

## North, West & Central Sutherland

### ARDGAY

#### Position Statement for Ardgay

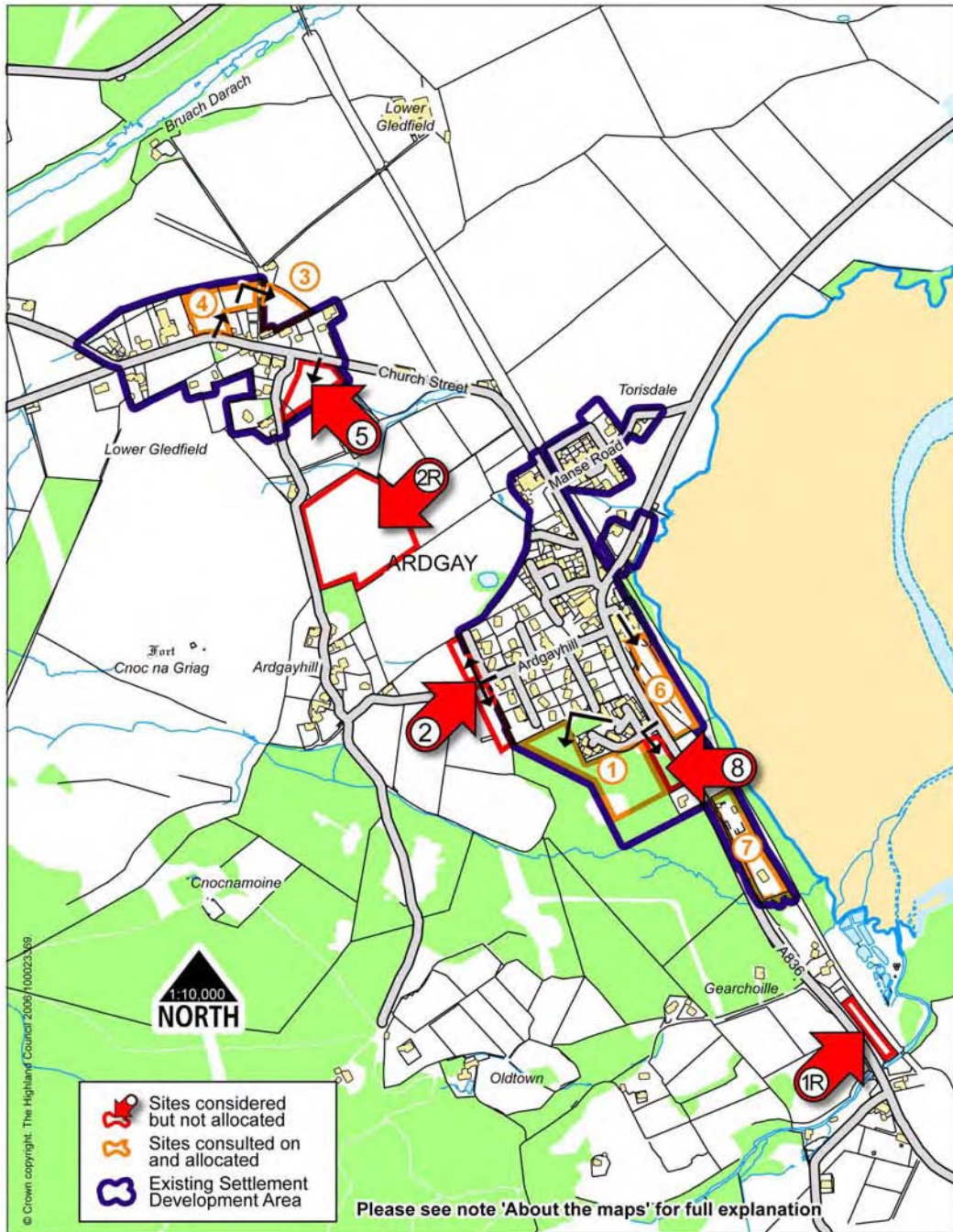
The land allocated for housing in Lower Gledfield allows for housing development around the Primary School. The site South of Oakwood Place will extend the provision of housing at the existing edge of the village. The land adjacent to Ardgayhill Road is beside overhead power lines. The site options north of Ardgayhill and land south of Ardgay are both beyond the scope of the settlement boundary of Ardgay and any proposed development there would be judged against the relevant local plan policies.

The long term allocation at Manse Road will extend housing into the area between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield, without encouraging ribbon development along the road. The site option from Sutherland Futures - south east of Lower Gledfield - could potentially become part of this extension from Lower Gledfield, in the future. It is preferable to focus development on extending the two areas gradually over time, towards to each other, rather than allocating a large amount of land between the two when no definite areas of land are proposed. Land between the two areas could ultimately in the future provide a series of alternative sites.

The two business allocations will keep all business activity on the eastern side of the A836. The removal of the business allocation at the site south of Oakwood Place means that the entrance to Ardgay will have a less industrial look.

#### Sites Rejected:

Site 2 Adjacent to Ardgayhill Road	The site is in close proximity to power lines.
Site 5 South east of Lower Gledfield	This site could potentially be used as part of the longer term expansion between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield.
Site 8 South of Oakwood Place (Business)	This site should become part of the housing allocation. This would encourage the business uses to stay on the eastern side of the A836 and would ensure that the visual entry point to Ardgay is not solely business uses.
Site 1R Land south of Ardgay	This land is outwith the settlement boundary of Ardgay. It is part of the area that separates Ardgay and Kincardine.
Site 2 R North of Ardgayhill	This land is separated from both Ardgay and Lower Gledfield. The area here is covered by other Local Plan policies.



## BONAR BRIDGE

### Position Statement for Bonar Bridge & South Bonar Industrial Estate

The Cherry Grove site in Bonar Bridge should provide a variety of house types for the village phased over a number of years. The site South of Cherry Grove is a long term site which will allow for the gradual expansion of Cherry Grove over time. It is essential that land to the north east of Cherry Grove is not landlocked in order to allow potential future expansion of the village. There may be some potential for the land within the SDA to provide for infill development and ultimately it may also provide expansion for the Cherry Grove site.

Business and industrial uses should be consolidated at South Bonar Industrial Estate; access to the site is good and causes no disturbance to residential areas. The site identified in Sutherland Futures to the west of school received planning permission for two houses and is therefore unsuitable for a business allocation. The other site option for business to the north of the village has steep access.

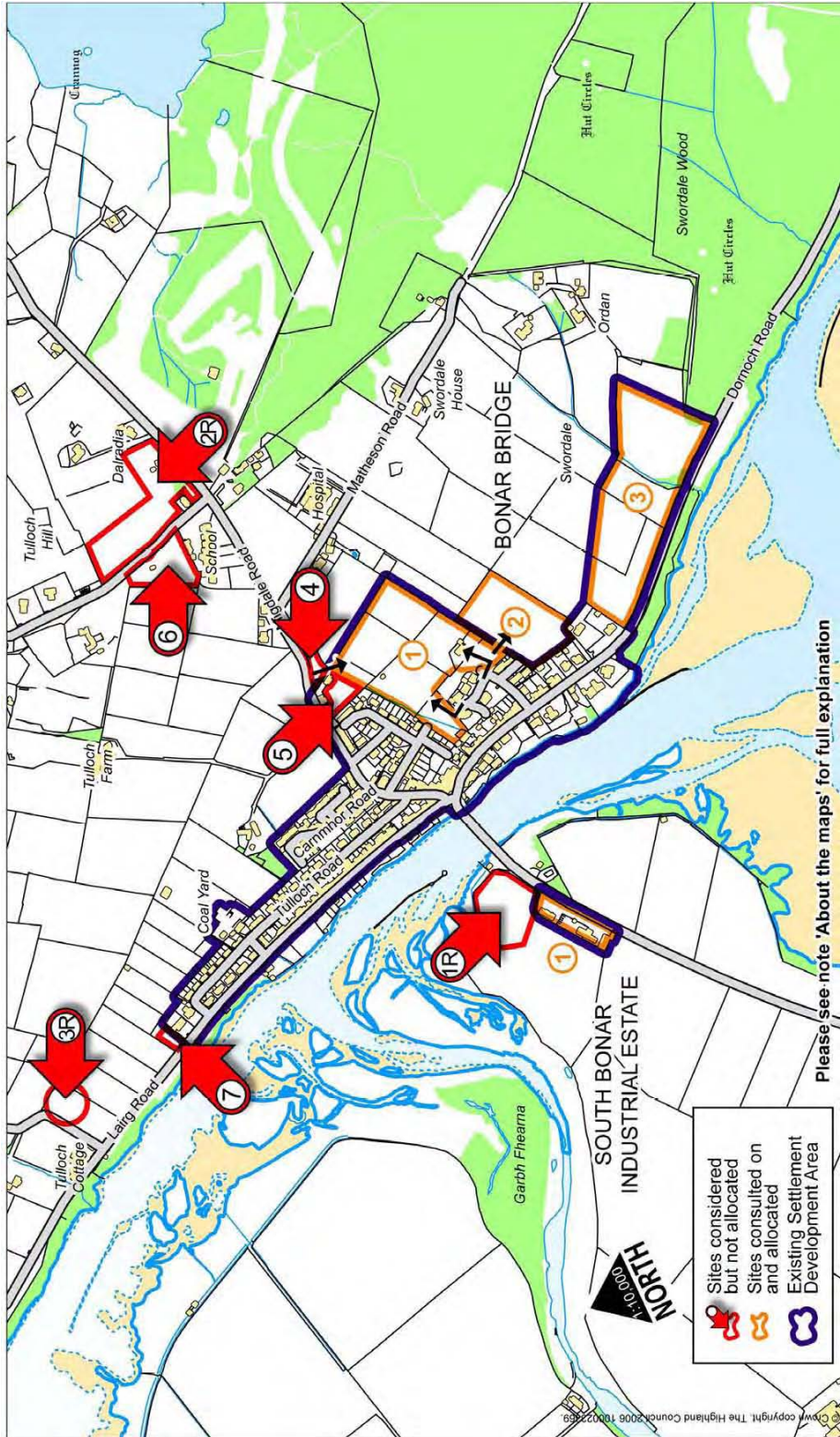
#### Sites Rejected:

Site 4 East of Am Mhuilin	The western section of this site needs to be reserved to maintain pedestrian access into Cherry Grove. The development of this site would encourage ribbon development along the Migdale Road and could contribute towards the land locking of Cherry Grove. As Cherry Grove is developed there may be longer term potential to include this site within that development.
Site 5 Am Mhuilin	Site is potentially full with limited potential for further infill houses. SEA identifies that the access is not suitable for further houses. Not recommended as an allocation, but it will come within the boundary of the SDA which will allow for any further limited infill opportunities.
Site 6 West of the school	Planning permission granted for two houses on this site, so no longer a site available for business allocation.
Site 7 North of the village	Preference given to consolidation of business uses at South Bonar Industrial Estate.
Site 1R Amenity development to north west of bridge	The SEA highlights that the site is at risk from SEPA 1 in 200 year flood risk.
Site 2R Land opposite school	This is a potential area of development for the longer term once other sites are fully developed.
Site 3R Land north of	The proposed potential tourism use will be



Bonar Bridge, adjacent to Tulloch Cottage

covered under general policies for tourism in the Local Plan.



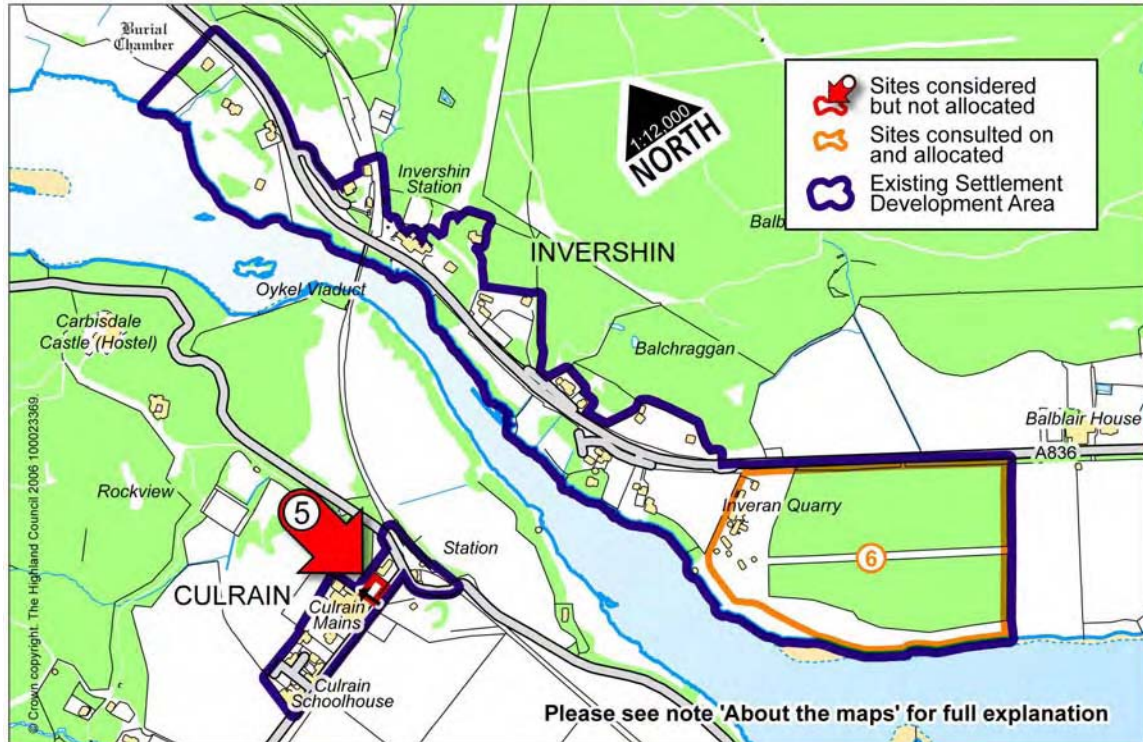
## CULRAIN

### Position Statement for Culrain

Culrain is a small centre. The SDA has been drawn to allow limited infill development, but also to safeguard the open character of adjoining land. The site option is removed as an allocation, but remains within the SDA, as there may be other more suitable infill opportunities within the SDA.

### Sites Rejected:

Site 5 West of the hall	The SEA identifies drainage and potential flooding issues. The existing SDA around Culrain will remain and the site will be included within the SDA.
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## ROSEHALL

### Position Statement for Rosehall

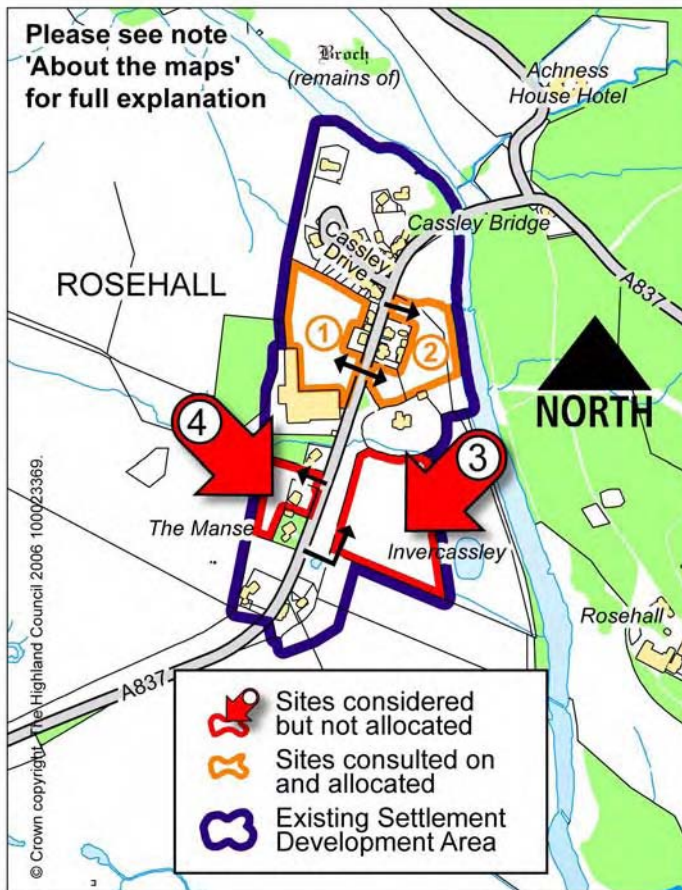
The two allocated sites - Rear of the Post Office and Opposite the Post Office – allow for development to be closer to centre of the existing village and the amenities already present. The two alternative site options from Sutherland Futures are further away from the village centre and would be preferable as



much longer term expansion areas once roads and services in the area had improved.

Sites Rejected:

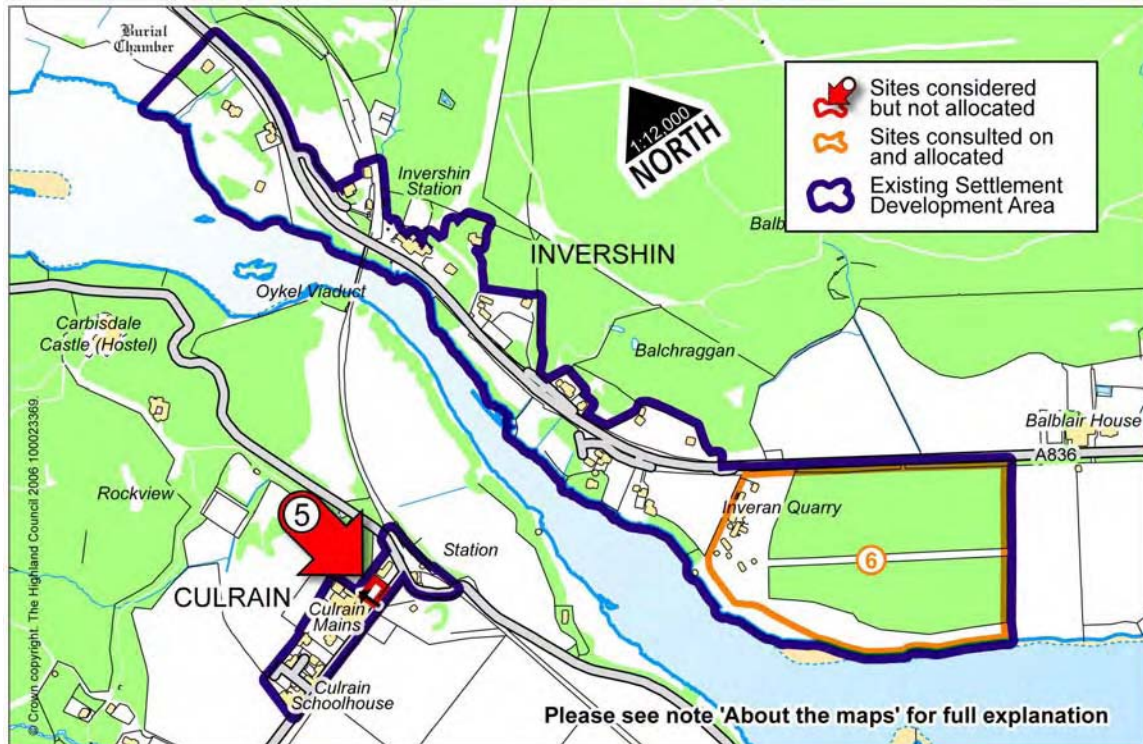
Site 3 East of the road	Other sites are closer to village amenities. Possibly a much longer term site for growth.
Site 4 West of the road	Other sites are closer to village amenities. Possibly a much longer term site for growth.



# INVERSHIN

## Position Statement for Invershin

The only allocation at Invershin is at the Former Balblair Workings, a disused and partly re-instated sand and gravel quarry. Whilst this development would not be similar to the existing settlement pattern, it would reuse a brownfield site. It would provide a small number of houses with land holdings rather than large numbers of typical residential plots. The development of this site will require the proximity of the River Oykel SAC to be taken into account. A potential contamination assessment will be required as will a flood risk assessment to show compliance with SPP7. Outwith this allocation potential for housing lies in infill opportunities within the settlement boundary.



## LAIRG

### Position Statement for Lairg

The housing allocation south west of Main Street encourages development close to existing facilities and amenities in the village. It will allow for phased housing development and will provide affordable housing. The Sutherland Futures site options adjacent to the post office depot and opposite the fire station encouraged development further away from the centre of the village.

Housing allocations to the north and east of Manse Road will provide for lower density housing and infill housing; however both of these sites have been Local Plan allocations since 1983 and their effectiveness will be monitored during the lifetime of this plan. The site option to the west of Manse Road has not been allocated but remains within the SDA. During Sutherland Futures consultation the community was of the opinion that there should be a housing allocation on the opposite side of Little Loch Shin. The housing allocation at Ord Place provides for this alternative.

The long term sites identified provide opportunity for longer term expansion of the village once sites closer to the village centre have been fully developed or become ineffective.

The two business allocations are within the centre of the village encouraging redevelopment and consolidation of existing business uses. The mixed use allocation at the former hotel encourages reuse of a central and very visible entrance site to the village.

### Sites Rejected:

Site 6 West of Manse Road	This site will remain in the SDA for Lairg therefore it could be subject to infill development.
Site 8 North of Clash Breac	SEA flooding issues.
Site 9 Builnatobernich	Some room for limited infill. SEA identifies that some archaeology requires protection and possible flooding issues. Access road suitable for another 2 infill houses, but after that would require upgrading.
Site 10 West Lochside	To become part of Long Term housing allocation at North West of Lochside.
Site 11 Adjacent to Post Office depot	This site would elongate Lairg along the Main Street and priority should be given to redeveloping business land at the Former Laundry site and consolidating the business site at West of Church Hill Road.
Site 13 Opposite fire	Priority should be given to business land at





## ASSYNT

### Position Statement for Assynt

In Lochinver several sites considered in Sutherland Futures were known to have limited potential and would not merit inclusion as an allocation. For Lochinver all the options identified at Sutherland Futures stage went into the Deposit draft as allocations or were included within the SDA. The limited suitable effective housing sites in and around Lochinver helped support the allocation of land at Glencanisp for 5 -10 houses. However as identified through the SEA this will be subject to various mitigation measures to cover siting, design and the necessary road upgrades.

The options which were developed for north Assynt at Sutherland Futures stage were developed after some desk based consideration and onsite survey work using the landscape capacity study as a starting point. At this point the Assynt Crofters trust had not suggested sites. However when they considered the suitability of the Sutherland Futures options, they felt that these options either had limited potential, or in Stoer south's case it was inappropriate because of its crofting value. They subsequently submitted sites they wanted us to consider which had been put forward by the local grazing clerks.

In consideration of these many were not allocated but two were made allocations within the Point of Stoer where the majority of the housing demand exists. In summary many of these proposals were suggested for or were assessed as only suitable for a level of development that should be considered against the general policies of the Local Plan rather than allocated. However in some instances their exclusion did relate to reasons which came out through from the SEA and made them unsuitable or uneconomic to develop sensitively. The two sites that became allocations required mitigation as identified through SEA.

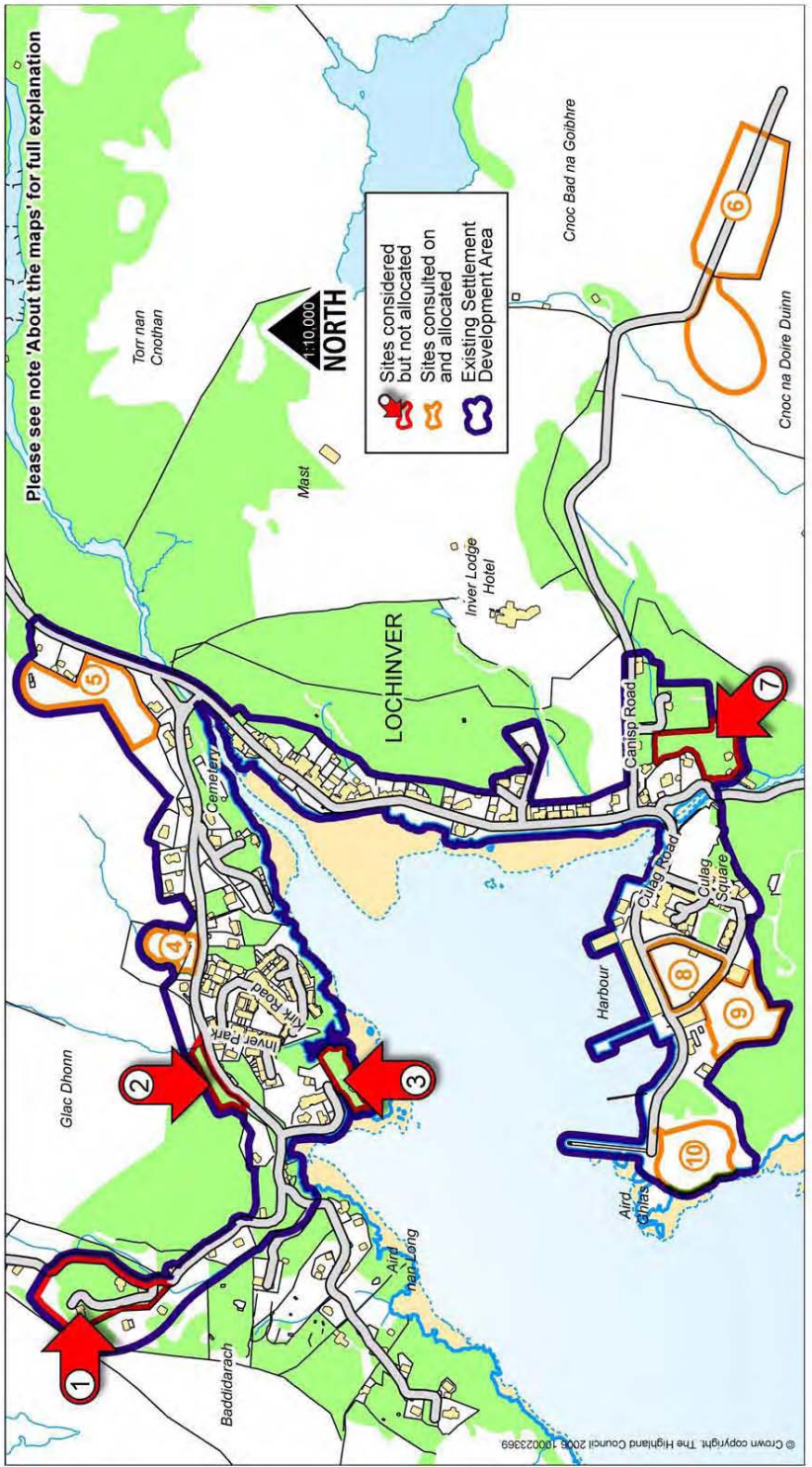
### Sites not allocated:

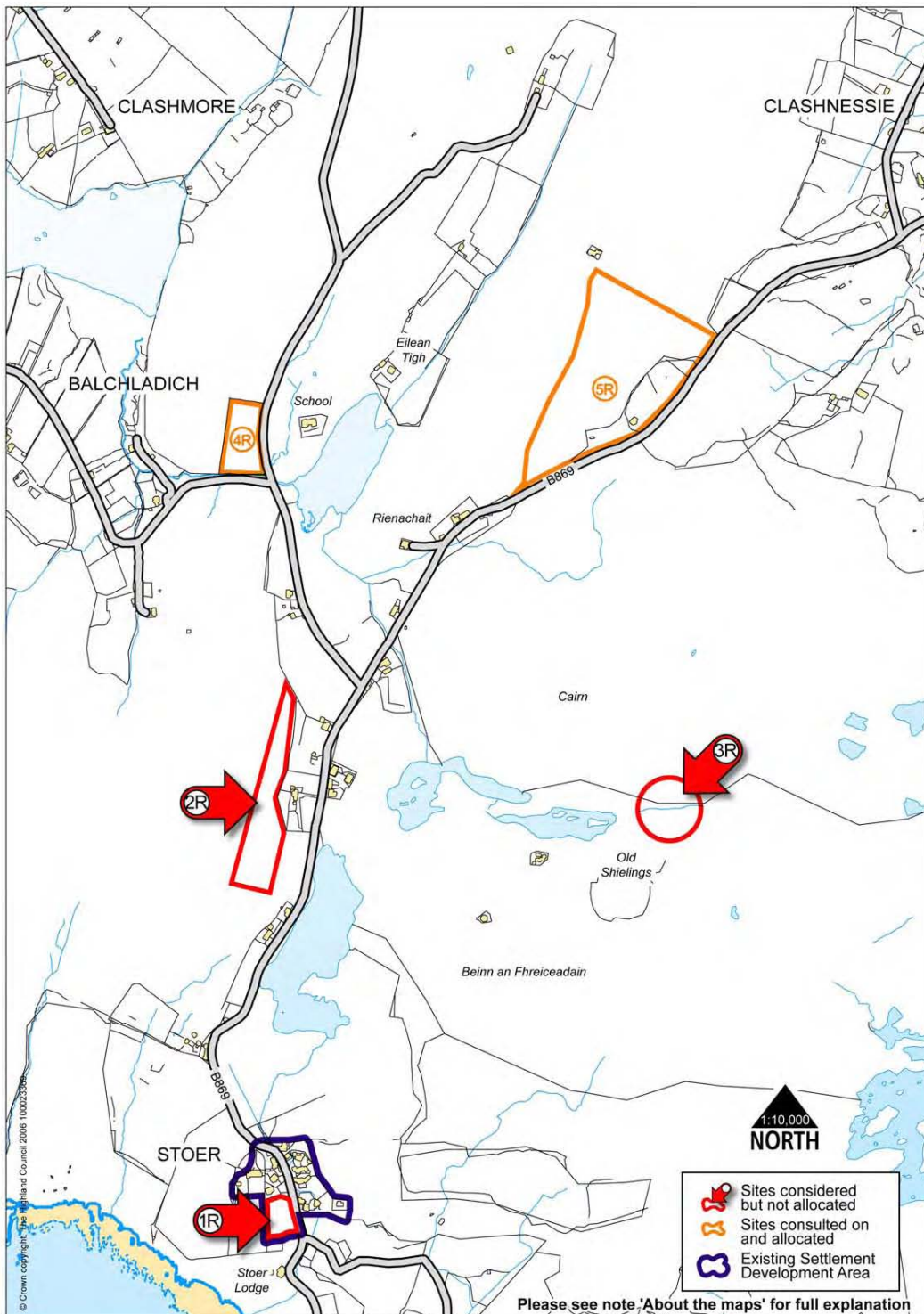
Site 1, Lochinver, North of Filin Baddidarrach	This site is a suitable and effective site for infill and is included within the SDA.
Site 2, Lochinver, North of Albyn development at Inver Park	This site is suitable for infill. There are doubts over its feasibility because an element of rock blasting is likely to be required but it merits inclusion within the SDA.
Site 3, Lochinver, South of the Pottery	This site is suitable and effective with scope for infill therefore it is appropriate to include it within the SDA. However SEA identifies that a flood risk assessment in line with SPP 7 will be required.
Site 7, Lochinver, Canisp Road/ Culag Bridge	This site is a suitable and effective site for infill and so it is included within the SDA.

Site 1, Stoer, Stoer south	This site was identified through the landscape capacity study and was removed not due to SEA but because it is good quality in bye croft land and did not have community support
Site 1R, Stoer, East of Loch Nan Cullach	This site was not allocated because of the SEA and also on feasibility due to the length of access that would be required. In terms of SEA it would not be encouraged due to the archaeological remains onsite and the need for fairly rigorous, extensive and expensive archaeological conditions.
Site 2R, Stoer, Drum Mhor	This site is not allocated as SEA determined that it is not suitable for a level of development that requires allocation. There is limited opportunity here as it is a sensitive location in landscape terms and proposals would need to be careful of sky lining. Proposals for a few houses could be appropriate but these can come forward and be assessed against the general policies of the Local Plan.
Site 2, Drumbeg, South of B869	This site does not require allocation or an SDA boundary as it was felt that the most appropriate way to deal with the small scale opportunities that exist would be to consider them against the general policies of the Local Plan.
Site 1R, Drumbeg, East of Church	This site was suggested but the aspirations were small scale and the ground conditions were challenging so it did not merit allocation. Any suitable proposal would be of a level that could be assessed under the general policies of the Local Plan.
Site 2R, Drumbeg, West of Loch Ruighean an Aitinn	On this site any suitable proposal would be of a level that could be assessed under the general policies of the Local Plan.
Site 3R, Drumbeg, South of Loch Ruighean an Aitinn	This site is not suitable and feasibility is doubted. SEA ruled out this proposal due to the engineering works necessary, change to landform, and the resultant landscape impact this would have. The impact within the NSA would be too significant and no satisfactory mitigation could be achieved.
Site 3, Drumbeg, Southwest of Loch Ruighean an Aitinn,	Part of this site was considered feasible but the scope was for small scale development that would be of a level that could be assessed under the general policies of the Local Plan.

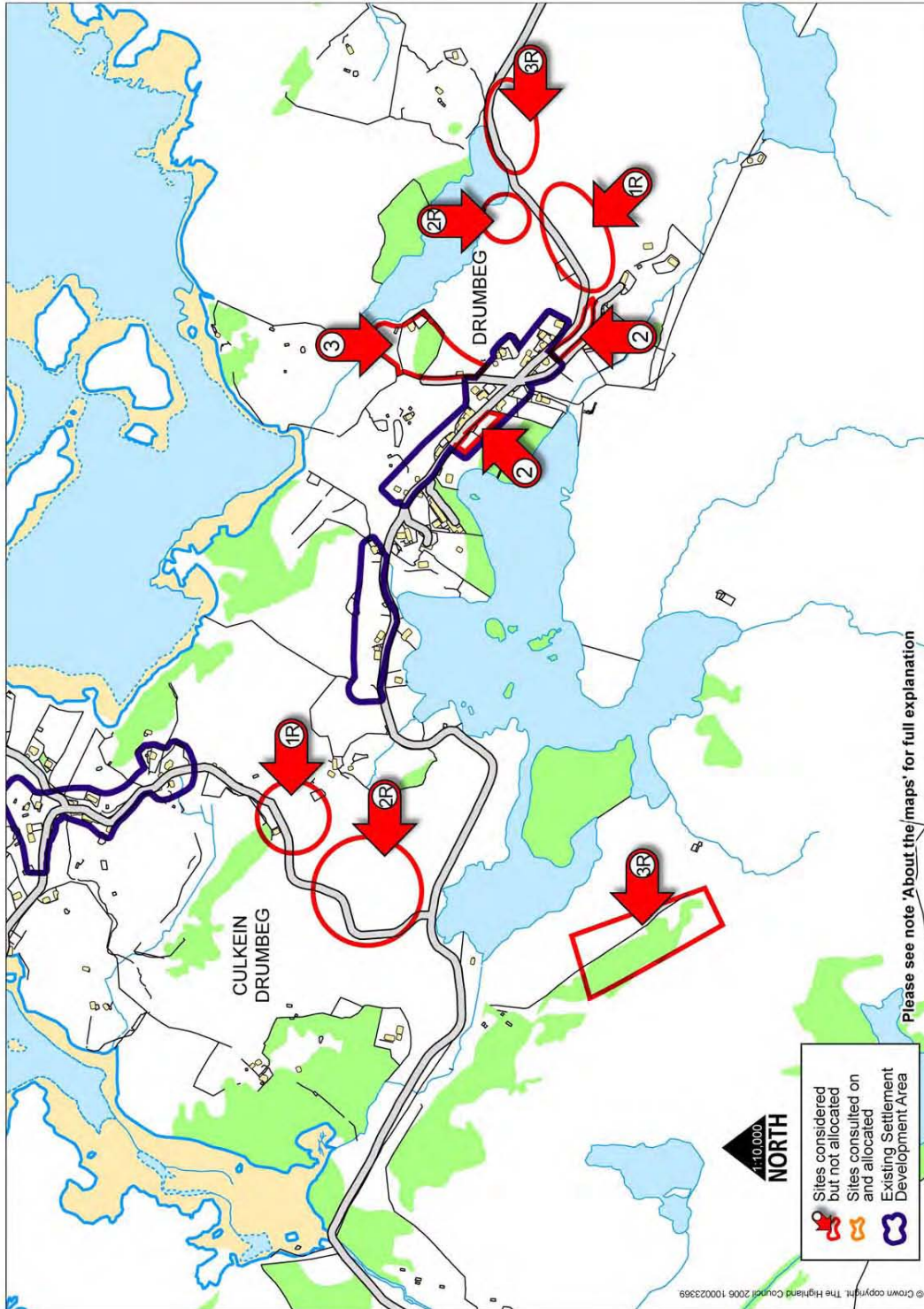
Site 1R, Culkein Drumbeg, North of Achloist	This site is suitable for small scale development that can be assessed against the general policies of the Local Plan.
Site 2R, Culkein Drumbeg, North of Loch Drumbeg	This site is suitable and effective for small scale development which can be assessed against the general policies of the Local Plan.
Site 3R, Culkein Drumbeg, West of Loch Drumbeg	This site requires a substantial length of access along the peat road which makes only small scale proposals feasible. Otherwise the road would need to be brought up to publicly adoptable standards. However a larger proposal would also be sensitive in terms of landscape character. Therefore it is only suitable and effective for a level of development which can be assessed against the general policies of the Local Plan.











## **-SCOURIE AND ACHFARY**

### Position Statement for Scourie and Achfary

Sites considered from Sutherland Futures included those identified by the community council in liaison with the local grazing committee. Other possible sites were identified after desk based consideration and onsite survey work using the landscape capacity study as a starting point. Several sites in Scourie were not allocated because of concerns expressed either by the crofter and/or the Crofters Commission on its suitability because of its local importance as croft land. Other suitable sites are not of a scale that merits inclusion as an allocation but have been retained within the SDA to promote their scope for infill. Identifying them as site options allowed more focus on their suitability and effectiveness so we could more accurately gauge the level of allocations required to meet our requirements for housing land and to draw the SDA appropriately.

Two options made it through as allocations in the Deposit draft because they were suitable and capable of contributing something beyond infill. SEA identifies need for a design statement on the larger H2 allocation principally to promote sensitive development within the landform. In Scourie these allocations together with the infill sites offer sufficient variety of options.

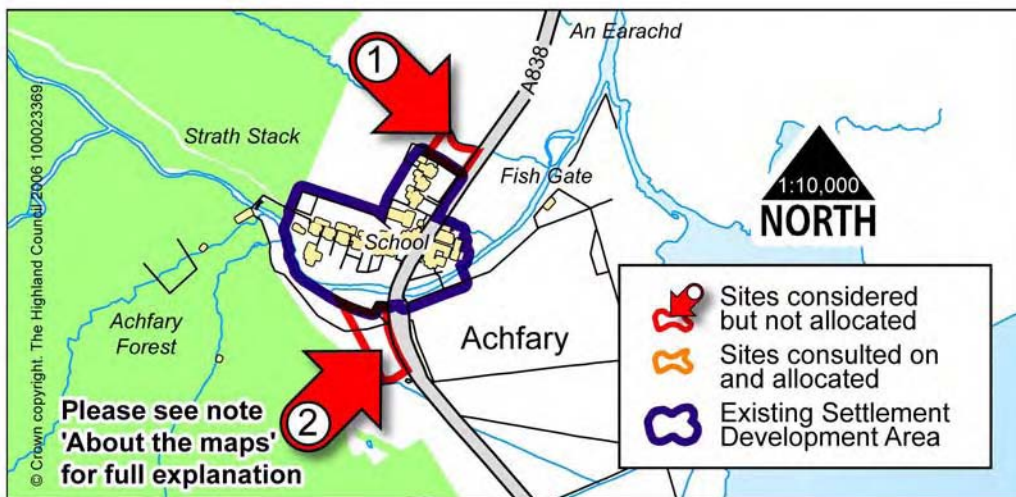
In smaller communities like Achfary, there is a different level of demand, and a need to assess sites on their merits against the policy framework. Therefore the options considered were not allocated.

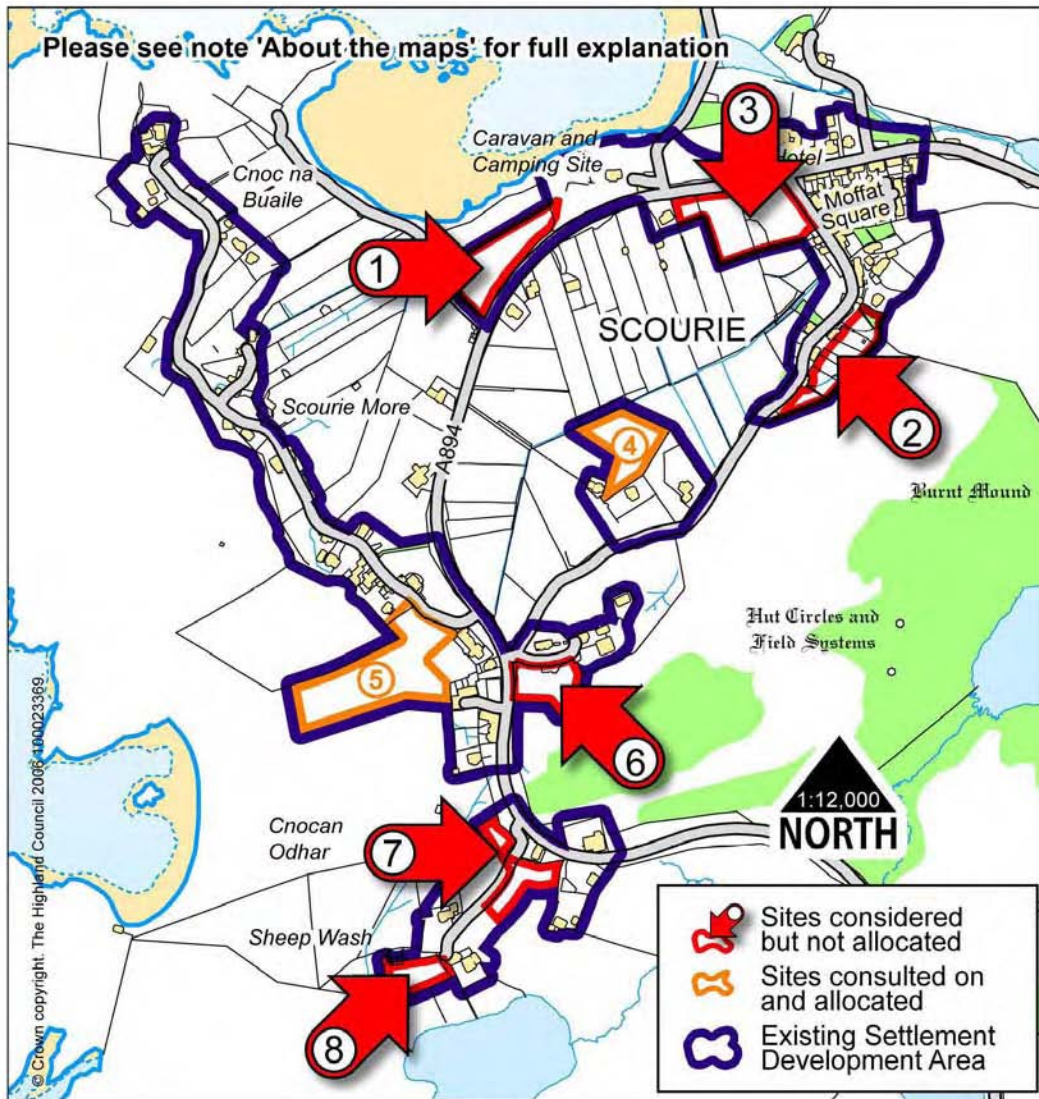
### Sites not allocated:

Site 1, Scourie, West of the caravan/ campsite	This site was not allocated because of its crofting value and the crofter's reluctance to release it for development. However in terms of the SEA it is a good site.
Site 2, Scourie, South of the church	The northern area of this site was not allocated because of the lack of interest from crofter's involved and difficulties with access arrangements. The southern area is common grazings and available so remains within the SDA.
Site 3, Scourie, West of Park Terrace	This site was considered locally important croft land and is currently in use. The crofter involved does not want to release it for development.
Site 6, Scourie, East of the school	On this site there is doubt over feasibility due to poor drainage/ground conditions but it has remained within the SDA boundary as it is an otherwise suitable site.



<p>Site 7, Scourie, North of the Free Church</p>	<p>This site had the support of the crofters and came through well in terms of SEA. However the appropriate scope here is for infill development and so including it within the SDA boundary was the best way to take this forward rather than allocation. The SEA identifies that there is need for improvement to the road network requiring developer contribution and so this is identified in the Local Plan.</p>
<p>Site 8, Scourie, South of the Free Church</p>	<p>This site was recently apportioned land from the common grazings and therefore the Crofter's Commission objected to its future development. It was felt that the croft land here should be protected from development as there are other more suitable and effective alternative sites available. In terms of SEA it came through as an acceptable site.</p>
<p>Site 1, Achfary, Achfary North</p>	<p>This site comes through the SEA as an acceptable site but the level of development does not justify allocation and it was felt that any proposals of this nature could be assessed against the general policies.</p>
<p>Site 2, Achfary, Achfary South</p>	<p>This site comes through the SEA as an acceptable site but the level of development does not justify allocation and it was felt that any proposals of this nature could be assessed against the general policies.</p>





## KINLOCHBERVIE

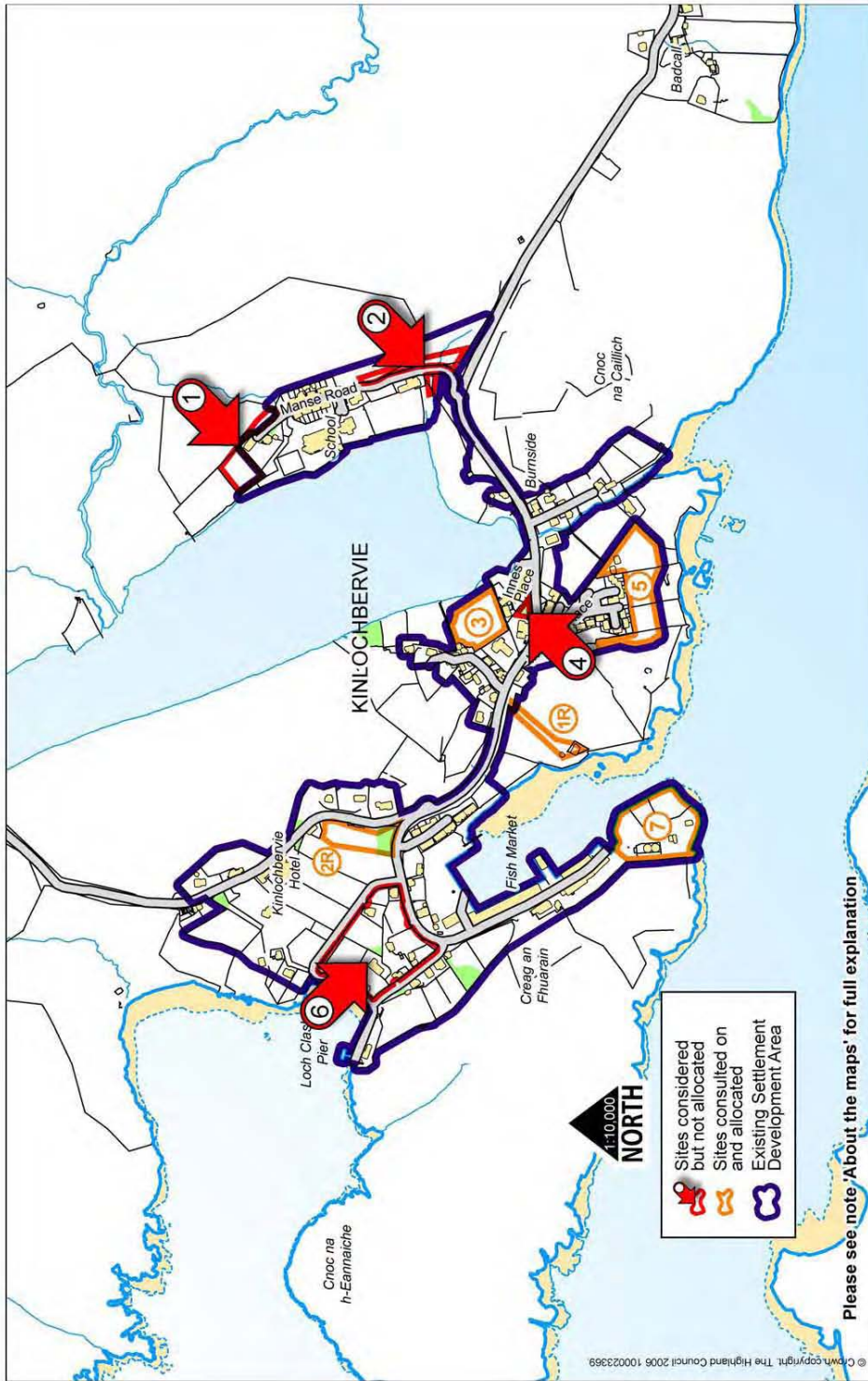
### Position Statement for Kinlochbervie

Apart from Manse road north, the options from Sutherland Futures that have not been allocated have been left within the SDA to promote opportunities for infill development. Identifying them as site options allowed more focus on their suitability and effectiveness so we could more accurately gauge the level of allocations required to meet our requirements for housing land. Other suitable sites came through for allocation after being suggested at Sutherland Futures consultation. These offer scope to other landowners and provide sites that will be easier to develop incrementally.

In terms of the Manse road north site it was an option that could potentially open up a long term land supply. However assessing it against the Innes Place site which provides the same opportunity it is a less appropriate site. An active crofter in Kinlochbervie felt that the Manse road site was the better croft land and the only land in the village suitable for arable use. It was also considered inappropriate in the landscape capacity study because it would compromise the setting of the church and the existing settlement envelope. In addition our roads colleagues advised that the engineering works required to open up access would need a substantial level of development to justify the costs. Perhaps the fact that this site was allocated back in 1987 and still remains undeveloped shows that the appetite is just not there to overcome these costs. It was therefore considered that land at Innes Place was the more suitable and feasible option with less in the way of upfront infrastructure costs.

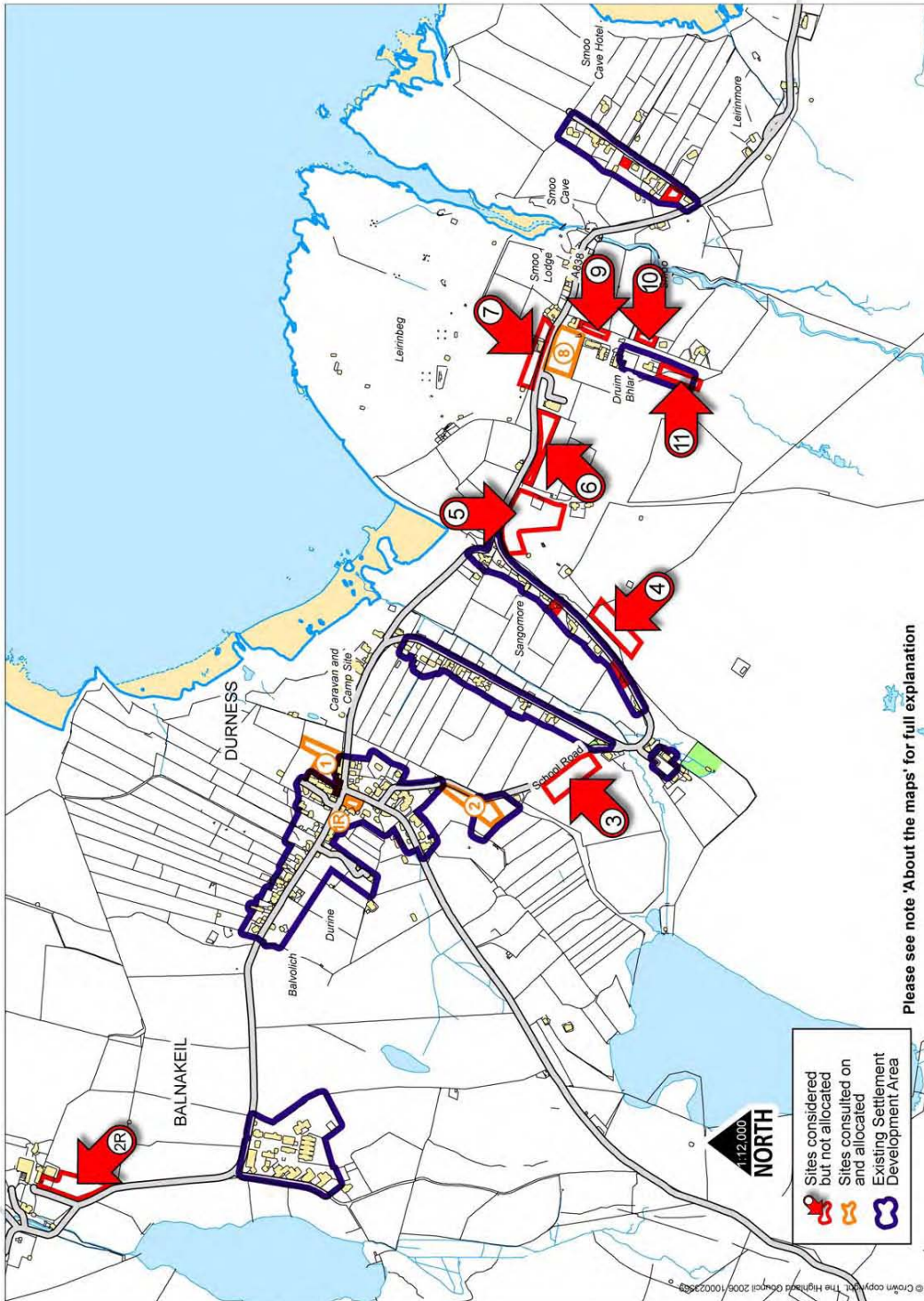
Sites not allocated:

Site 1, Manse road north	This site was not allocated on the basis of the agricultural value of this land, feasibility due to access considerations, and because of the issues established in the SEA about setting of the church and breaking the village envelope.
Site 2, Manse road south	This site has potential but just for two houses so it was appropriate to include it within the SDA rather than allocate. Developer requirements for SEA issues; a footpath from the main road: and a problem with run off water from the hill is highlighted in the text of the Local Plan.
Site 4, Adjacent to the garage	This site was identified as a possible site by the Northern Constabulary but they have subsequently pursued another option and obtained planning permission. Therefore it is not allocated but included within the SDA. However SEA mitigation requiring an assessment of contamination issues is highlighted in the text of the Local plan.
Site 6, Between Loch Bervie – and Loch Clash pier	This site was included within the SDA rather than allocated. The SEA did establish the need for a developer requirement for any proposals within the vicinity of the Church and its Manse to pay due regard to preserving any physical visual link between them.



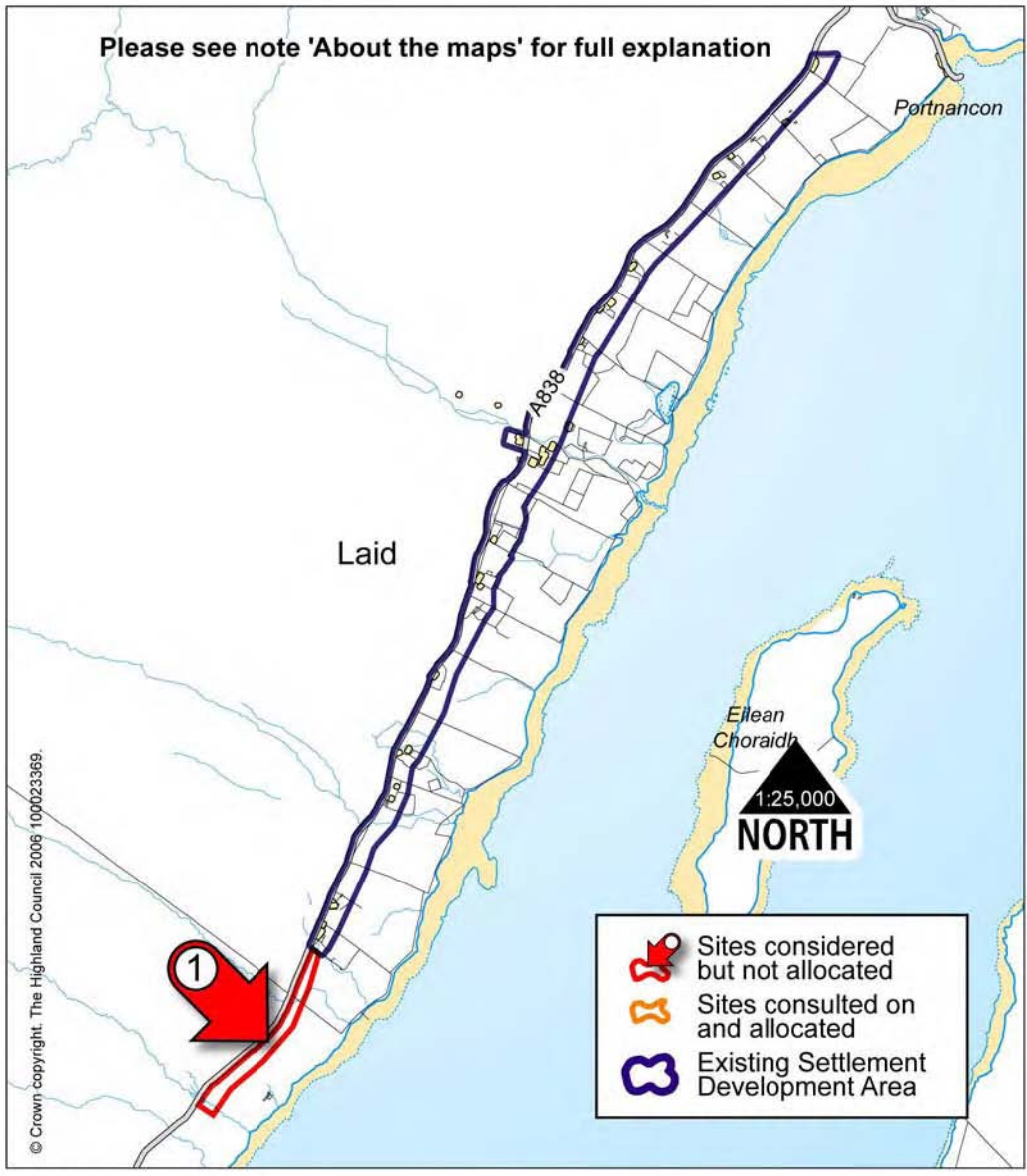


**DURNESS**



Please see note 'About the maps' for full explanation

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## Position Statement for Durness, Laid and Balnakeil

Only the west of School road site was actually removed and this was because of its crofting value having been recently apportioned from the common grazing. The other sites are still within the settlement development area boundary promoted for infill opportunities. Identifying them as site options allowed more focus on their suitability and effectiveness so we could more accurately gauge the level of allocations required to meet our requirements for housing land supply. The options that made it through from Sutherland Futures are suitable for a variety of uses as allocations and offer opportunity for a larger scale of development. The SEA identifies however that the H1 School Road allocation requires mitigation with the road to be stopped off to alleviate a pedestrian safety issue. Also siting and design are critical given its prominent position. These sites have been supplemented in allocation by a site put forward for housing for the elderly or community use.

### Sites not allocated:

Site 2, Durness, West of school road	This site was removed because of its crofting value having been recently apportioned from the common grazings.
Site 4, Durness, East Sangomore	This site was identified in Sutherland Futures but did not reflect the area that the grazings committee and community council meant to promote. In any case the level of development did not require allocation so the SDA boundary was amended to take in some of the new sites put forward by the grazings committee whilst other individual sites would need to be assessed against the general policy framework.
Site 5, Durness, North of Sangomore	This site does not require allocation due to the scale and is therefore retained within the SDA.
Site 6, Durness, West of Village Hall	This site does not require allocation due to the scale and is therefore retained within the SDA.
Site 1, Durness, Smoo - West of Smoo lodge	This site does not require allocation due to the scale and is therefore retained within the SDA. However the eastern area has been omitted because of access problems.
Site 9, Durness, Smoo - South of Caberfeidh cottage	This site does not require allocation due to the scale and is therefore retained within the SDA.
Site 10, Durness, Smoo - South east of Druim Bhlar	This site does not require allocation due to the scale and is therefore retained within the SDA.
Site 11, Durness, Smoo – South of Pamukkale	This site does not require allocation due to the scale and is therefore retained within the SDA.



Site1, Laid – Extension to the south	This site does not require allocation due to the scale and can be assessed against the general policy framework.
Site 2R, Balnakeil – South of the manse	This site was considered inappropriate because of road capacity and access considerations

## **TONGUE & MELNESS**

### Position Statement for Tongue & Melness

One option from Sutherland Futures was not allocated because the scope for development is limited and it just needs to remain within the SDA. The other options from Sutherland Futures made it through as allocations and two of these offer scope for mixed use development. SEA did identify the need for a design statement to be submitted on MU1 and proposals to pay particular regard to the setting of the Manse and the Church and the visual link between them. Also access and pedestrian footway issues flagged up through SEA are solved through mitigation by way of developer requirements for H1 and MU2.

A further site was suggested by the community beyond the edge of the settlement at Hysbackie. It was decided to include this site in the Deposit draft for low density to mitigate its potential effects on the water environment and to suit its location in terms of landscape impact. There were some concerns over the new option put forward as an alternative to the existing allocation at Varich Place. However in terms of SEA there is mitigation which would make allocation of part of this land acceptable. It was not allocated because the existing allocation was considered more suitable and effective, and additional allocations were not considered necessary.

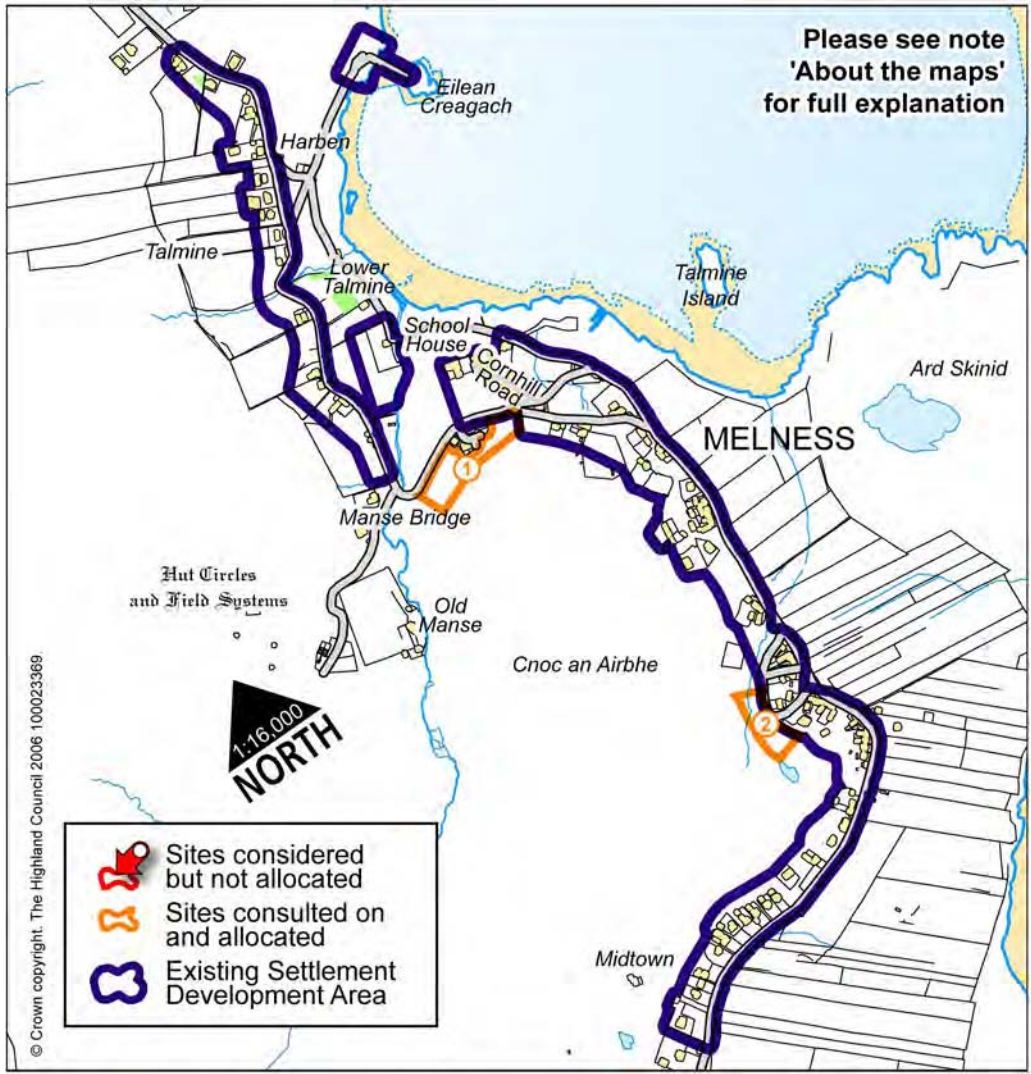
In Melness the two sites identified at Sutherland Futures stage are appropriate sites to develop. However the SEA does come through with advice on developer requirements and development factors so that these sites can come forward sensitively. An additional site was also put forward by the Social Work Service for a replacement care home facility, this came through SEA well, and was allocated.

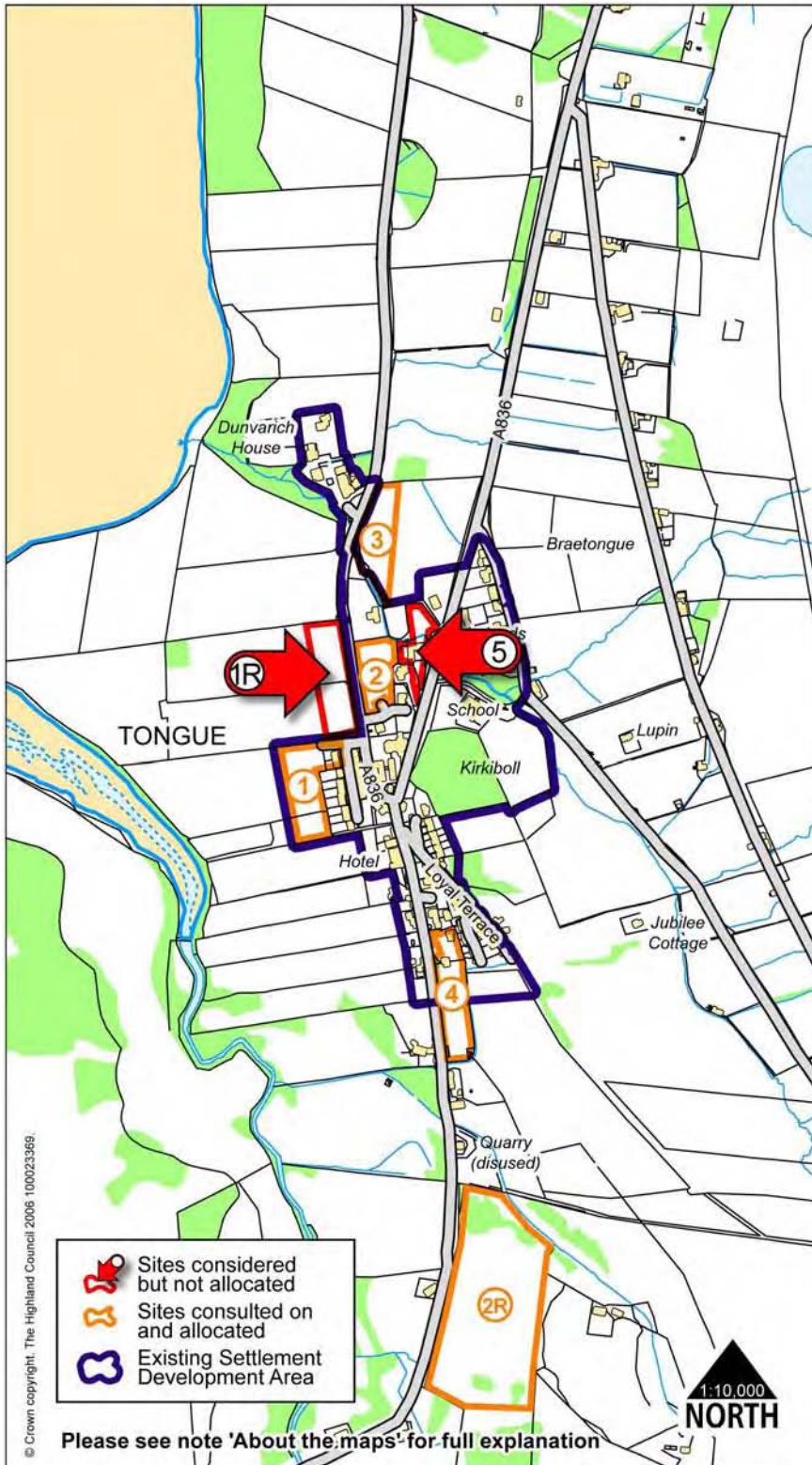
### Sites not allocated:

Site 5, North of Kirkiboll burn	This site has a planning application approved for conversion of the steadings. Anything further that could be developed on this site would not be of a scale that would merit allocation. It therefore remains within the SDA but does not need specific allocation.
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Site 1R, North of Varich Place (referred to in March 07 committee report)

This site was not included. It was suggested by residents of Varich Place as a replacement for the West of Varich Place allocation but there was no material planning reason why the original site should not continue to be allocated.





## BETTYHILL

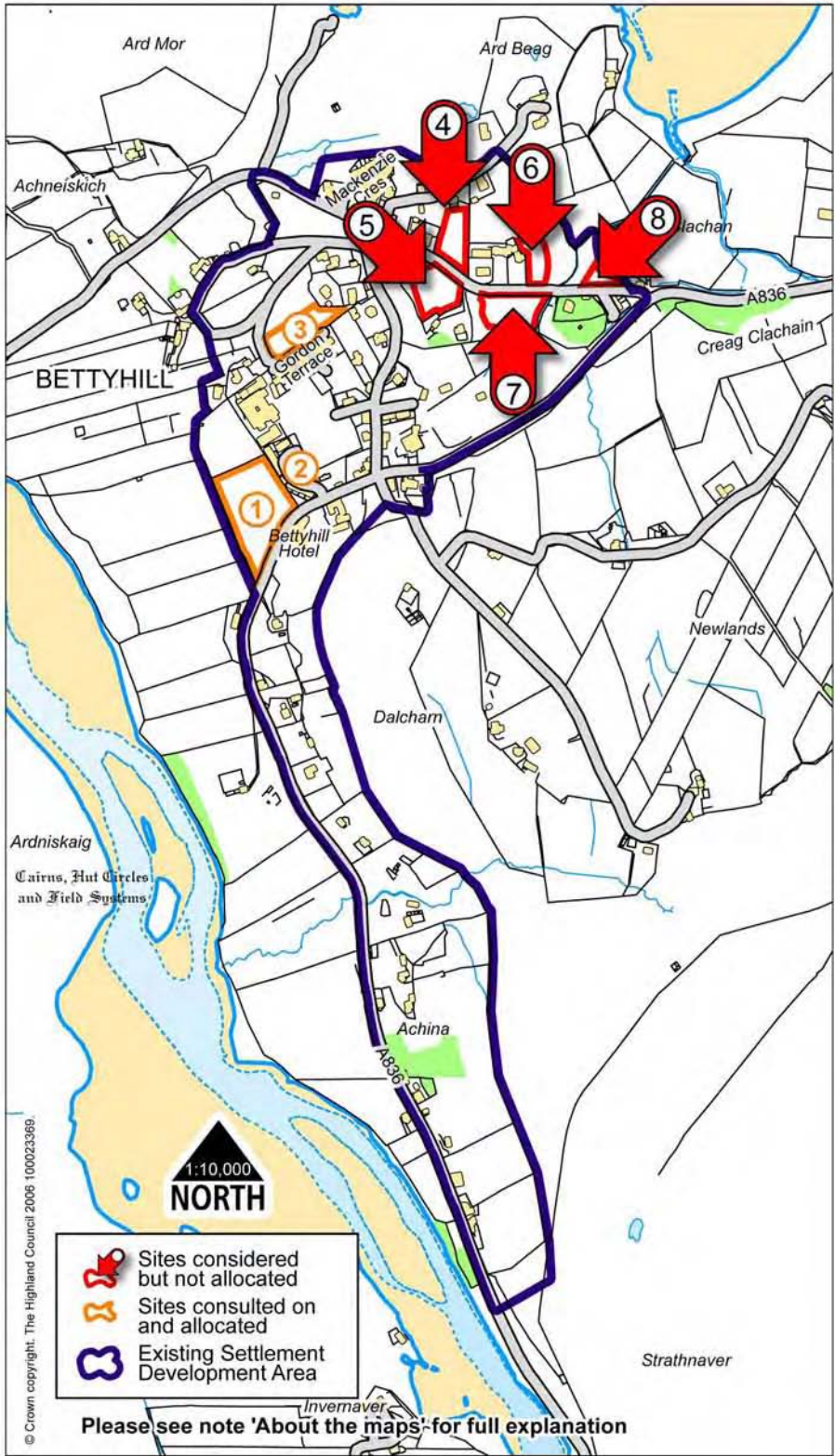
### Position Statement for Bettyhill

The options from Sutherland Futures that made it through for allocation are effective and come through SEA well. They offer scope to a mixture of landowners and provide a good choice of sites. A design brief has been required for H1 and extended for H2 because they are prominent sites on an important entrance to the village. The sites not allocated from Sutherland Futures stage are inbye croft land. The Crofter's Commission were concerned about land here being allocated and certainly some land is of arable quality and therefore inappropriate. Other areas were not actively used and are of significantly lower quality but the crofters involved did not want to release this land for allocation. They may however use the opportunity for some single house development in the future and being within the SDA there will be policy support.

### Sites not allocated:

Site 4, Farr Bay Road - east of Farr Parish Church	This site is partially covered by gorse and does not appear to be actively used but the crofter does not want to see it allocated. It is therefore left within the SDA and has policy support for infill development.
Site 5, Farr Bay Road - south of Farr Parish Church	This site is not locally important croft land however the crofter does not wish this land to be allocated, just opportunity for infill. It is therefore left within the SDA.
Site 6, Farr Bay Road - east of Dunollie	This site was removed after objection from the Crofters Commission that this land is arable and therefore locally important.
Site 7, Farr Bay Road - south of the School House	This site was removed after objection from the Crofters Commission that this land is arable and therefore locally important.
Site 8, Farr Bay Road - north of Farr View	This site was removed after objection from the Crofters Commission that this land is arable and therefore locally important.





## **STRATHY AND ARMADALE**

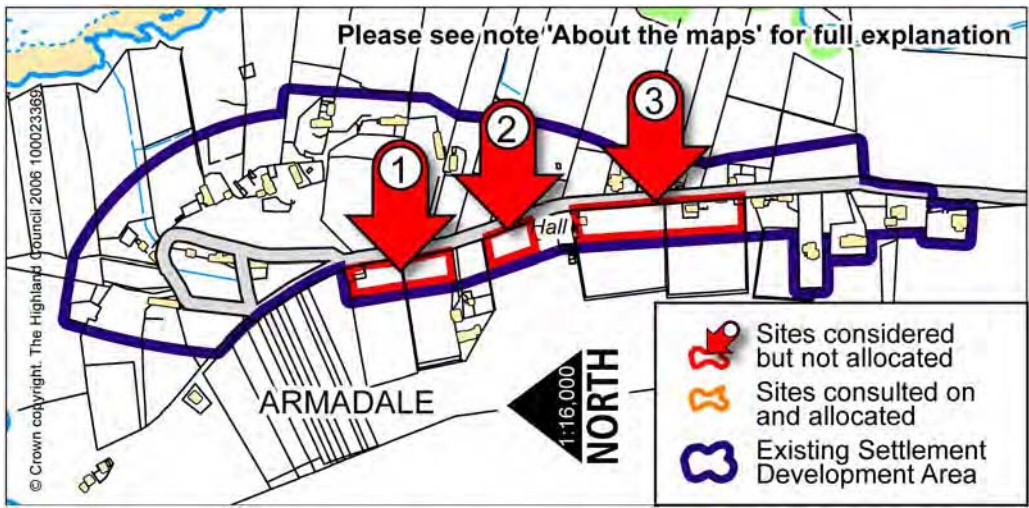
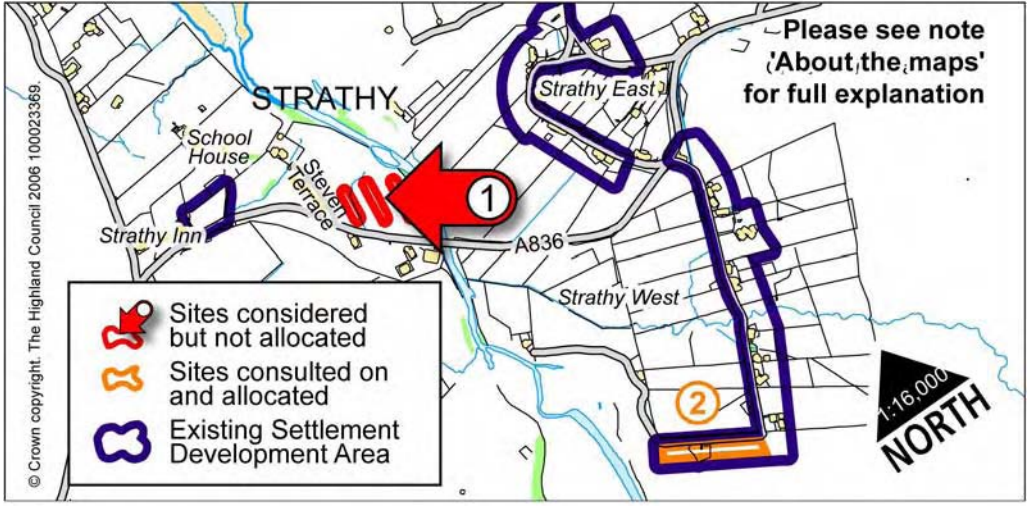
### Position statement for Strathy and Armadale

Armadale has had significant development in its terms with recent completion of the Albyn affordable housing. The options were selected in terms of suitability: fitting into the landscape; reflecting the existing settlement form; and the ability to service them. However these sites are actively crofted inbye and the Local Grazings clerk objected to them when we carried out our consultation. The preferred location for future development was on common grazings to the south of the village. However having had recent affordable housing, the demand coming forward will be for small/single house developments and there is no need for an allocation. For these smaller communities there is a need to assess these sites on their merits against the policy framework.

In Strathy the Steven Terrace site was identified after some desk based research and onsite survey work. It would have offered extra choice and flexibility and could have connected to the spare capacity in the public sewage treatment system. However again this is inbye croft and the crofter has decided he wants to use this land for crofting so it has been removed to reflect his intentions. However the other site option at Strathy west is effective and is well supported locally and has therefore been continued as an allocation. Additionally at Strathy point and Strathy west there will be opportunity for infill development in accordance with the SDA and general policies.

### Sites not allocated:

Site 1, Strathy, Below Steven Terrace	This site was removed because the crofter wants to bring it back into active crofting use and did not want to release it for development.
Site 2, Armadale, South of the village hall	This site was removed because of crofting interests
Site 3, Armadale, North of the village hall	This site was removed because of crofting interests
Site 1, Armadale, South of new affordable homes	This site was removed because of crofting interests



## MELVICH & PORTSKERRA

### Position Statement for Melvich & Portskerra

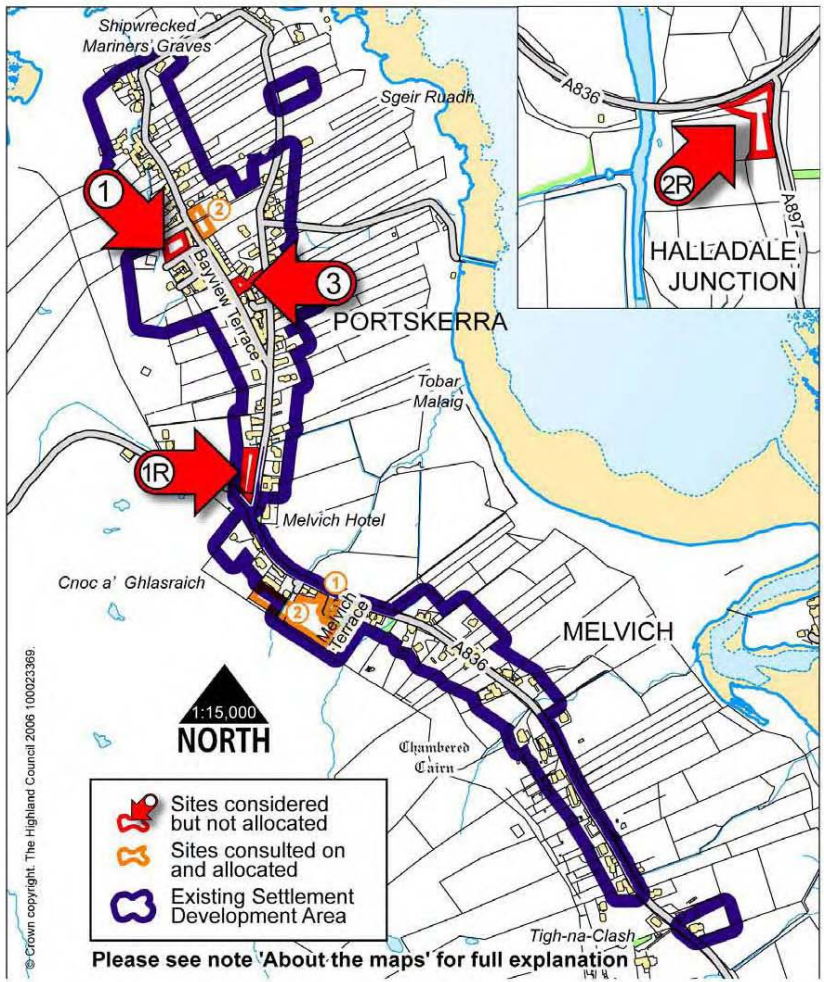
Most site options identified in Melvich & Portskerra were continued but in Portskerra it was difficult to identify a larger site suitable for allocation. Two of the sites capable of this in Portskerra were dropped after Sutherland Futures. However Melvich and Portskerra are adjoining communities and share services and amenities between them so this does not cause a problem as Melvich has retained its larger allocations for housing and business. Thus between them there is a good choice with a mixture of sites.

Two additional sites were investigated after Sutherland Futures. Land south of Portskerra shop was a site identified by the community council. This was an attempt to find a suitable site for something beyond infill within the village. Also croft land at Halladale bridge near Melvich was put forward by a local crofter without objection from the Crofters Commission. However neither of these sites came through SEA and technical appraisal as being suitable and effective for development.

### Sites not allocated:

Site 1, Portskerra, North of Mackay Terrace	This site is removed because the owner's intentions are for small scale infill development
Site 3, Portskerra, South of Sutherland House	This is an attractive feature and its development would close off the openness creating a continuous street which was considered undesirable by the community council.
Site 2R, Melvich, Halladale bridge	This site is unsuitable for allocation after considering its SEA. However a few dispersed houses could come forward and be assessed against the general policies. The landscape impact, inability to connect to the public drainage system and distance from amenities and services mark it out as unacceptable for allocation.
Site 1R, Portskerra, South of Portskerra shop	This site was put forward by the community council and comes through SEA well, but the potential is limited to small scale by access considerations so it is not allocated but remains within the SDA.





## **5.4 Examples which highlight the influence of SEA**

This section helps illustrate how SEA has influenced the Local Plan process, in terms of site selection and site mitigation. The SEA is an important part of the Council's consideration on whether a site should be allocated as it influences the officer's report and recommendations and hence Committee's decision-making. However its impact in helping identify appropriate mitigation measures for sites is just as important.

### **An example where SEA suggested appropriate mitigation within a Settlement Development Area (SDA)**

Scourie has an example of a mitigation measure which came about through SEA of an option from Sutherland Futures which did not go forward as an allocation but remained within the SDA. The option north of the Free Church was a suitable site but did not require allocation. However triggered by question 4 the SEA it identified that a developer requirement for contributions to bring back the 40 mph speed limit, widen the bellmouth junction and for structural improvements and passing places was necessary.

### **Examples where SEA suggested appropriate mitigation for allocated sites**

#### **Lochinver - H2 Cnoc A' Mhuillinn**

Through the SEA the following development requirements were developed.

- Moving the speed restriction and provision of a footpath link - in response to question 4.
- A requirement for a design statement respecting its village entrance location, limiting the eastern area to 1 ½ storey housing and looking for careful siting throughout - in response to question 8 and 11.

#### **Lochinver - I2 Land adjacent to the Assynt Leisure centre**

Through the SEA the following development requirements were developed.

- Development should be set back from the quarry walls with no further freshening of bare rock faces – in response to question 26
- Buildings to be kept low and within the envelope of the quarry and finished in suitable natural colours and materials – in response to question 8+11
- Although flood risk does not directly impinge on the site itself the developer will be required to carry out a Flood Risk Assessment in line with SPP7 in order to demonstrate that proposals enable emergency access to the site during 1 in 200 year events – in response to question 27
- Consideration of past uses required before determining whether an assessment of potential contamination issues is required – in response to question 7

*Further mitigation identified but not through SEA*

The herons must not be disturbed by development close to their nest between March and August. This is not a protected species and the SEA therefore does not deal with it explicitly but it is a natural heritage consideration identified by a member of the public and after consultation with the local ranger it was decided this was how we should mitigate the impact.

**Point of Stoer – H2 south of the radio mast**

Through the SEA the following development requirements were developed.

- This is undulating cnocan landscape with some rocky outcrops. Development should be dispersed and sympathetically sited within the landform to minimise earthworks and the need for blasting – in response to question 8 and 26
- Also the heights, rooflines and orientations could be varied to reflect the underlying terrain – in response to question 11

**Kinlochbervie - H3 Land at Cnoc Ruadh**

Through the SEA the following development requirements were developed.

- Reduce speed limit to 30 mph to get visibility. There may be access gradient issues and since the access is opposite an existing road this will need to be addressed – in response to question 4
- Suitable for linear development, new housing should seek to preserve traditional relationship of a croft house with its land – in response to question 11

*Further mitigation identified but not through SEA*

Remains of the boundary stone walls should be left as intact as possible and prior to any alteration an extensive photographic record would need to be made recording the feature in its original setting. This is not identified in the Sites and Monuments Record and so is not dealt with explicitly in the SEA. However it is an important built heritage feature for interpretation of the historic landscape and therefore merits protection.

**Tongue MU1 – west of the manse**

Through the SEA the following development requirements were developed.

- Safeguard the setting of the Church and its Manse and maintain the relationship and visual link between them - in response to question 14
- A design statement should accompany an application here - in response to questions 8,11 and 14

**Tongue MU2 - north of St Andrews church**

Through the SEA the following development requirements were developed.

- Proposals should be sympathetic to the setting of the church - in response to question 14
- A footway is required to connect to the existing and the speed limit would need to be moved - in response to question 4

### **Melness MU2 – west of the Craggan Hotel**

Through the SEA the following development requirements were developed.

- Careful siting and design to ensure it fits with the strong settlement pattern - in response to question 8 +11
- The road would need to be brought up to adoptable standards - in response to question 4.

### **Examples where SEA leads to not allocating an option**

#### **Site 2R, Melvich - Halladale bridge site**

This site was not allocated because the SEA indicated some concerns, and other sites assessed better. The SEA shows issues over landscape impact, connection to public drainage, and distance to services. The only way to mitigate these concerns effectively is to reduce the potential to a few dispersed houses which could be assessed against the general policies.

#### **Site 3R, Drumbeg - South of Loch Ruighean an Aitinn**

This site is not suitable and feasibility is doubted. SEA ruled out this proposal due to the engineering works necessary, change to landform, and the resultant landscape impact this would have. The impact within the NSA would be too significant and no satisfactory mitigation could be achieved.

### **Examples where factors other than SEA lead to not allocating an option**

#### **Sites 6, 7 and 8, Bettyhill - East of Dunollie, South of the school house, and North of Farr View**

These sites were removed after objection from the Crofters Commission that this land is locally important croft land.

#### **Site 1, and 3, Scourie - West of the caravan and camping site & West of Park Terrace**

These sites were not allocated because of their agricultural value and the crofter's reluctance to release it for development. However in terms of the SEA it is a good site.

#### **Site 8, Scourie - South of the Free Church**

This site was recently apportioned land from the common grazings and therefore the Crofter's Commission objected to its future development. It was felt that the croft land here should be protected from development as there are other more



suitable and effective alternative sites available. In terms of SEA it came through as an acceptable site.

### **Site 3R, Bonar Bridge - Land north of Bonar Bridge, adjacent to Tulloch Cottage**

The proposal for this site was for potential tourism use with 2 or 3 properties being built. The Landscape Capacity Study indicates that it is unlikely to be suitable for development due to landscape value; however this could potentially be mitigated via appropriate and sensitive siting and design. However the SEA is not the only reason for rejecting the site as an allocation. The site, whilst in close proximity to Bonar Bridge, is not within the village or adjacent to any built part of the village. To include it as an allocation within the SDA would mean greatly extending the northern end of the village. The proposal would be better judged against other local plan policies for areas outwith SDAs and allocations.

### **Examples where a combination of factors including SEA lead to not allocating an option**

#### **Site 3R, Culkein Drumbeg - West of Loch Drumbeg**

This site requires a substantial length of access along the peat road which makes only small scale proposals feasible as this would not require public adoption of the road. However a larger proposal would also be sensitive in terms of landscape character. Therefore it is only suitable and effective for a lower level of development which can be assessed against the general policies of the Local Plan rather than being allocated.

#### **Site1, Kinlochbervie - Manse road north**

This site was not allocated on the basis of the agricultural value of this land, feasibility due to access considerations, and because of the issues established in the SEA about setting of the church and breaking the village envelope.

### **Example of a site which is still being taken forward as an allocation even though SEA highlights some issues**

#### **Pittentrail MU1 - Mart Site**

The SEA assessment indicated that the south-eastern corner of site was at risk of 1 in 200 year fluvial flooding and there may be potential contamination issues to be assessed and resolved. However the site is a brownfield site within the settlement boundary. It is a prominent site within the centre of the village which the community is keen to see redeveloped. The concerns highlighted do not preclude the possibility of some development on the site, subject to the careful consideration and resolution of the issues.