

Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Main Centre
2005 Estimated Population	370
Housing Completions 2000-2006	11
Primary/Secondary School Capacity	80% / 71%
Water Capacity	Currently limited but additional capacity projects planned between 2007-2010
Sewerage Capacity	Existing septic tanks have limited capacity

Prospects

Lochinver is the service, employment and tourist centre for south west Sutherland and is dominated by its major fishery port, deep water berth and reclaimed land. The Main Street area is the location for many of the community facilities and has a distinct linear form which is an attractive feature within the National Scenic Area. Further to the South, port related facilities together with industrial land and the Assynt Leisure centre are backed by some 36 hectares of community woodlands at Culag.

Infill opportunities continue to be brought forward within the village and recently the development of eight affordable homes was accommodated at Inver Park. However in recognition of the longstanding shortage of readily developable land together with infrastructure restrictions, a housing study was recently undertaken.

In Assynt housing completions data has indicated that the majority of development has been accommodated within the townships rather than within Lochinver itself leaving infrastructure in many cases close to or at its capacity. Even within the village the septic tanks are close to capacity with the exception of the Inver Park tank which has capacity for a further 13 houses. However Lochinver has been identified in the top priority category for lifting this constraint and Scottish Water is committed to funding the upgrade required when planning permission is granted for more housing. The current information on water supply suggests that it is constrained. However it is believed that the decrease in water usage at the harbour combined with improvements to leakage will cope with demands placed within this plan period and projects are planned within the next three years to upgrade capacity.

Therefore it is important that an effective land supply is identified within Lochinver or as close to its services as possible. However, rising land, ground conditions, crofting, and servicing all constrain the options for growth and there is a need to identify sufficient opportunity for the next phase of development to meet the needs that remain unmet and to plan future growth.

The Assynt Estate has been investigating the potential of land at Cnoc A Mhullinn at the entrance to the village and they hold further potential for development at the sheep stock pens. In the longer term dependent on an engineering assessment there may be potential to loop through to Cnoc A Mhullin and open up further land here.

In 2005 there was a community buyout of the Glencanisp and Drumrunie Estates south of Lochinver. Since then the Assynt Foundation have been investigating the development opportunities and a full feasibility study for housing development will be undertaken shortly in Glencanisp. The level of development potential in this area which is roughly 1 kilometre from the village may be determined by feasibility in terms of road upgrades required. However in the context of the constraints experienced within Lochinver itself it is an appropriate location to accommodate a fairly significant level of development.

Development Factors

- Lochinver lies within a National Scenic Area so particular care needs to be taken with regards to sensitive siting and design of development;
- Low downward emission design street lights;
- Development within the regenerating woodland at Glendarrach can be accommodated but the loss of woodland should be limited and setting protected as much as possible.

Developer Requirements

- A flood risk assessment in line with SPP7 would be required for land adjacent to the pottery.

Site Allocations

Site Ref.	Site Area	Location	Housing Capacity	Developer Requirements
H1	0.7ha	Sheep pens north of Inver Park	6 units	The sheep fanks should be relocated at the developer's expense. The indicative capacity shown is constrained to that level by access.
H2	2.9ha	Cnoc A Mhuillin	12 units	At the entrance to the village and prominent so any application will need to be accompanied by a design statement. The speed restriction will need to be moved and a footpath link into the site is required. The eastern area should be limited to 1 ½ storey housing and careful siting throughout is vital.
H3	n/a	Glencanisp	5-10 within the plan period with 30 long term dependent on feasibility/availability of the glebe and landscape capacity/siting considerations	The public road is in poor condition and needs upgrading. The private road would not stand up to the construction of any amount of housing and requires major upgrading to bring up to adoptable standard. The land being investigated is on the south of the road here and potentially extends to the church glebe land to the west of the river Alt Loch Bad na Goibhre. Important that housing development here is sensitively accommodated within cnocan landscape, good design is also essential mitigation and a design statement and a safer routes to school plan are required.
I1	1.1ha	Culag Harbour	-	Developer will be required to carry out a Flood Risk Assessment in line with SPP7 as part of this site lies within a 1 in 200 year risk of coastal flooding.
I2	1.4ha	Land adjacent to the Assynt Leisure centre	-	Development should be set back from the quarry walls with no further quarrying or freshening of bare rock faces. Buildings to be kept low and within the envelope of the quarry and finished in suitable natural colours and materials. 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. The herons must not be disturbed by development close to their nest between March and August. Consideration of past uses before determining whether an assessment of potential contamination issues is required.
LT1	1.4ha	West of the Coast Guards	-	Beyond the existing developed area of the harbour and has longer term potential which should be fulfilled after other opportunities within Culag have been taken forward. Comments above relating to freshening of the rock faces and design and finish of the buildings also apply here. The site will require sensitive treatment and a design brief is required. 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. The herons must not be disturbed by development close to their nest between March and August. Consideration of past uses before determining whether an assessment of potential contamination issues is required.

(Housing capacities are indicative only and given on the basis of likely development densities.)

