## Policies And Proposals

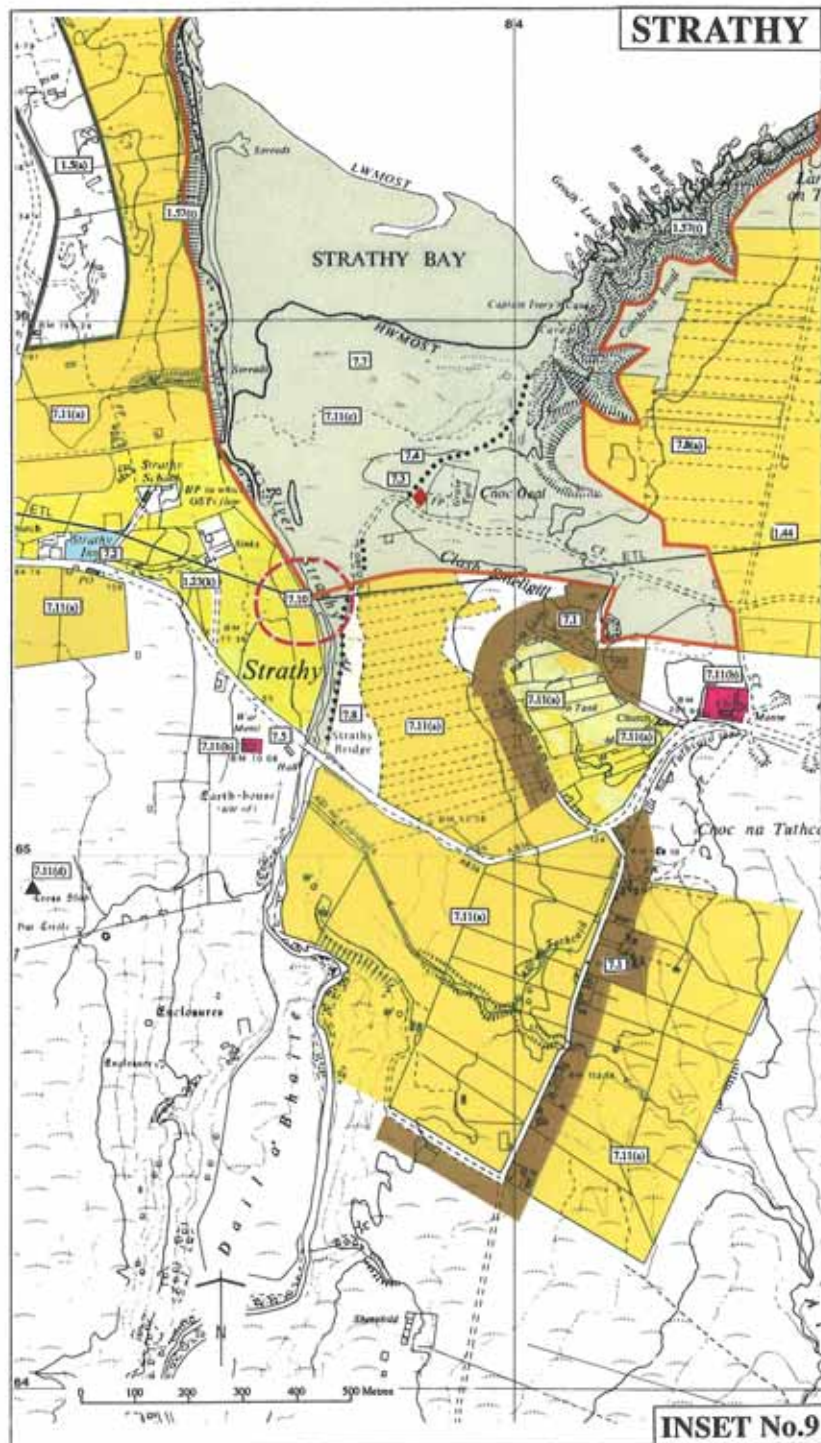
### HOUSING

8.1 Housing policy RS2 will apply to infill development at Armadale. Proposals should avoid the better farmland where possible.

### ECONOMY

8.2 0.1ha. of land in the ownership of Highlands and Islands Enterprise is allocated for business industry and/or tourist/commercial uses.





### INSET No.9&10

#### HOUSING

□ Fragile Countryside

■ Infill

— Dispersed Community

#### ECONOMY

□ Commerce / Tourism

■ Business / Industry

#### SERVICES

— High Voltage O/H Electricity Line

■ Bridge Improvements

— Sewage Treatment Works Safeguard

— Road Improvements

#### COMMUNITY

◆ Cemetery

◆◆◆ Footpath

#### ENVIRONMENT

■ Site of Special Scientific Interest

■ Local Nature Conservation Area

■ Agricultural / Development Restraint

■ Listed Building

— Area of Great Landscape Value

▲ Archaeological Site

#### SERVICES

##### Car Park

8.3 A small car park for visitors using the beach is required, which should be linked with footpath access, improved signposting and

interpretive facilities. A possible location is the loop of the old road, now bypassed.

#### COMMUNITY

##### Doctor's Surgery

8.4 The local GP is constructing a new surgery at the entrance to the village.

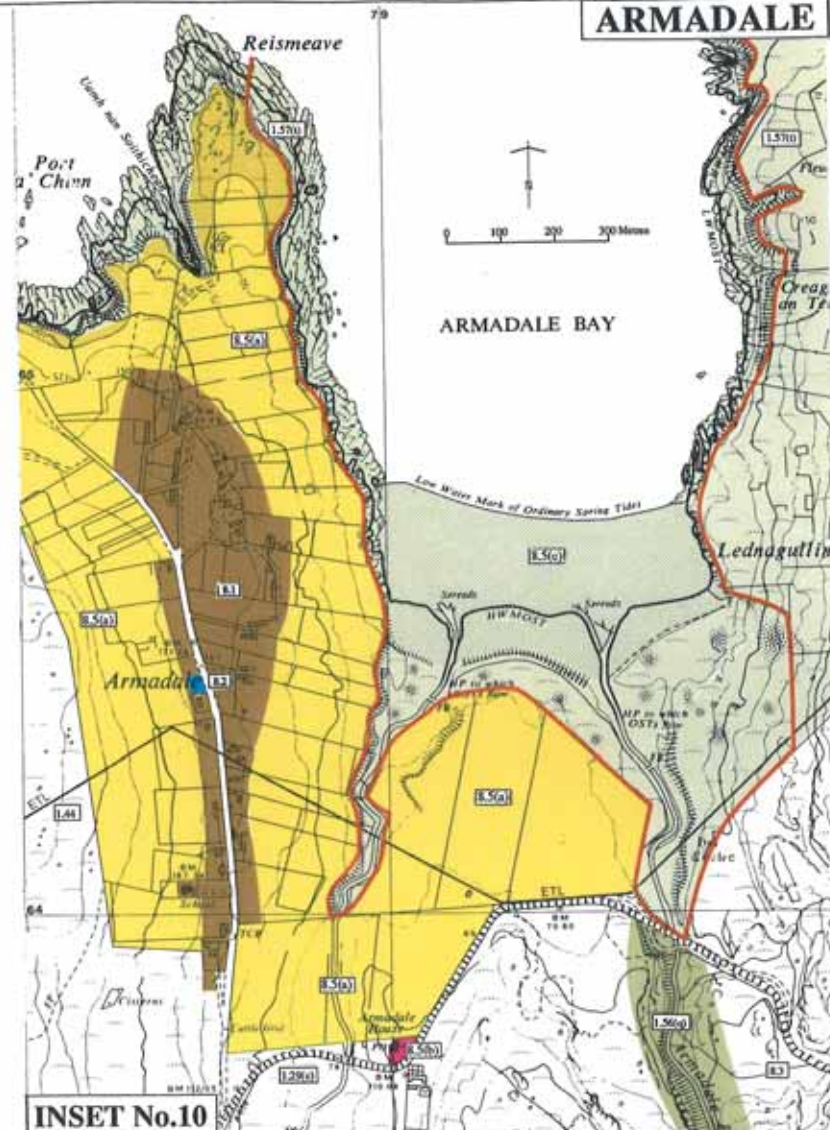
#### ENVIRONMENT

##### Conservation

8.5 There will be a presumption against development which adversely effects or is unsympathetic to the following except where there is a proven agricultural requirement-

- (a) The better in bye croftland.

- (b) The setting and fabric of Armadale House (Listed Building).
- (c) Beach and dune system at Armadale Bay which the Council designates as an Area of Great Landscape Value.



# 9 Skerray

Situated to the west of Torrisdale Bay, Skerray is a lively community of 90 people. Various small townships combine to form the settlement, from Borgie in the south through Torrisdale and Achtoty to Strathan in the west. The traditional settlement pattern of long "street villages" predominates. Much of Skerray lies within the Kyle of Tongue National Scenic Area and adjoins two SSSIs.

The area has a good range of amenities, including hotel, post office, hall and harbour. Skerray has a strong sense of community with various initiatives being undertaken, including the local Community Enterprise and creation of an art studio and local meeting place. Prospects depend very much on safeguarding the traditional crofting way of life, together with promoting new initiatives in tourism, local industry and new community projects.

## Development Factors

The SSSIs to the north and east, the need to protect the better croftland and the steeper ground to the west are the major constraints on development. Future building is likely to be restricted to infill opportunities and renovation or rebuilding of older property.

## Principles

The main objectives of the Plan are:-

- to safeguard the croftland;



Skerray Pier

- protect the outstanding amenity of the NSA and the coastline;
- safeguard the important nature conservation sites;
- maintain the traditional settlement pattern, whilst allowing for future growth; and
- identify a site for local business.

## Policies and Proposals

### HOUSING

9.1 Housing policy RS2 will apply to the following townships:-

- (a) Borgie
- (b) Aird Torrisdale
- (c) Torrisdale
- (d) Achtoty
- (e) Clasheddy
- (f) Tubeg
- (g) Modsarie
- (h) Strathan

There will be a presumption against development outwith the established settlement pattern in order to safeguard croftland.

### ECONOMY

9.2 The Council intends to erect a small workshop in Skerray for business and light industrial uses. A site adjoining the fank to the north of Borgie would be suitable.

### COMMUNITY

#### Recreation Ground

9.3 The Council will safeguard the football field at Invernaver.

#### Community Building

9.4 Derelict property at Achtoty would be suitable for renovation for community and ancillary commercial purposes, subject to adequate servicing and car parking and suitable rethatching of the

properties. The local community has various ideas for an audio visual studio, craft and coffee shop.

#### Village Hall

9.5 The local community propose to improve the village hall through an environmental improvement scheme, including landscaping and new access for the disabled.

#### Signposting

9.6 Facilities at Skerray are badly signposted at present. The Council will investigate the potential for composite advance signs at both entrances from the A836.

### SERVICES

#### Drainage

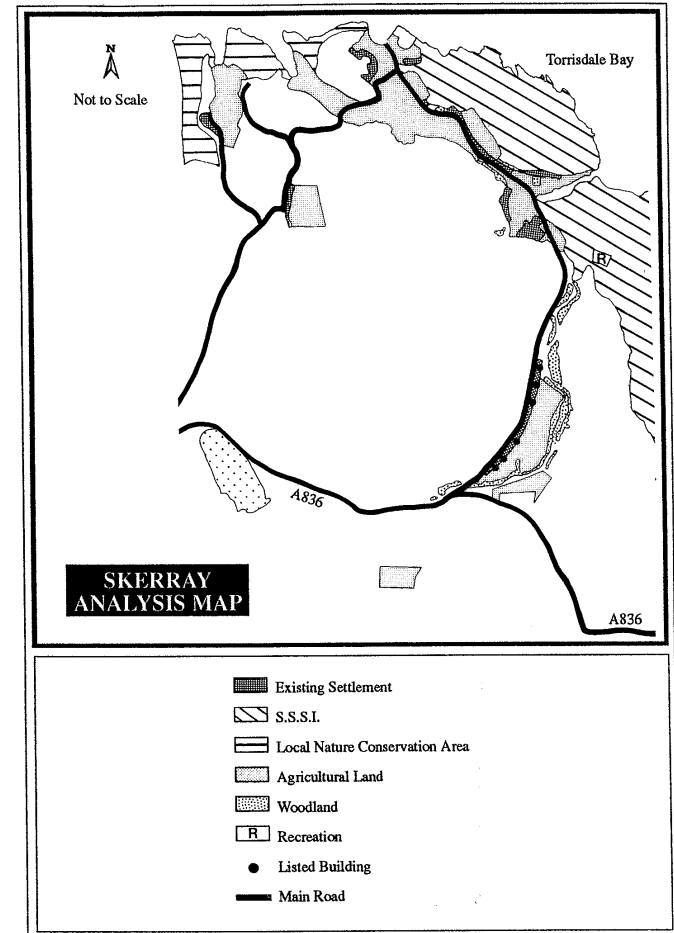
9.7 Pollution problems have occurred around Skerray where ground conditions for soakaway are poor. The Council intends to construct a new drainage system post 1999 at a cost of £350,000.

### ENVIRONMENT

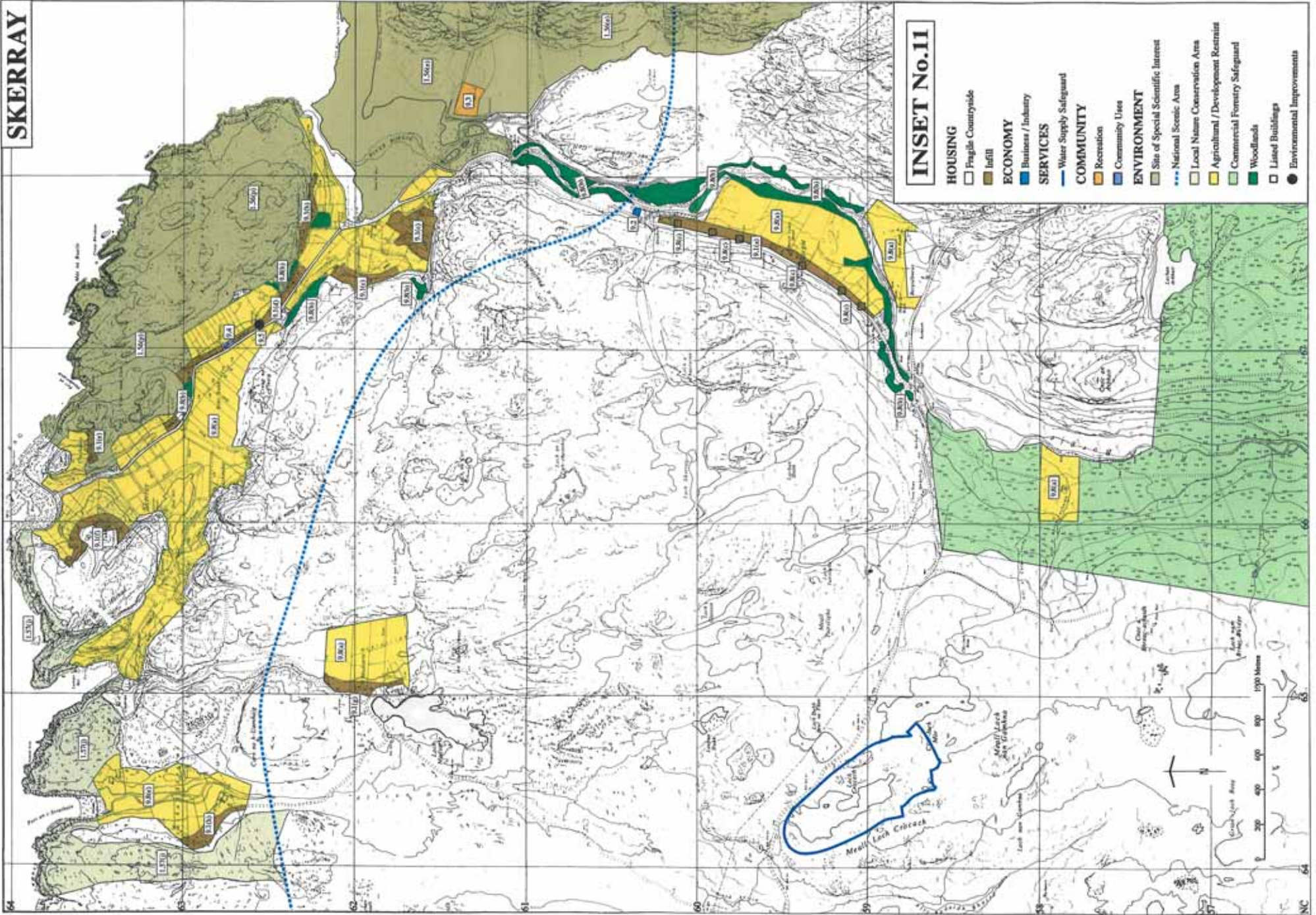
#### Conservation

9.8 There will be a presumption against development which adversely affects or is unsympathetic to the following:-

- (a) the extensive in bye croftland;
- (b) amenity woodlands, particularly around Borgie;
- the fabric and setting of all listed buildings.



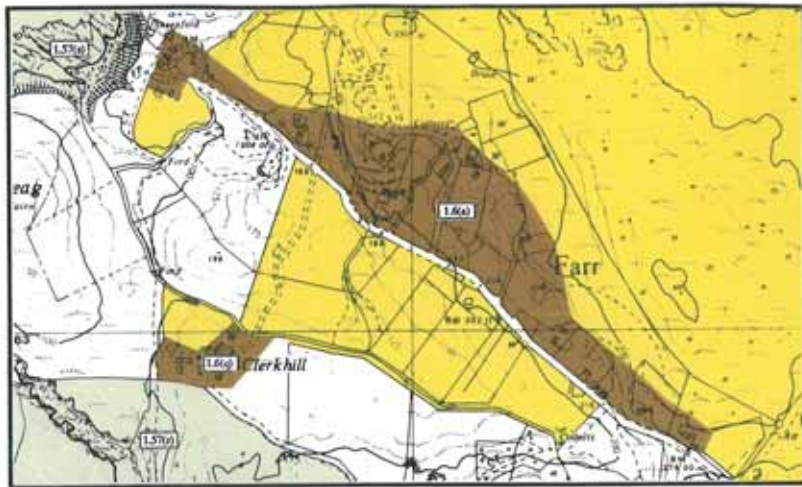
# SKERRAY



## INSET No.11

- HOUSING**
- Fragile Countryside
- Infill
- ECONOMY**
- Business / Industry
- SERVICES**
- Water Supply Safeguard
- COMMUNITY**
- Recreation
- Community Uses
- ENVIRONMENT**
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Scenic Area
- Local Nature Conservation Area
- Agricultural / Development Restraint
- Commercial Forestry Safeguard
- Woodlands
- Listed Buildings
- Environmental Improvements

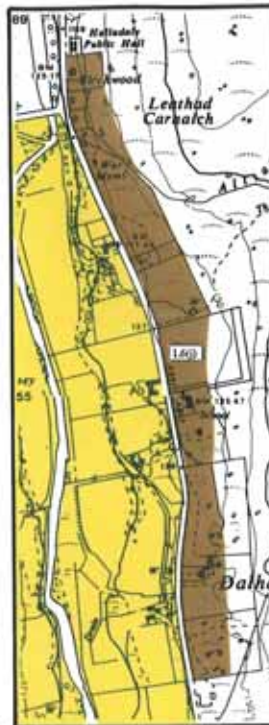




Inset No.12 : Clerkhill



Inset No.13 : Farr



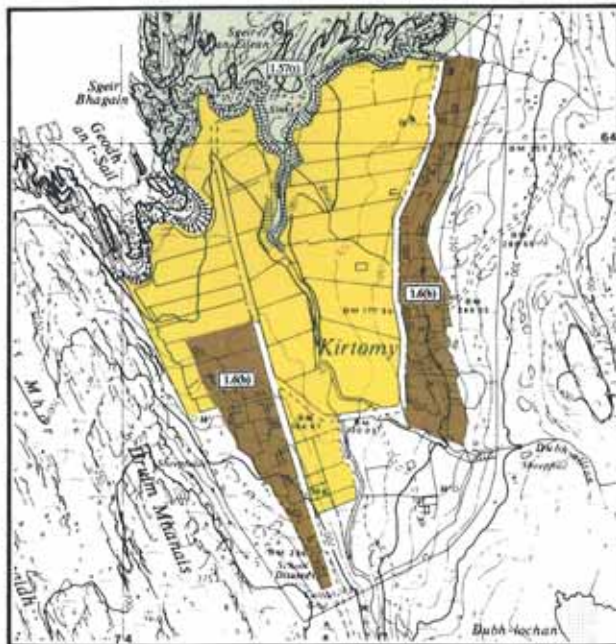
Inset No.14 : Dalhalvaig



Inset No.15 : Trantlebeg



Inset No.16 : Upper Bighouse



Inset No.19 : Kirtomy



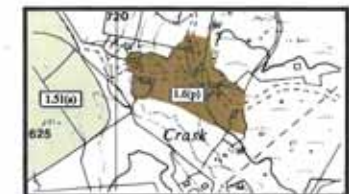
Inset No.20 : Trantlemore



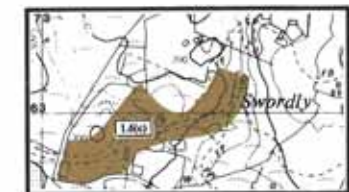
Inset No.21 : Forsinard



Inset No.22 : Baligill



Inset No.17: Crask



Inset No.18: Swordly

**INSET Nos.12-22**

**HOUSING**

□ Fragile Countryside

■ Infill Development

**ENVIRONMENT**

■ Site of Special Scientific Interest

■ Local Nature Conservation Area

■ Agricultural / Development Restraint





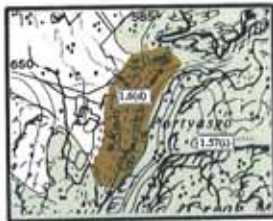
Inset No.23 : Blandy



Inset No.29 : Strathan



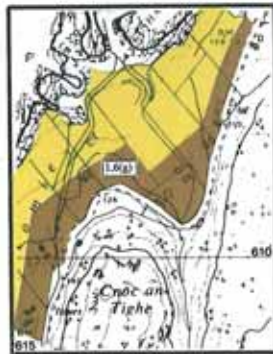
Inset No.30 : Achiniver



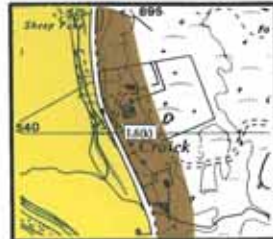
Inset No.24 : Port Vasgo



Inset No.28 : Midfield



Inset No.25 : Scullomic





Inset No.29 : Croick



Inset No.26 : Coldbackie

### INSET Nos.23-30

#### HOUSING

-  Fragile Countryside
-  Infill Development

#### ENVIRONMENT

-  Site of Special Scientific Interest
-  Local Nature Conservation Area
-  Agricultural / Development Restraint

