

The Highland Council

**Sutherland Local Plan
Deposit Draft October 2007**

**Statement of Publicity and Consultation
Leading to the Deposit Draft Local Plan**

Introduction

This report is required under Regulation 30(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Structure and Local Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 1983. It summarises the procedures that the Council as a Planning Authority has carried out in order to secure the necessary degree of public participation in the preparation of this Local Plan.

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Section 1: Timetable of events

The following table sets out the activities undertaken by the Local Plan Team to raise awareness of the Local Plan and determine the views of the general public and other stakeholders. Supporting information (including examples) is available in Section 2 following the table, on the pages as indicated in the right hand column.

<p>June 2005 Informal phase of work</p>	<p>The Sutherland Local Housing Development Forum is attended by those with an interest in affordable housing provision.</p> <p>A representative of the Local Plan team attended these meetings bi monthly and the Local Plan was accepted as a standing item on the agenda and considered at each subsequent meeting.</p> <p>At one of the first meetings we considered the draft housing land audit as a group and the effectiveness of the allocations in the existing Local Plans covering the Sutherland area.</p>	
<p>June 2005</p>	<p>Report to Sutherland County Committee to update members on progress on a number of specific areas of ongoing work which were informing our identification of site options and Settlement Development Area (SDA) boundaries. This includes the draft Sutherland Housing Land Audit and the Sutherland Landscape Capacity Study.</p>	<p>Committee Report (page 10)</p>
<p>October 2005</p>	<p>Report to Sutherland County Committee which asked Members to agree to the formal commencement of the preparation of the new Sutherland Local Plan and included a Project Plan which details the process by which the Local Plan will be prepared and target dates for each stage.</p>	<p>Committee Report (page 13)</p>
<p>November 2005</p>	<p>Sutherland Local Plan web site is set up to improve access to Local Plan information. All subsequent reports, background papers, ward profiles, newsletters and revised timetables were placed on this website with the opportunity available for people to respond to us electronically using our contact email address sutherlandlp@highland.gov.uk</p>	<p>http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/Sutherland-local-plan.htm</p>

November 2005	Publish 1st Newsletter which included a simple user friendly guide to Local Plans and the Planning System, the proposed timetable for the plan and an explanation of why we need public involvement.	Issue 1 of the Sutherland Local Plan Newsletter (page 20)
November 2005	Circulation of Background Papers on Housing, Business/Economic Development and the Environment	Background papers available at: http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/Sutherland-local-plan.htm
November 2005	Circulation of ward profiles to every household with details of population change, number of households, employment and services so the general public understand the context for the Local Plan. Also circulated was a feedback form to draw out the public's responses to the key issues facing the area.	Ward Profiles (page 24) Feedback form (page 25)
November 2005	Publish Intention to prepare Advert in The Northern Times and Edinburgh Gazette	Advert (page 28)
November 2005	Initiated by our release of Background Papers there was an Article in the Northern Times about the review of the Local Plan, talking about some of the key issues for the area, detailing the public's opportunity to get involved, with the chairman of the planning committee urging people to get involved.	Article in the Northern Times (page 29)
May 2006	Article in the Northern Times which raises awareness that the review of the Local Plan is underway particularly drawing attention to housing site options in Dornoch and Embo. This was initiated by Councillor Duncan Allan's vision.	Article (page 30)

June 2006	Committee Report indicating the progress on preparation of the Sutherland Local Plan. It draws together the main themes arising from initial consultation with stakeholders and the public; identifies key issues for the Plan; and invites Members to agree publication of a Newsletter to be circulated widely throughout the Area, summarising these matters. In addition a revised timetable was also set out.	Committee Report (pages 31 – 39) Minutes (pages 40 – 41)
June 2006	2nd Newsletter summarising the main themes coming from initial consultation with stakeholders and the community and identifying the key issues for the plan.	Issue 2 of the Sutherland Local Plan Newsletter (pages 42 - 44)
September 2006	Committee Report for approval of the Sutherland Local Plan Issues and Options paper 'Sutherland Futures' for circulation as widely as possible throughout the area and to stakeholders.	Committee Report is available at: http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/committees/archivepremay2007/sutherland/sutherlandcounty/2007-03-19-sa-min.htm Minutes (page 45)
October 2006	Publication of Sutherland Futures which was sent out to our stakeholders, landowners, to members of the general public who responded to the Background Papers and to the local service points, libraries, and post offices. Sutherland Futures contains a vision for the area suggesting what kind of place Sutherland should be 20 years from now; key forecasts and a sustainable strategy for the future; along with the land requirements and the key site options being considered for development. It also invites people to attend our exhibitions and meetings and offers an enclosed form to submit comments by the 15 December.	Sutherland Futures is available at: http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/Sutherlandfutures.htm
October 2006	A Public Notice was placed in the Northern Times every week from the 13 October to 24 November to advise people of the opportunity to give us feedback on our consultation document Sutherland Futures and the timescale for submitting comments. Also included were details of the public exhibitions and meetings.	Public Notice in the Northern Times (page 46)
October 2006	Initiated by our press release the article on the 13 th of October explains the	Northern Times article (page 47)

	public's opportunity to get involved in the plan preparation and highlights the publication of "Sutherland Futures" and what this will cover. It also gives details of the public exhibitions and meetings.	
October/November 2006	Initiated by our press releases there were articles published in October/November with details of the exhibitions and meetings being held that week detailing some of the key options for these places.	Northern Times articles (pages 48 – 51)
October/ November 2006	<p>In each of the 17 community council areas afternoon exhibitions were held followed by evening meetings chaired by the Local Members. In addition to the public notices, awareness was raised through the publication and distribution of Sutherland Futures and by local posters.</p> <p>The exhibitions allowed people the opportunity to come and talk to us in person and view the display and talk about the options for their community.</p> <p>The evening sessions started with a presentation which briefly summarised the vision and strategy of the plan, its likely format and our consideration of the site options. Then we opened up to allow the community the chance to debate the issues, give us feedback, and ask questions.</p>	Example of poster (page 52)
November 2006	An additional exhibition was arranged for Embo along with a bus to take people through to the evening meeting in Dornoch. The exhibition is advertised through posters and an article in the Northern Times.	Article in the Northern Times (page 53)
December 2006	Initiated by our press release there was an article in the Northern Times on the 8 December highlighting that the deadline for comments on the Sutherland Local Plan was just a week away.	Article in the Northern Times (page 54)
January 2007	<p>Consultation with pupils of Kinlochbervie High School. A short presentation was given to give a simple and engaging explanation of the planning system and the Local Plan before facilitating the following exercises with small groups.</p> <p>A - Find where you live (using our electronic mapping on laptops)</p> <p>B - Tell us your ideas for improvements to your area</p>	Involvement Questionnaire Results (pages 55 - 57)

	<p>C - Choose sites for new development</p> <p>D - Let us know how you think we should get you involved in the future (which gave us information on how best to carry out our engagement with communities and how successful our session had been)</p>	
February 2007	Consultation with Golspie and Dornoch secondary schools following the same format as with Kinlochbervie.	
March / April 2007	After considering the feedback from the consultation on 'Sutherland Futures' a summary of the main issues was prepared and committee direction was sought on these along with direction on the sites identified in Sutherland Futures. Draft objectives and general policies were also included for consideration.	Committee report (pages 58 – 139) Minutes from the meetings (pages 140 – 151)
June 2007	Following the Council elections in May when only one of members from Sutherland was re-elected, a meeting was held with the members of the new North West and Central Sutherland Ward to explain the progress made on the Local Plan and to seek their feedback as we prepare a Deposit Draft for committee. A separate meeting was also held with members of the East Sutherland and Edderton ward.	
June 2007	<p>A consultation exercise was carried out in North Assynt as at the Lochinver meeting for Sutherland Futures we were made aware that the Assynt Crofters Trust were beginning to consult with their local grazings clerks to identify sites.</p> <p>The first session was with an invited group of infrastructure providers, Assynt Crofters Trust representatives, local grazing clerks and the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust.</p> <p>There was an initial presentation to give details of the plan framework and the progress being made. Then each site that was put forward through the Trust was given our initial assessment looking at the technical feasibility and suitability and whether the level of development proposed would require an allocation or could be considered within the policy framework of the Local Plan. After each site we opened up to discussion.</p> <p>The second session was a public exhibition with details of the sites on</p>	

	display boards and the opportunity for the public to submit comments to us on a comment form and talk to us about the Local Plan.	
September 2007	Joint Wards Business Group to present to them the draft Local Plan picking out the changes that have been made from the points raised when we met in June. This gave us a recommendation on the current draft of the written statement for the Planning, Environment and Development Committee.	
September 2007	The Deposit Draft of the Sutherland Local Plan is approved by the Planning Environment and Development Committee and authorised for placement on Deposit allowing formal objections to be made on the route towards final adoption.	The committee report and minutes of the meeting (pages 152 – 160)
Ongoing	Various meetings were held throughout the plan process with key partners in Sutherland. These included Scottish Water, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Crofters Commission, and the Sutherland Partnership board.	

Section 2 Supporting information / examples

These appear on the pages that follow and are referred to in the table in Section 1.

Agenda Item	19
Report No	123/05

Sutherland Local Plan – Progress Report

Report by Director of Planning & Development

SUMMARY

This report updates members on progress on preparation of the Sutherland Local Plan and provides details of a number of specific areas of ongoing work which will inform the identification of development site options and Settlement Development Area boundaries once the formal phases of plan preparation begin. Members are asked to note the progress to date.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the preparation of the Sutherland Local Plan is taking place over the course of 2005 and 2006. Following initial discussions, background work has been progressing and it is anticipated that a detailed Project Plan will be presented to the August County Committee, following which the initial stages of public involvement will be carried out.
- 1.2 This report details the work that has been carried out to date, and indicates how this will inform the next stage of the Local Plan preparation process.

2.0 DRAFT SUTHERLAND HOUSING LAND AUDIT

- 2.1 One of the key issues facing Sutherland during the Local Plan period is the provision of sufficient effective land for general and affordable housing. A key exercise carried out has therefore been an audit of land identified for housing within the existing Local Plans and an appraisal of current development pressures throughout Sutherland. The Draft report is attached, and any comments Members may have on the content or style would be welcomed prior to it forming part of the background papers for the Local Plan.
- 2.2 Members will note from the draft document that a number of allocated sites have not seen any development to date. The land audit document will form a crucial basis for discussions with landowners, developers, partner agencies and the public to determine which sites remain effective and should be retained within the new Plan, and which are non-effective or completed.
- 2.3 Where there is a shortage of available sites, the Local Plan will seek to identify new areas for growth for discussion with communities. A number of new site options have already been put forward for inclusion within the Local Plan process, for example, the Lochinver Housing Study sites (see para. 6.3), the old Brora Woollen Mill, the Ardgay Station Yard and the Rogart Auction Mart. Options for further new sites will of course be drawn up as the Plan progresses, in discussion with interested parties.

3.0 PLANNING AID WORKSHOPS

- 3.1 Planning Aid, which is a registered charity offering free planning advice, set up and facilitated two community workshops held in Golspie in April and Lairg in May. These workshops were attended by community representatives and the Local Plan process was explained to them in some detail. Feedback has been positive. It is hoped that these workshops will have contributed to a greater understating of what the Local Plan is setting out to achieve and thereby increase engagement of the public throughout the process.

4.0 LIAISON WITH THE CROFTERS COMMISSION

- 4.1. In order to ensure joint working and the effective engagement of the crofting community, discussions have been undertaken with the Crofters Commission. A pilot exercise has been carried out in Skye & Lochalsh as part of the Local Plan preparation in that Area, and it is hope that a similar approach will be utilised in Sutherland. This involved the Commission writing to each Common Grazings Committee setting out the purpose of the Local Plan and seeking views on which areas of land might be suitable for development within their area. The response has been encouraging and the lessons learned will be adopted in the Sutherland Local Plan preparation.

5.0 SETTLEMENT LANDSCAPE CAPACITY STUDY

- 5.1 A Landscape Capacity Study is being carried out to inform the identification of settlement boundaries. The outcomes of this study, the first phase of which is nearing completion, will be considered alongside important infrastructure provision information, servicing requirements and crofting issues to ensure that the Settlement Development Areas reflect the most appropriate areas for development in the more rural areas during the Plan period.

6.0 OTHER ISSUES

- 6.1 A number of other areas of work have been carried out, and will be inform or contribute to the Local Plan process. These include:
- 6.2 **Lochinver Housing Study** - The study commenced in 2004 with the main public consultation on a number of potential sites in June and July of that year. At the Assynt Community Council meeting on 30 September a report was given on the responses to the consultation exercise. The Community Council considered these responses and made their own comments in November. Around the same time views were also obtained from the Inver Common Grazings Committee and Assynt Estate /Mr Edmund Vestey.
- 6.3 Aside from the issues over the inclusion of land the subject of the planning application at Inver Park (site 3), there was considerable support for inclusion of Sites 1 (East of Main Street), 2 (Cnoc a Mhuillin) and 4 (the Sheep Fank) in proposed interim planning guidance. However, the Estate cast doubt over the suitability of the upper part of Site 1 because of the excessive depth of peat. A previous feasibility study by Matheson, MacKenzie and Ross was extended to examine this area and clarify this particular aspect. This needs to be completed to enable a report in full to the County Committee and finalise the site boundaries/area. The previous deadline of 28 February 2005 set by Housing Services came and went before additional engineering survey work (probing) by Halcrows commenced. The latest date for the consultants to report back is 30 June 2005.

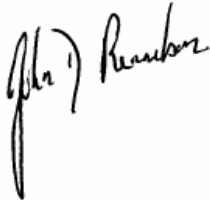
- 6.4 **South Bonar Industrial Estate** - Further to the South and East Sutherland Local Plan (2000) a draft Development Brief for South Bonar Industrial Estate was produced in September 2004. This looked at the estate in its entirety and its suitability for development. This took account of two studies: a flood risk assessment, and investigations into the ground conditions as a result of former uses. The Brief outlined an option (dependant on private investment and ERDF funding) that remediation of the site took place and that flood protection works were carried out before the site be marketed for business and community uses. Unfortunately, private sector interests have now withdrawn, effectively ending the immediate possibility of private or European monies for the estate.
- 6.5 The Council was however, successful with a bid of £100, 000 from the Scottish Executive in order to carry out remediation works. This can be added to the £36, 000 in the Capital Programme for environmental improvements, giving a total of £136, 000 to be spent on the estate this financial year. It is planned that an updated Brief will go to the next Sutherland County Committee in August of this year. This will outline a future programme of works including land assembly, appointment of consultants to carry out remediation works and take forward environmental improvements and an updated planning concept for the site.
- 6.6 In addition to this, the review of the Sutherland Local Plan may wish to consider whether finding a new business site with less of a flood risk may be appropriate. Certainly it would seem sensible to relocate the fire station to a less vulnerable area in light of recent Executive guidance.
- 6.7 **Other Strategies** – The new Local Plan will also tie in and ensure compatibility with other strategies such as the Renewable Energy Strategy and the Core Path Network Plan.

7.0 **NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 The formal Project Plan will be presented to the August 2005 County Committee, and this will be the formal start of the Plan preparation process. This Project Plan will include full details of the proposed public participation as well as the definitive timetable for producing a Deposit Draft Local Plan during 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

That members note the progress being made on the preparation of the Sutherland Local Plan and offer comment on issues that need to be addressed as work on the Plan moves forward



Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning & Development

Agenda Item	3
Report No	185/05

THE SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN

Report by Director of Planning and Development

SUMMARY

This report asks Members to agree formal commencement of the preparation of the new Sutherland wide local plan. It also requests the approval of the content of the attached Project Plan, which details the process by which the Plan will be prepared and the target dates for each stage.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 20 June 2005, I reported on the progress with the review of the existing local plans covering Sutherland and the intention to replace these with a single Area wide plan. This included reference to the Housing Land Audit, Planning Aid workshops, liaison with the Crofters Commission, the Settlement Landscape Capacity Study and other ongoing work in Lochinver and at South Bonar Industrial Estate. This work together with site visits and consultation will help inform the identification of development site options and Settlement Development Area boundaries once the formal phases of plan preparation begin.
- 1.2 I also advised that the formal Project Plan was to be presented to the August 2005 County Committee, and this will be the formal start of the Plan preparation process. Unfortunately, the pressure of other committed work combined with staffing changes forced the deferral of this report until now. This report should therefore be read in conjunction with the attached Project Plan, which includes details of the proposed consultation process as well as the definitive timetable for producing a Deposit Draft Local Plan in autumn 2006.

2.0 NEW LOCAL PLAN FORMAT AND CONSULTATION

- 2.1 In 2004 the Scottish Executive issued advice urging the preparation of a new style of **shorter and simpler** local plans than those prepared to date. This is further emphasised in the White Paper on Modernising the Planning System, published by the Scottish Executive in July 2005. The attached Project Plan contains more details of this streamlined format which has already been piloted successfully in Wester Ross. A short verbal presentation will explain the advantages of this format. It will contain fewer policies and be of modular format which means complicated cross-referencing is kept to a minimum and therefore local residents will only need to read the parts of the Plan of most interest to them. There will also be fewer policy boundaries on the mapping. A single, outer boundary will suffice for many communities, giving greater flexibility and scope for discretion in decision making. Also, more emphasis is to be placed on **results and implementation**. An action plan will be produced to ensure proposals are followed through and checks on performance are made through regular monitoring. Moreover, increased clarity will mean more certainty for those making investment decisions whether this is the private sector or public agencies.

- 2.2 Shorter will mean **faster**. The **timescale** for the new Plan will be approximately two years from the formal commencement advertisement to adoption by the Council. Although this timescale will be dependent upon the availability of resources, it will hopefully appease the concerns of Members that policies and allocations become out of date too quickly and make the Plan more responsive to local communities. This is also the basis for achieving the regular review of local plan every five years as envisaged in the Scottish Executive guidance
- 2.3 **Community consultation will be made more effective** by concentrating on quality rather quantity. Previous methods of local plan consultation have either raised too many false hopes by giving residents free rein in making land use suggestions or have promoted negative reactions by not providing any choices or opportunity for debate. The Project Plan suggests targeted consultation on a limited number of land use options with a range of informed and representative individuals and organisations.

3.0 **PROJECT PLAN**

- 3.1 The Project Plan comprises seven sections giving details on:
1. the principal clients and objectives;
 2. the need to provide a more up to date local plan for Sutherland;
 3. the context for the plan, notably the links with other plans, legislation and guidance;
 4. the key trends and issues affecting the plan area;
 5. proposed engagement with communities, various consultees and other interests;
 6. the key outputs; and
 7. the proposed timetable with the key stages in preparation of the local plan.

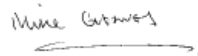
4.0 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The staff resources required for this project are included in the existing Work Programme.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee endorse the decision to prepare the Sutherland Local Plan and approve the content of the attached Project Plan as the process by which that Plan will be prepared. In particular, Committee approval is sought for the publication of the Plan's statutory commencement advertisement and initial public consultation procedures.

Signature:



Designation: Head of Development and Strategy

Date: 23 September 2005

Author: Alan Ogilvie 01463-702262

Background Papers/Local Government (Access to information) Act 1985

1. Making Development Plans Deliver: Consultation Paper: The Scottish Executive: May 2004
2. White Paper on Modernising the Planning System: Consultation Paper: The Scottish Executive: July 2005
3. Adopted Local Plan: Golspie & Lairg
4. Adopted Local Plan: North West Sutherland: May 1987
5. Adopted Local Plan: Tongue & Farr: October 1995
6. Adopted Local Plan: South & East Sutherland: May 2000

SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN

PROJECT PLAN

1 Clients & Objectives

- 1.1 These are many and varied but the Plan's principal clients and their primary objectives can be summarised as below.

Client	Primary Objective
Local Communities	A plan responsive to local need and circumstance
The Highland Council [THC] Members	A vehicle for action adopted as quickly and efficiently as possible
THC Officials	A robust framework for development control
Scottish Executive	Consistency with national planning policies
Agency Partners & Private Sector	A Plan that minimises risk when making investment decisions via a clear, consistent and up-to-date development framework

- 1.2 It is proposed to prepare and progress a new Sutherland Local Plan to adoption by November 2007. It will be intended to guide development over a ten year period.

2 Why Replace the Plan?

- 2.1 A new local plan is required for the following reasons: -

- THC has a statutory duty to prepare and keep up to date a local plan for each of its areas.
- All four of the Adopted Local Plans covering Sutherland are now more than five years old. These therefore have less value in guiding development control decisions and no longer contribute positively to the Scottish Executive's performance indicator for local plans.
- Despite falling population, there is pressure for housing development requiring more land to be earmarked for affordable and private dwellings. The need to provide for new employment opportunities and community facilities is also necessary to help sustain communities.
- The Scottish Executive recently issued advice urging the preparation of a new style of local plan, which will be far shorter and simpler in format and content than many predecessor plans.
- Area Committees now have given greater control over the decision making process for local plans. Up to consideration of any public local inquiry report, the Area Committee will determine the Plan's content and how to respond to objections. A new local plan would therefore have a greater feeling of ownership at the local level.

3 Context - Links with Other Plans, Legislation & Guidance

- 3.1 The **European Commission** and the **Scottish Executive** set the legislative and national policy context within which the new Plan must be prepared. Strategic Environmental Assessment [SEA] is one example of how new legislation will impact upon the preparation and content of the new Plan.
- 3.2 The **Highland Community Plan 2004-2007** sets a Highland-wide context for the preparation of the new Plan. During this period current and emerging local community planning partnerships (LCCPs) will be supported. The three strategic aims of the new Community Plan are particularly relevant to Sutherland: encouraging more people to choose to live and work in Highland; promoting equity across Highland, and; improving Highland's infrastructure.
- 3.3 The **Structure Plan** remains THC's corporate land use planning policy framework. It will shape the content of the new Plan but also allows flexibility to local circumstance.

- 3.4 THC has approved its own **development plan policy guidelines** for particular land use issues that have Highland-wide implications. Guidelines on Affordable Housing, Housing in the Countryside and Designing for Sustainability will be cross-referred in the new local plan. Other THC and other agency policy documents with particular relevance to Sutherland may also be relevant.

4 Key Trends & Issues

- 4.1 In terms of **demography**, 13,800 people live within a 6071 km² land area. At 2.2 persons per km² Sutherland is the most sparsely populated Area of Highland (7.7/km²). During the 1990's the population declined by 0.5%, contrasting with growth of 2.4% in Highland. Sutherland has a significantly higher proportion than Highland of its population in the and very oldest age groups (age 65+: 21.9% compared to 16.6%) and a lower proportion in the very youngest age groups (0-15: 17.8% compared to 19.6%). The under-representation of young adults in the age structure is Highland-wide but is also particularly pronounced in Sutherland (age 16-24: 7.3% compared to 9.3%). The new Plan will forecast how the Area's population is expected to change over the Plan period.
- 4.2 The **implications for service provision** are significant. The comparatively low numbers of those of working age and consequently comparatively high numbers of those in the more dependant older age groups, coupled with the dispersed distribution of that population, means that public service provision is likely to be costly and the potential to generate local tax revenue poor. It is also likely to mean that private sector investment interest will be low in terms of retail and other developments requiring a concentrated, high spending catchment. The new Plan will consider whether concentrating future development will make public and private service provision more economic.
- 4.3 Forecasting **future population and household numbers** is complex. There are currently around 7800 residential addresses within Sutherland. Around 18% of these are not occupied by permanent residents (second/holiday homes and vacant properties). The 2001 Census established that there were 6,281 resident households in the area, a growth of 658 (10.5%) from 1991 despite the population decline in the same period. The new Plan will forecast how household figures are expected to change over the next 10 years relative to population forecasts. More specific housing requirements will be indicated in Settlement Profiles and Background Papers to be produced for circulation in November 2005.
- 4.4 The growing need for affordable housing in Sutherland is influenced by: increased home ownership through right to buy; the influx of persons retiring to the area from other parts of the UK; the growth in holiday or second home ownership; development pressures in the Inner Moray Firth housing market area; and development constraints such as drainage, physical conditions, ownership and important crofting interests. In many places more affordable housing is essential to support inward investment and prevent further population decline. The new Plan will reflect investment priorities identified in the Housing Strategy by the Local Housing Development Forum.
- 4.5 In terms of **economic structure**, Sutherland varies from the Highland average in terms of under-representation in the business, manufacturing, retail and distribution sectors. Over-representation occurs in the primary sector particularly in agriculture/crofting, fishing, tourism, public administration, education and health. A significant number of jobs were lost in textile manufacturing, telecommunications, transport and distribution and fishing in the last 20 years, which have had a profound impact on communities such as Brora, Lairg and Lochinver. While unemployment is now at its lowest for some time (2.7% in June 2005), so are the number of jobs. This continues to cause many young people leave Sutherland as well as for further education and training. However, a survey of people who left over the past 20 years found that a massive 75% of them would like to return to the county if suitable jobs were available for them and their families. The attraction of new development such as the lithium ion battery recycling plant to Golspie and the Essentiagroup contact centre and community learning/business training centre to Brora provide optimism in this regard. The new Plan will consider whether additional innovative opportunities can be exploited and unlock potential to help create a strong, diverse and sustainable economy where quality of life is matched by quality of opportunity.
- 4.6 The **high quality natural environment and diverse historic background** underpin tourism in Sutherland. The beaches, rated by many as the best in Britain, some of the very finest mountainous scenery and places of cultural and historic interest are internationally renowned. These together with

long standing attractions such as the Falls of Shin and Dunrobin Castle, almost unlimited angling, championship standard golf courses, a growing number of annual activity events and fine cuisine using local produce attract many visitors. The standard of service is higher than ever before, with a range of new and upgraded accommodation, ranging from low cost hostels to the exclusive Carnegie Club at Skibo. The establishment of the North Highland College in Dornoch, part of the UHI Millennium Institute, offers courses in golf course management and tourist services. It is also helping to partly counter the decline in education employment in the Plan area due to falling secondary school rolls.

- 4.7 The high quality environment of Sutherland is both an asset and a constraint. Just over a quarter of the land area is covered by sites of special scientific interest, around 16% of all such sites in Highland and a large proportion of them in the Flow Country. Almost 17% of the land area is covered by National Scenic Area designations. There are also approximately 300 Listed buildings and countless sites of archaeological significance. Targeted consultation with the principal environment agencies (SNH and Historic Scotland) will review planning policies for relevant designations and consider how to address key environmental issues in Sutherland. The challenge for the new Plan is to protect and enhance the resource but at the same time ensure it does not impinge upon the social and economic growth prospects for the area. Pressures to meet government renewable energy targets through on shore wind generation present the greatest current challenge in this respect. Deriving social and economic benefit has to be balanced with the impact upon the landscape.
- 4.8 The Lewisian Gneiss of west Sutherland creates a landscape of low hills and scattered lochans, from which rise huge masses of Torridonian Sandstone capped by Quartzite, which form the distinctive mountains of Suilven, Canisp, Quinag and Cul Mor and the basis of the recently achieved geopark status. This extensive rocky landscape and overlying peat also act as constraints to development, and in many cases make building costs prohibitive in and around existing settlements. This contrasts with east side of the County where the more rounded hills form a backdrop to the more fertile agricultural and crofting landscape.
- 4.9 Managing **development pressure** is one of the principal functions of a local plan. Over the next ten years, Sutherland will need more affordable housing and plots for private houses, as well as land for business accommodation and community facilities. The Plan will seek to direct development away from sensitive areas such as ancient woodlands and land liable to flood, and encourage sustainable development in the right locations with spare capacity. This means capacity in terms of an area's service networks (such as water, wastewater, education and roads) and also in terms of its landscape. The new Plan will explore whether there are particular areas that merit a more active policy of encouraging development given their spare servicing capacity.
- 4.10 In certain locations **improvement of infrastructure** will be necessary to unlock development potential essential to meet growth pressures and affordable housing needs as well as help sustain some of the more remote and low demand communities. Lack of foul drainage capacity in Lochinver and Bonar Bridge are of particular concern.
- 4.11 Of Sutherland's 1,271 kms of roads, there are 499 kms of A road and 116 kms of B road. 77% of all roads are single-track, including almost 60% of the A roads. Significant improvements were carried out to twin-track the A road network in the north and west in the last 20 years, which aided the development of Kinlochbervie and Lochinver harbours. However, additional improvements are desirable including completion of the phased upgrade of the A836 north coast route. This continues to provide better links between the existing communities and access to job opportunities and services in north west Caithness (Dounreay/ Thurso).
- 4.12 Upgrading of the A9 north of the Dornoch Bridge remains a strategic objective of the Council, coupled with parallel rail improvements to the Far North Line. The preparation of the new Plan will therefore address the need to continue to safeguard bypass routes for Golspie and Brora as well as the prospects for sustaining and improving the railway.

5 Engagement

- 5.1 The new Plan will be responsive to local need and circumstance and a good example of **community planning** in practice. Partnership working will be essential to the preparation and particularly the

implementation of the new Plan. It is hoped that the Sutherland Community Planning Partnership will provide the umbrella for gaining the support of key partners.

- 5.2 **Effective engagement of local communities requires an initial resource in terms of awareness raising.** It is proposed to do this in a variety of ways. Planning Aid (the voluntary organisation that offers free and independent planning advice in Scotland) has ran two workshops during April 2005 which were aimed at informing community councils and other community groups how planning and in particular a local plan works. They also offered follow up training to interested individuals.
- 5.3 Greater use of the internet via a dedicated web-site page; of local newsletters, and; of the local press; have all proved successful methods of awareness raising. These were piloted through the Wester Ross Local Plan and it is proposed to employ similar methods for the new Sutherland Local Plan.
- 5.4 It is envisaged that the new Plan will have a **shorter period of more focused public consultation.** Previous methods of planning consultation have tended towards the extremes of “carte blanche” or “fait accompli”. Either false hopes of major public investment have been raised by allowing communities free reign with their aspirations or officials have told communities that decisions have already been made and their only course of action is to lodge formal objection. The proposed solution for this Plan is a middle ground of discussion with key partners and communities of a range of development options. The Sutherland Partnership or sub-groups of it (such as the Local Housing Development Forum) together with public exhibitions and site options workshops in Community Council areas would be the means to foster more meaningful input.
- 5.5 If partners and communities are to contribute to the **implementation of the Plan** then dialogue must be on-going. Effective engagement over the Plan period will result from regular monitoring, written updates of progress via the web and newsletters and the advertised availability of staff to meet any individuals or organisations with an interest in the Area.

6 Output

- 6.1 **Committee reports** will be produced to seek Member approval for the key Plan stages. In particular, approval is sought for the approval of this Project Plan, the content of the statutory Plan drafts and the response to representations and Inquiry Reporter’s Report.
- 6.2 **Four versions of the written part of the Plan** (called the Written Statement), which will comprise a Vision, a Strategy, General Policies and Appendices, will be produced. Ideally this will be around 20 pages long and will be published for the following stages: -
- Deposit Draft
 - Post Inquiry Modifications
 - Intention to Adopt
 - Adoption
- 6.3 An **Action Plan** will be produced at the same time as the Deposit Draft but not placed on public deposit. It will be circulated to implementation partners via the Community Planning Partnership.
- 6.4 **Mapping** will be produced to accompany the four public deposit stages and will include maps at 1:5,000 scale for most settlements. Background maps will also be published showing features such as tree preservation orders, flood risk areas and nature conservation designations.
- 6.5 **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** will be required for this Plan and necessitates its own output. The nature of this output will be clearer once a template has been determined through the Wester Ross Local Plan process and the draft Bill on this issue has passed through the Scottish Parliament. This may include the production of an Environmental Report, a report on consultation responses and a Statement of Compliance. Essential involvement of the three main environmental agencies SNH, SEPA and Historic Scotland in this process has already been agreed.
- 6.6 **Other consultation material** will be required in addition to the other formal deposited documents.

- Mapping of development site options and indicative boundaries for the community council hosted workshops
- Dedicated page on THC's web-site
- Quarterly newsletter advertising the plan stages and giving background information
- Other awareness raising and community engagement material including the preparation of statutory press advertisements
- Statement of Publicity, Consultation & Representations
- Regulation 35,36 & 37 Statement

7 Proposed Timetable

7.1 Subject to the availability of resources, it is proposed to prepare the Plan in line with the timescales set out below.

Task	Target Date
Area Committee asked to approve Project Plan	3 Oct 2005
Awareness Raising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Aid workshops • Preparation of Background papers on Housing, Business/Economic Development and Environmental Issues for circulation • Preparation of Settlement Profiles for circulation and feedback • Local Plan specific informal consultations and/or meetings (as appropriate) with Community Councils, Community Planning Partnership, various agencies, grazing committees, interested landowners, developers, Members and other Council Services • Preparation of Newsletter and Webpage 	Up to mid Dec 2005 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 held in Apr 2005 • 19 Sept to 10 Nov 2005 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept to 10 Nov 2005 – feedback by 16 Dec 2005 • up to 16 Dec 2005 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by 10/11 Nov 2005 with regular updates
Survey Work, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Land Audit (ongoing) • Business/industry land (ongoing) • Site visits • Landscape Capacity Study (in progress) 	Ongoing to Mar 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by 10 Nov 2005 • by 10 Nov 2005 • up to Mar 2006 • Oct 2005
Publish Intention to Prepare Advert	10/11 Nov 2005
Preparation of Site Options	Dec 2005 – end Mar 2006
Informal Consultation on Site Options and Settlement Development Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full household circulation • Public exhibitions (at least one in each Community Council area) • Technical Workshops with invited participants (at least one in each Community Council area) 	Apr & May 2006
Prepare Deposit Draft	June – Sept 2006
Area Committee asked to Approve Deposit Draft	Oct 2006
Deposit Draft Published and formal consultation, including neighbour notification on site options.	Oct 2006
Public Local Inquiry for Unresolved Objections	Apr 2007
Adoption	Nov 2007



SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN

Issue 1: November 2005

The Highland Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for Sutherland. It will cover all land use issues, including housing, business and industry, retailing, infrastructure, recreation and environmental protection to guide the future development of the area. It will also indicate policies for the conservation of the built, natural and cultural heritage and encourage improvement of the physical environment. This first issue of the Sutherland Local Plan Newsletter sets the scene and is the first in a series aimed at keeping you in the picture about over the progress of the new Plan. *If you would like to know more about what a local plan is and why the Council has to prepare it please see page 2.*

Notice of Intention to Prepare the Sutherland Local Plan

The Notice of Intention to Prepare the Local Plan will be advertised in the 11 and 18 November editions of the Northern Times. This is the first formal statutory advert in the process inviting people to come forward with issues and proposals direct to the Local Plan team.

WHY WE NEED YOUR INVOLVEMENT NOW

As local residents, you know your area better than anyone else and that is why it is important that you are involved in planning for its future. We are right at the official start of the plan preparation process and we hope that this is just the beginning of your involvement.

The policies contained in local plans affect your life everyday. Getting involved in local plan preparation gives you a say in the future of your community and environment. Your opinions at this stage can be more effective than trying to influence decisions over planning applications later. This is because planning applications must be decided in accordance with the Development Plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise).

To get you started thinking about the issues now, we have put together some of the key facts and figures that are currently available about the area in a series of Ward Profiles and Background Papers.

Ward Profiles

In the last few weeks, work has been undertaken on the preparation of Ward Profiles, using information from the 2001 Census. These provide information on population change, number of households, employment and services so that communities have a better understanding of the

Background Papers

To further set the context for the Plan, we have produced three Background Papers for information and comment. These papers set out the recent changes and the current context in terms of Housing, Economic Development and the Environment. The papers also raise a number of issues to be considered as part of the Local Plan process. They have been sent out to all the main local organisations and other agencies we would normally consult when we prepare a local plan. Copies will be available free of charge from the following: -

- The Area Planning & Building Standards Manager, The Meadows, Dornoch
- Council Service Points at Bettyhill, Bonar Bridge, Brora, Dornoch, Durness, Golspie, Helmsdale, Lairg and Lochinver,
- All local libraries and the mobile library service
- All local post offices
- Planning & Development, Headquarters, Inverness

Local Plans and the Planning System

How does the planning system work?

Planning is about the future development and use of land. Decisions are usually best taken at the local level, so planning is normally a matter for councils. The three main planning duties of councils are:

- preparing development plans;
- deciding on applications for planning permission; and
- taking action against development that hasn't been approved.

Development plans

The development plan is made up of two parts - the structure plan and the local plan. Between them they show how much development may take place, where it will take place and where it is unlikely to be allowed. Development plans are the basis for decisions on planning applications. They contain policies for the future development and use of land in an area. Plans can cover a wide range of issues such as housing, transport, employment, shopping, recreation and conserving and protecting the countryside.

The **structure plan** for an area takes a long-term view of development, considering its general scale and broadly where it should be located. The current Highland Structure Plan was approved in March 2001.

Local plans are often for smaller areas and must be in line with the approved structure plan. A local plan sets out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land that should guide day-to-day planning decisions. It must identify effective opportunities for

development and encourage investment in an area. The aim is to exert a positive influence over land use decisions. It should contain policies relating to:

- the identification of land relating to different development types e.g. housing, business and industry, retailing, transport, leisure and recreation;
- the conservation of the built, natural and cultural heritage;
- the improvement of the physical environment;
- integrated transport issues; and
- urban and rural regeneration.

Councils must consult widely on the content of a local plan. After considering all views and objections and making suitable changes, councils will adopt the local plan as the basis for their decision making in the area.

Local Plan coverage in Highland and Sutherland

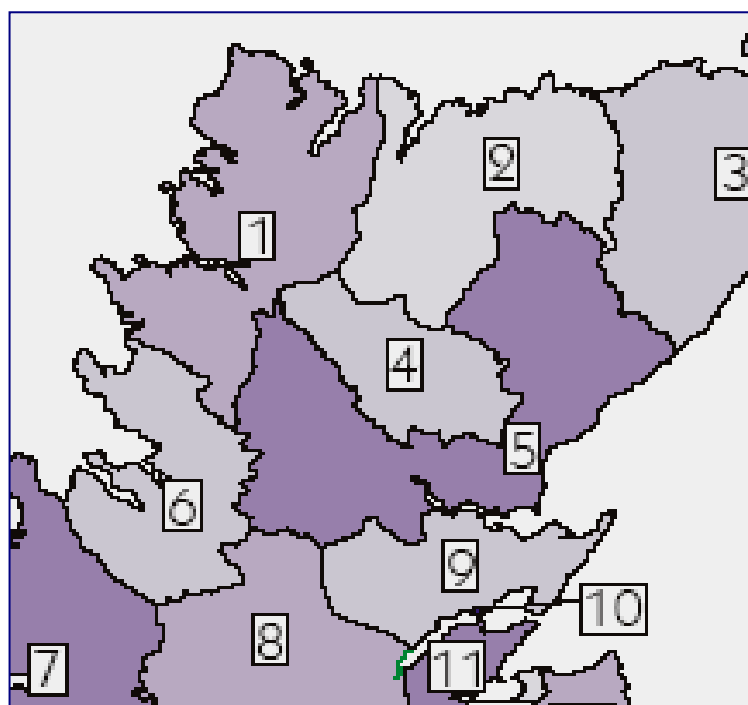
At present there are 19 local plans for the Highland Council's area, including 4 covering Sutherland. These are:

- [Golspie & Lairg \(Lairg & Rogart areas only\)](#), adopted in 1983
- [North West Sutherland](#), adopted in 1987
- [South & East Sutherland](#), adopted in 2000
- [Tongue & Farr](#), adopted in 1985

The move towards a new Sutherland wide Local Plan is part of the Council's programme of reducing the number of plans and preparing single local plans for each of its 8 existing administrative Areas. In theory, this should allow each plan to be reviewed on a 5 year cycle, in line with Government advice, so that it remains up to date and responsive to changes in circumstances and new issues.

Existing Local Plan Coverage

1. North West Sutherland
2. Tongue & Farr
3. Caithness
4. (Golspie &) Lairg
5. South & East Sutherland
6. Ullapool
7. Lochbroom Landward
8. Mid Ross
9. Easter Ross
10. Invergordon
11. Black Isle



SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN - PROPOSED TIMETABLE	
Task	Target Date
Project Plan approved by Area Committee	Oct 2005
Awareness Raising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Circulation of Background Papers & Ward Profiles - specific informal consultations - Feedback 	10 Nov to mid Dec 2005
Publish Intention to Prepare Advert	11 Nov 2005
Survey Work	Ongoing to Mar 2006
Prepare Site Options	Dec 2005 - Mar 2006
Informal Consultation on Site Options and Settlement Development Areas	Apr & May 2006
Preparation of formal Deposit Draft	June - Sept 2006
Area Committee to Approve Deposit Draft for publication	Oct 2006
Publish Deposit Draft and formal consultation, including neighbour notification on site options.	Oct 2006
Public Local Inquiry for Unresolved Objections	Apr 2007
Adoption	Nov 2007

See web page for full details of timetable.

Sutherland Local Plan

Ward Profiles were prepared covering the following areas:

Ward	Community Council Areas	Settlement Zones		MAIN SETTLEMENTS (output areas?)
		Ref	Name	
11. Sutherland North West	Assynt	SZ810	Drumbeg	LOCHINVER
		SZ817	Lochassynt	
		SZ818	Lochinver	
		SZ825	Unapool	
		SZ823	Stoer	
	Durness	SZ811	Durness	DURNESS
	Kinlochbervie	SZ815	Kinlochbervie	KINLOCHBERVIE
Scourie	SZ801	Achfary	SCOURIE	
	SZ822	Scourie		
12. Tongue & Farr	Bettyhill, Strathnaver and Altnaharra	SZ802	Altnaharra	
		SZ804	Bettyhill/Farr	BETTYHILL
	Melvich	SZ819	Melvich	MELVICH
	Strathy & Armadale	SZ804	Bettyhill/Farr (part) Melvich (part)	
		SZ819		
Tongue	SZ824	Tongue	TONGUE	
13. Sutherland Central	Ardgay & District	SZ803	Ardgay	ARDGAY
		SZ807	Croick	
		SZ808	Culrain	
	Creich	SZ805	Bonar Bridge	BONAR BRIDGE
		SZ821	Rosehall	ROSEHALL
Lairg	SZ816	Lairg	LAIRG	
14. Golspie & Rogart	Golspie	SZ812	Golspie	GOLSPIE
	Rogart	SZ820	Rogart	ROGART
15. Brora	Brora	SZ806	Brora	BRORA
	Helmsdale	SZ813	Helmsdale	HELMSDALE
		SZ814	Kinbrace	
16. Dornoch Firth	Dornoch Area	SZ809	Dornoch	DORNOCH & EMBO
	Edderton	SZ615	Edderton	EDDERTON

SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN: FEEDBACK FORM

WHAT DO THESE FACTS AND FIGURES MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR AREA?

The Local Plan is important for the future of your area. As well as this information included in this Profile please look at the background papers on Housing, Economic Development and the Environment, which will shortly be available free of charge at local libraries, Council Service Points and offices, at local post offices and on the Council's website. Please use this form to give us your views on the key **land use** issues for the area. You can continue on separate sheets if necessary. We would be grateful if you could return comments in the FREEPOST envelope or e.mail them by the **16 December 2005**.

Housing

For example: In light of the likely need for housing in your community are there any particular sites you would like to see developed? Do you have a view on the level of need and type of affordable housing required? Can crofting land contribute to meeting the demand for housing?

Economic Development

For example: Do you think that there is an adequate provision of land for business/industrial units in the area? Should land be identified for new economic development activities, including tourist facilities?

Natural and Cultural Heritage

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

Services

For example: Would you like more land to be identified for new recreational or community facilities in your area? If so, what facilities and where should they be located?

Any other comments

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

If you require a map (for example to indicate an area of land you feel would be appropriate for development), please contact Alan, Katie or Brian of the Sutherland Local Plan Team:

Planning and Development Service
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX
Tel: 01463 702262, 702271 or 702276
e-mail: sutherlandlp@highland.gov.uk

If you would like to be kept informed about progress on the Local Plan please provide your details below.

Name:

Address:

e-mail:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

November 2005 – Intention to prepare advert

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
NOTICE OF INTENTION TO START PREPARATION OF REPLACEMENT
OF LOCAL PLANS
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN

The Highland Council intend to prepare a new Local Plan for the whole of Sutherland to replace the existing Plans for:

- Golspie & Lairg (Lairg & Rogart areas)
- North West Sutherland
- South & East Sutherland
- Tongue & Farr

At this early stage in the Local Plan process, The Highland Council would like to invite initial views of the general public and all interested bodies on those matters which should be taken into consideration in preparation of the Plan.

As local residents you know your area better than anyone therefore it is important that you are involved in planning for its future. You can do this by responding to the Profiles prepared for each of the six Sutherland Councillor Wards, which will be distributed to every household in the area. The Profiles together with Background Papers on Housing, Economic Development and the Environment outline the key facts and figures relating to Sutherland, and some of the issues to be addressed by the replacement Local Plan.

The Ward Profiles and Background Papers are also available free of charge from:

- The Director of Planning & Development, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX
- The Area Planning & Building Standards Manager, The Meadows, Dornoch
- The Highland Council Web-site at www.highland.gov.uk/plintra/devplans/suth/suth.htm

Background Papers are also available from:

- Service points at Bettyhill, Bonar Bridge, Brora, Dornoch, Durness, Golspie, Helmsdale, Lairg and Lochinver,
- All local libraries and the mobile library service
- All local post offices

You can also contact the Sutherland Local Plan team direct by:

- post at The Highland Council Planning & Development Service, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX
- e-mail at sutherlandlp@highland.gov.uk
- phone at 01463 702262, 702271 or 702276

Local plan for whole of Sutherland will be first in over three decades

This week sees the official start of work by Highland Council planners on a new local plan for Sutherland.

The council is to leaflet every household and business address in the county to invite individual residents, community groups, local organisations, landowners and national agencies to make contributions to the preparation of the new plan.

The new Sutherland Local Plan will become part of the council's corporate strategy for the county and will be the first single development plan for the whole of Sutherland in more than 30 years.

"It will provide a blueprint for future action and a statutory basis for important land use changes within the area over the next five to 10 years," a council spokesman said.

"As a more up to date guide for deciding planning applications, it will ensure that the planning of sites for new homes, industry and business, shops, schools and leisure uses are tied in with proposals for public services and infrastructure. It will also identify and protect important natural and man-made heritage features and the scope for local environmental improvements."

The new plan is required because all four of the existing local plans covering Sutherland are now more than five years

old. Planning authorities are expected to keep their local plans up to date, to address emerging development and environmental issues. In particular, there is mounting pressure to build new housing in many parts of the county, requiring more land to be earmarked for affordable and private dwellings.

"The latest national population estimates indicate that after more than a decade of decline Sutherland's population grew by 249 (or 1.5 per cent) in the period 2001 to 2004, largely due to the effect of in-migration," the council spokesman said. "A large proportion of in-migrants are in the 55-64 age group, many of whom might have retired early and/or moved to the area due to lower house prices and a better environment."

"The new plan will forecast how the area's population and household figures are expected to change in the future, and use this as a basis for calculating the need for housing. In preparing the plan, however, development constraints such as drainage, ground conditions, ownership and important crossing interests will be identified and ways of tackling these indicated to help ensure that the required number of houses can be built."

The spokesman added: "Another key concern is the low proportion of young

adults, which is a Highland-wide issue but particularly pronounced in Sutherland. The 16-24 age group, for example, only makes up 7.3 per cent of the Sutherland population compared to 9.3 per cent of the Highland population.

"Many move out of Highland to pursue higher or further education and training, or to take up jobs. A survey of persons who left in the last 20 years suggested that 75 per cent of them would like to return to the county if suitable jobs were available for them and their families. It is therefore important that the new plan helps encourage new employment opportunities and better community facilities to complement the provision of more housing and so help sustain existing communities."

The Scottish Executive recently issued advice urging the preparation of a new style of local plan, far shorter and simpler in format and content than previous plans. It is also to take less time to prepare than previous plans. This follows a successful pilot by the council of a more streamlined format in Wester Ross containing fewer policies, clearer (coloured) mapping and more emphasis on results and implementation.

"Community consultation will concentrate on quality rather than quantity to help make it more effective,"

the council spokesman said.

"The comments from the initial consultation up to Christmas 2005 will help the council consider the need to set up specific focus groups to explore local plan issues. Thereafter consultation will be a targeted on a limited number of site options, with a series of exhibitions and workshops proposed for April and May 2006."

The public and other interests are to be kept regularly informed of progress over the period of preparing the plan by newsletters, updates via the internet and the advertised availability of staff to meet individuals or organisations with an interest in the area, he added.

"In addition to the initial circulation of leaflets with ward profiles to generate comments, the plan team has prepared background papers on housing, economic development and the environment. These will be available at local offices, Service Points, post offices and libraries as well as on the council's website. Copies will also be circulated to the various local and national organisations that are also being consulted on the new plan."

The council is also about to embark on consultation over the production of a Core Path Plan for Sutherland, one of six throughout Highland. This

plan, a statutory requirement under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, is intended to provide the basic framework of routes sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area.

"Communities, land managers and access takers will all be encouraged to have their say for suggesting suitable routes, especially those that surround settlements and tourist features, and for general comments about the access provision in their local area," the council spokesman said.

"Mott Deat, the access officer for Sutherland, is developing this plan for the county and although not directly linked to the local plan process, the CFP consultations will take advantage of the public exhibitions planned for spring 2006."

Councillor Francis Keith, chairman of Sutherland County Committee, said: "I more than welcome the start of work on the new Sutherland County Local Plan. Some parts of the county had their plans reviewed in 1987, but this work will review the planning situation for the whole county."

"I urge all locals to think ahead regarding housing in their areas and to gather their ideas for consideration by the planning team in preparation of the local plan."

The plan team consists of Alan Ogilvie, Brian Macdonnie and Katie Briggs, based in Inverness, but working closely with local staff in Dornoch.

For more details contact Alan Ogilvie, Principal Planner, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX (tel: 01463-702352).

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For more details contact Alan Ogilvie, Principal Planner, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX (tel: 01463-702352).

Full council comes to Sutherland

The Highland Council comes to Sutherland in force today (Friday) for a special meeting of the full council in Lairg.

It is the fifth in a series of meetings the 80-member council held twice a year outside Inverness, in an effort to bring the decision-making process closer to the more distant parts of their huge area.

The six members of the council's Sutherland

silence at the recently renovated war memorial in the village at 11am today (Friday).

From Lairg Community Centre they will be led by Pipe Major Sandy Forbes of Talmac to the war memorial, where council convener Alison Magee and Sutherland County Committee chairman Francis Keith will lay wreaths. Local minister the Rev Leslie Gosdick and Councillor Bill Fulton

Back to the future for Dornoch?

Local councillor DUNCAN ALLAN, an admirer of Prince Charles's 'model village' of Poundbury in Dorset, outlines his vision for the future development of Dornoch and urges townsfolk to have their say on the new Local Plan

THE NEW Sutherland Local Plan provides an opportunity for those of us living in Dornoch Parish to take stock.

In 1850 the population of the parish was 3000. The number of people who lived in each home was double what it is today. Despite steady inward migration over the last 15 years it is now still only around 2000. But there is a new air of confidence. Unemployment has fallen from over 10 per cent to under two per cent. Our schools are a major attraction for families wishing to live here. The problem is a lack of housing and the shortage has forced up prices. A population of 3000 would provide the critical mass to sustain the services and facilities that we need, without spoiling the community. In other words, it is a matter of going back to the future.

The new areas of housing designated for extension are to the north, between Poles Road and the Embo road, an area of about 30 hectares, and a long-standing proposed development at The Meadows. There are also plots in Bishopfield, in the field below the war memorial, and near the fire station. An interesting idea now being mooted is to replicate the old fishertown-style part of Embo, between the bypass road and Embo Burn to the south. This might include a public square and a community centre. It would restore the population of Embo to what it was in the early 1900s.

The style of housing proposed for the future will be sympathetic to the existing housing in Dornoch and Embo and with a similar density. It is hoped that the urban sprawl that has disfigured so many once attractive towns in the Highlands will be avoided. The car will not be king any more. Well



The future for Dornoch? The 'model village' of Poundbury in Dorset.

designed streets should ensure the safety of children and pedestrians. Our road engineers will need to be re-educated. Roads can be threaded through the houses on the basis that people come first, not cars. Car parks could be put behind the houses and houses might front straight on to the street. The vast majority of accidents involving children happen near the home.

At least 25 per cent of all future housing should be low cost, or affordable as some would have it. We also need houses for the 99 people who have indicated that Dornoch is their first choice for rented accommodation. Ninety per cent of them are people of working age.

There is a myth that only old people wish to live in Dornoch. In fact there is a surplus of houses for older people because a proper analysis of need was not carried out in the past. New housing will be a mixture of low cost housing, large expensive houses, houses for rent and family houses. Segregating people in estates according to income group is a thoroughly undesirable post-war development.

However these are merely some proposals based on need and good ideas from elsewhere. Please take the trouble to attend the planning meetings and give us the benefit of your considered opinion. After all, it is your plan.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
SUTHERLAND COUNTY COMMITTEE

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, EUROPE AND TOURISM

5 JUNE 2006

**SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN
POSITION STATEMENT**

Report by Director of Planning & Development

Agenda Item	
Report No	

SUMMARY

This report updates the Committee on progress with the preparation of the Sutherland Local Plan. It draws together the main themes arising from initial consultation with stakeholders and the public, identifies key issues for the Plan and invites Members to agree publication of a Newsletter to be circulated widely throughout the Area, summarising these matters.

A revised timetable is set out with a view to preparing an *Issues and Options* paper to be followed by a series of public meetings/workshops during late summer 2006, and Members consideration of a Deposit Local Plan in early 2007.

1.0

Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 3rd October 2005, Committee authorised formal commencement of the Sutherland Local Plan. Statutory advertisement was placed to this effect, a Newsletter circulated and views invited on issues for consideration as part of the Plan. Background papers relating to housing, economic development and the environment were prepared together with Ward Profiles to inform responses; the intention being to involve all stakeholders – statutory agencies, community groups, the voluntary and private sector, landowners and the public – as early in the Plan process as possible.
- 1.2 This information is available at www.highland.gov.uk and every household in Sutherland has been notified. To date, some 500 responses have been received from a wide range of interests and the public, raising more than 3,000 points for consideration. A detailed record of all the matters raised - which are now being fully investigated - is available at the Sutherland Local Plan website. This includes a wealth of local information, knowledge and views as well as particular opinion about the development of communities, economic investment and safeguards for the environment, most notably in respect of the tourist economy and any potential for wind farms.

- 1.3 Given that the Local Plan sets a framework for development, the purpose of this report is to assimilate the principal themes arising and identify key *development* objectives for the Plan. It is proposed that the following analysis should form the basis of a second *Newsletter* to be circulated widely in order to keep local people and other stakeholders informed of progress.
- 1.4 Members may be aware that the Local Plan is required to have a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) carried out on it. This means that the plan must be fully assessed on the impact that the plan has on the environment of the Area. A “scoping” report has been prepared and submitted to the Consultation Authorities.

2.0

Newsletter

Housing

- 2.1 The availability of housing is essential to stemming the drift of people from Sutherland, regenerating the population and encouraging economic growth. Balanced communities have a vital role, particularly where there is spare capacity in infrastructure networks and additional development respects adjoining land uses, the settlement pattern and character of places. Affordable homes for rent and ownership; and accommodation for first-time buyers, families and elderly people are needed across the “market”: a mix of new-build and initiatives to renovate and occupy vacant homes. In the more remote villages, requirements should be carefully assessed. Holiday/second homes contribute to rising house-prices.
- 2.2 Land for development might selectively include poorer or underused/neglected grazings/crofting areas and uncommitted industrial sites; although in certain localities croft land should be avoided and developed only exceptionally, in order to revitalise townships and activities. Traditional building forms and high quality design should be promoted in urban and rural situations, and inappropriate ribbon development discouraged. Table 1 below represents opportunities identified within the main communities, which require to be investigated for their suitability and availability for development.

Table 1:

Settlements	Locations
Ardgay	between Gledfield School and Church Street
Bettyhill	infill areas in Farr and Crask
Bonar Bridge	Cherry Grove; east of Carnegie Court; by the Surgery; above Swordale Crescent; below Matheson Road; to the rear of Kyle House/Church of Scotland Manse; and at Swordale Farm
Brora	Brora Old Mill Site; former Radio Station; south of Academy Street; east Brora Muir; Muirfield Road/Drive; Knox's Corner; West Clyne and Achrimsdale

Dornoch	The Meadows; towards Cuthill; south of A949/east of Drumdivan; to the rear of Stafford Court / Earls Cross Road; Proncy; Poles Road; and the fields at Achinchanter, Fourpenny and Rearquhar
Durness	opposite the Village Hall; between Loch Eriboll/A, south of the village
Edderton	between the railway and Ardmore Road
Embo	Back Park
Golspie	Blaize Field; Backies; Sibell Road; between Drummuie Terrace/rear of Sutherland Technical School; industrial site, south of Golspie; Ferry Road; East Shore; Duke Street; Rhives and adjoining the Seafront Centre
Helmsdale	Bogal Park; Simpson Crescent; Golf Road; and Battery Park (between Simpson Crescent/East Shire Street)
Lairg	Old Sutherland Arms Hotel; Sutherland Transport Garage
Lochinver	behind the Surgery; towards Glencanisp; Clashnessie; Snittab common grazings; Ledmore Forest/Ledbog Farm, Assynt; and the Assynt Foundation Estates
Melvich/Portskerra	between Melvich/Pentland; and west of Pentland
Rogart	Rogart Mart; behind the Hall; by the Playing Field; Pittentrail; Marbet Stana; Corry Meadows; Braemar Road
Rosehall	Cassley Drive
Strathnaver	south of Dalharrold
Tongue	below Varrich Place; off Loyal Terrace; above Kirkiboll
No sites identified	Kinlochbervie, Rhiconich, Elphin, Melness/Talmine, Scourie, Skerray, Strathcarron, Strathy/Armadale, Trantlemore, Forsinard

Objectives

2.3 Further to consideration of the matters raised by stakeholders, the Local Plan should be geared towards:

- identifying land with sufficient choice and capacity to meet projected housing needs over the next decade;
- ensuring a supply of land for housing can be delivered within or adjoining established settlements, most notably where spare capacity in infrastructure and services exists;
- encouraging an appropriate mix of accommodation – including through affordable homes, initiatives to reuse vacant stock and regeneration of

crofting/outlying communities.

Economy

- 2.4 Economic development - retaining and growing the workforce - is a key “driver” of regeneration in Sutherland and the key to the prospects for quality employment and a sustainable future. Promotion of the Area’s assets - specific to different localities - and initiatives to generate jobs need to be supported by a choice in housing, improved skills/training, modern services and infrastructure, better communications and environmental safeguards.
- 2.5 Improvement of the A9 and public transport services, both road and rail, could improve interaction between the east coast settlements and adjoining areas, including the Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth. The lack of employment opportunities is especially acute in the more remote, peripheral or fragile communities where full broadband coverage, home working/cottage industries, and incentives for tourism and resource development, could help address the disadvantages presented by distance and a sparse population. Undeveloped land and vacant premises in certain communities emphasises the need for improved promotion and targeted investment, perhaps in brown-field land and accommodation at affordable rates. Table 2 sets out possible opportunities for economic development together with an indication as to where existing investment might be promoted further.

Table 2:

Opportunities	Settlements	Locations
business/office accommodation	Dornoch*, Golspie*, Lairg*; Melvich*, Armadale*,	Meadows, airstrip, gas works/slaughterhouse (Dornoch); Sutherland Arms Hotel, Ferrycroft (Lairg)
small business/starter units service/enterprise units	Brora*, Kinlochbervie, Helmsdale, Lochinver#, Edderton, Ardgay/Bonar Bridge*, Bettyhill*	South Bonar (Bonar Bridge);
marina/hostel; small business units	Kinlochbervie; Lochinver	Loch Clash
“social enterprises”; bespoke units	Tongue, Scourie	“Windy Corner” (Scourie)
employment initiatives	Kinlochbervie; Lochinver; Tongue; Stoer; Durness; Bettyhill; Brora	
tourism/accommodation/facilities	Brora	Woollen Mill, Harbour, former Radio Station, Stafford Terrace, Fascally
*existing land/accommodation not fully utilised/occupied #significant land shortage		

Objectives

- 2.6 Consideration needs to be given with the appropriate agencies, to initiatives designed to:
- secure a competitive economy and long term prospects for regeneration, including links with adjoining areas;
 - identify the main economic “drivers” for the future together with incentives for investment and the scope for greater interaction of communities and development of resources;
 - review the effectiveness of the existing land supply for economic development and maximise the use of vacant/underused accommodation.

Services

- 2.7 The priority is to address local deficiencies and improve the range and quality of facilities. Particular emphasis needs to be given to the young and elderly and to opportunities to improve the appeal of places to visitors. All-purpose community/leisure centres and recreational facilities; community care, education and public road and rail transport services need to be developed. The size and distribution of the population and accessibility to centres will influence future investment. The viability of services may depend on pooling resources and innovation in the delivery of schemes, including amalgamation of new and existing facilities. Table 3 indicates local service priorities.

Table 3:

Settlement	Service deficiency	Locations
Ardgay	Sports/Leisure Centre, Community Hall, Hospital, Nursery	
Bettyhill	Sports/Leisure Centre/Swimming Pool; courts,	
Bonar Bridge	Sports/Leisure Centre/Swimming Pool; Games Field, water sports, caravan/camping site	Sutherland Transport, Kyle of Sutherland
Brora	Sports/Leisure Centre/Swimming Pool; Day Care Centre, Community Hall/Youth Centre, Golf course/Academy, Equestrian Centre/County Show, recycling; Tourist Information Point, beach sports	Harbour, Former Radio Station, Faskally, High School, Old Woollen Mill, McKay's
Dornoch	Sports/Leisure Centre;	Social Club, Meadows,

	playing field/courts, Health care facilities/Day Care Centre, Community Hall, Golf course/Academy, Equestrian Centre/County Show, recycling	College
Durness	Swimming Pool; Day Care Centre, Golf Driving Range	
Embo	Community Centre	
Golspie	Sports/Leisure Centre/Curling; Library/Service Point, playing field/courts, Health care facilities/Day Care Centre, Community Hall	Drummie Park, Blaize Park
Helmsdale	footpath	A9-Portgower
Kinlochbervie	Swimming Pool; Caravan/Camping site; marina, public transport, Skate-board	Loch Clash
Lairg	Sports/Leisure Centre/Swimming Pool; Day Care Centre, Youth Centre, Golf Course, Tourist Information Point	Sutherland Arms Hotel, Old Sutherland Transport
Lochinver	Swimming Pool; Secondary School, Day Care Centre, Library/Learning/IT Centre, Community Hall/Youth Centre, Golf Course, water sports/small boats, Community Park; public transport	Cruamer, Inchnadamph/Clachtoll- Drumbeg (golf), Assynt Estate
Melness	Community Centre, playing field, Caravan/Camping site,	
Melvich	Youth Centre	
Rogart	Sports/Playing field	Corry
Tongue	Sports Centre, Community Hall/Youth Centre, Golf Course, water sports, local play	Day Care Centre
Scourie	Golf Course, Swimming	

	Pool, marina, Tourist Information Point	
Strathy	playing field, cemetery extension	

Objectives

- 2.8 Further consideration requires to be given to:
- the location of facilities which are dependent for their viability on accessibility to communities across Sutherland as a whole;
 - the potential for improved local facilities including opportunities for joined-up delivery of services;
 - the investments needed to support better transport networks and services within and outwith Sutherland.

Environment

- 2.9 The diverse natural and cultural heritage of Sutherland - its habitats, species, scenery and artefacts - is a major asset. As a priority, this must be protected and promoted to maximise the area's economic prospects, including its appeal to visitors. An integrated and balanced regime of land uses embracing forestry and other resources, on and off-shore renewable energy; archaeological/geological interpretation; access to the countryside, recreation and outdoor pursuits; wildlife management and traditional activities, able to draw investment in dependent, "downstream" or support activities is required. This should be based increasingly on community stewardship, excellence in environmental management and sustainable principles which promote the right development, at the right scale, in the right places. Table 2 sets out possible opportunities together with an indication as to where existing investment might be promoted further.

Table 4:

Settlement	Location/Opportunities
Ardgay	Rail Yard; recycling facilities; village approaches – wasteland; Carbisdale Castle – walled garden
Bettyhill	Gordon Terrace – parking; safety zones/footpaths; Workhouse refurbishment/Museum; Torrisdale Bay;
Bonar Bridge	Local trails; Loch Migdale; Airdens – archaeological interpretation;
Brora	Fountain Square – improvements; Loch Brora; Heritage Centre/Drill Hall; Harbour; railway station, former Radio Station/Lower Brora; reclaimed Coal Pit
Dornoch	Astle-Clashmore – Right of Way; Loch Fleet – facilities/interpretation; Conservation Area enhancement; local paths; Golf School; Skelbo Castle
Durness	Cape Wrath lighthouse – access routes/facilities; Smoo Cave; airstrip
Edderton	Pictish Stone, Station Road;
Elphin	trails
Embo	pier-marina; Dornoch branch-line restoration
Golspie	focal point/Tourist Information Point/Fountain Road/car park;

	Big Burn/Dunrobin Woods; sea-wall/pier; the Glebe; Golspie-Littleferry path; Arts Centre for Cultural Activity
Helmsdale	railway station; Timespan; Shore Street/harbour
Kylesku	wildlife interpretation
Kinlochbervie	Loch Clash – heritage centre/marina; Loch Innes – public access; walking routes;
Lochinver	Assynt Centre
Lairg	Sutherland Arms Hotel; cemetery paking; Ferrycroft – recreation; Rhian Bridge-Loyal Terrace – footpath; Falls of Shin – interpretation;
Lochinver	Assynt Foundation initiatives; School of Gaelic and Traditional Music – Glencanisp Lodge
Melvich	Portskerra path; Puffin colony
Rogart	Loch Buidhe; recycling facilities; Rhiloch an School; Achnagarron Hut Circles; Cassley Falls
Scourie	Doctor’s House; Tourist Information Point
Stoer	Stoer Church;
Strathy	Dune system; Shelby lighthouse;
Tongue	County Depot; Castle Varrich; Youth Hostel; golf course

Objectives

- 2.10 Safeguarding and promoting the exceptional natural and cultural heritage should involve:
- respect for the character of communities and promotion of the highest design standards for new development;
 - a balance of measures to protect the environment and maximise development/management of resources.

3.0

Next Steps

- 3.1 As a precursor to the formal Local Plan, it is proposed to prepare an *issues and options* paper for consideration by Committee at its meeting on 4th September 2006 and consultation with communities and the public thereafter. This embraces the themes brought forward as part of the Scottish Executive’s reforms: the purpose will be to draw together and articulate:
- *a 20-year vision* - a context for long term community aspirations: major ideas which might materialise over the longer term but which require broad consensus from the outset;
 - *a strategy* - based on key forecasts for change in population, households and the economy. This will identify the location of development and a framework for investment in services over the next decade;
 - *settlement plans* - identifying key sites and the extent of *Settlement Development Areas* in each of the areas communities together with appropriate safeguards;
 - *a draft action plan* - a statement of community projects/agency programmes, their timescales, available resources, the proponents and likely outcomes. This must be prioritised by communities on the basis of schemes capable of being

delivered over a two-year period, up-dated biannually.

Subject to approval, a series of local meetings/workshops will be arranged during the Autumn of this year, centred on Community Council Areas across the Sutherland, with a view to finalising a Deposit Draft Local Plan by 11th December 2006.

- 3.2 An *issues and options* paper will require further discussion with agency advisers - notably through the Sutherland Housing Development Forum meeting next on 14th June - and landowners as necessary. It is intended to take the opportunity to discuss the *issues and options* with Members through the Policy Working Group at an appropriate date in August. Members views are sought on the location of public meetings to be held in September. The following sets out the milestones of a revised timetable.

Issues and Options Paper	Members Briefing – August 2006
Issues and Options Paper	Committee - 4 th September 2006
Public Meetings/workshops	September 2006
Deposit Plan	early 2007

4.0 Resource Implications

- 4.1 There are no unbudgeted resource implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee agree:

- (i) to prepare a further *Newsletter* based on the content of this report, to circulate this to all households in Sutherland and make the Newsletter available at the Sutherland Local Plan website;
- (ii) the revised timetable for preparation of the Local Plan including publication of an *Issues and Options* paper and consultation through a series of public meetings/workshops.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning & Development

Date:

Authors: Colin Mackenzie (tel. 01463 702261), Brian MacKenzie (702276), Katie Briggs (702271), Julie-Ann Acheson (702266)

Background Papers:

1. Report to the Sutherland County Committee by Director of Planning and Development: 3 October 2006
2. Sutherland Local Plan Background Papers and Newsletter No 1
3. Sutherland Local Plan: Summary of Consultation Responses May 2006

4. Sutherland County Committee Minutes – June 05 2006

2. Sutherland Local Plan – Update

There had been circulated Report No. SU/100/06 by the Director of Planning & Development providing an update on progress with the preparation of the Sutherland Local Plan, drawing together the main themes arising from initial consultation with stakeholders and the public, and identifying key issues for the Plan. The report recommended that Members agree to a further Newsletter being prepared, based on the content of the report, to be circulated to all households in Sutherland and posted on the Sutherland Local Plan website; and approve the revised timetable for preparation of the Plan including publication of an 'Issues and Options' paper and consultation through a series of public meetings/workshops during late summer of 2006, prior to consideration of a Deposit Local Plan in early 2007.

The Chairman expressed concern that the content of the proposed Newsletter could act to raise expectations beyond what can be delivered, and at a time when the Council is under financial pressure. He indicated that the desire for swimming pools in many villages as set out in the report is unrealistic given the costs involved and that typically these facilities run at a loss.

Mrs R Finlayson supported the fact that a day care centre for Brora had been identified as a service deficiency, advising that she had been seeking this facility for a considerable period of time.

Mrs A Magee observed that the village of Rosehall is only referred to under housing, despite the fact that strenuous efforts are being made to regenerate the village. She opined that the locations identified for housing in Lairg are inadequate. Following on from this Mrs Magee expressed concern that the date of the next Local Housing Forum had been set and Member informed thereafter, indicating that she and other Members are unable to attend due to other commitments. She advised that it is important that Members are involved in these meetings, given current relevant issues such as ward boundary changes and the Local Plan review, and asked for a revised date to be set to suit all Members.

Mr D Allan referred to proposals within his Ward that are effectively out of date as the position on the ground had moved forward. He also suggested that the role of the North Highland College in Dornoch, both present and future should be considered as part of the review.

Mrs A Magee stressed that the Local Plan should reflect both ongoing and planned development and delete what is already in place, referring to a number of relevant ongoing developments e.g. cycle trails at Carbisdale, expansion of Timepsan, Helmsdale etc.

Mr I Ross emphasised that the review process should establish a realistic balance in terms of what can be achieved and identify gaps where they exist, as an example referring to the need to have an integrated and comprehensive development around the new mountain bike track in Golspie. He concurred that it should be made clear in the Newsletter that the proposals contained therein are aspirational.

Members heard from both the Principal Planner and Planner on the purpose of the next meeting of the Local Housing Forum explaining that it is essentially a technical exercise to gather information, and determine what is deliverable in the next five years, which will then be taken to the Members to allow a full and informed discussion and thereafter community consultation on potential sites.

The Area Manager explained that he had asked that Members to be invited to the meeting of the Forum.

The Chairman expressed his extreme dissatisfaction that Members had not been consulted on the date of the next Forum meeting in the first instance, and queried the mechanism for identifying sites, advising this should be the role of local communities.

Following further discussion the Committee **AGREED** to a further Newsletter being prepared, based on the content of the report and on the comments of Members detailed above, to be circulated to all households in Sutherland and posted on the Sutherland Local Plan website; and **APPROVED** the revised timetable for preparation of the Plan including publication of an 'Issues and Options' paper and consultation through a series of public meetings/workshops during late summer 2006, prior to consideration of a Deposit Local Plan in early 2007. Additionally it was **AGREED** that it be explicit in the Newsletter that the content reflects the community aspirations, so as not to create unrealistic expectations within the community.



PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

NEWSLETTER

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SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN

Issue 2: June 2006

The Highland Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for Sutherland. It will cover all land use issues, including housing, business and industry, retailing, infrastructure, recreation and environmental protection to guide the future development of the area. It will also indicate policies for the conservation of the built, natural and cultural heritage and encourage improvement of the physical environment.

In November 2005 the first Newsletter was issued and views were sought on issues to be considered. Background papers relating to housing, economic development and the environment were prepared together with Ward Profiles. This information is available at www.highland.gov.uk (do a search for Sutherland Local Plan). Every household in Sutherland was notified and all stakeholders, statutory agencies, community groups, the voluntary and private sector, landowners and the public were asked to comment.

To date, some 500 responses have been received from a wide range of interests and the public, raising more than 3000 points for consideration. Tables of all comments received and the matters raised are available at the Sutherland Local Plan website. These responses are now being fully investigated.

This second issue of the Sutherland Local Plan Newsletter provides a summary of the main themes arising from initial consultation with stakeholders and the public and identifies key issues for the Plan.

Housing

The availability of housing is essential to stop the drift of people from Sutherland, regenerating the population and encouraging economic growth. Affordable homes for rent and ownership, as well as accommodation for first-time buyers, families and the elderly are required, either through new build or renovating and occupying vacant homes. Holiday/second homes contribute to rising house prices.

Land for development might include poorer or underused-neglected grazing/crofting areas, although in certain places croft land should be avoided and developed only by exception to revitalise townships. Traditional building forms and high quality design should be promoted and inappropriate ribbon development discouraged. Responses to the consultation identified opportunities within the main communities; these require to be investigated for their suitability and availability for development.

Objectives

Further consideration needs to be given to matters raised by stakeholders and the Local Plan should:

- Identify land with sufficient choice and capacity to meet projected housing needs over the next decade;
- Ensure a supply of land for housing can be delivered within or adjoining settlements;
- Encourage an appropriate mix of accommodation.

Economy

Economic development – retaining and growing the workforce – is an essential part of the regeneration of Sutherland. Initiatives to generate jobs need to be supported by a choice in housing, improved skills/training, modern services and infrastructure, better communications and environmental. The consultation identified possible opportunities for economic development within main settlements together with an indication as to where existing investment might need further promotion.

Objectives

Consideration needs to be given with the appropriate agencies, to initiatives designed to:

- Secure a competitive economy, including links with adjoining areas;
- Identify the main economic “drivers” for the future;
- Review the effectiveness of existing land supply for economic development and maximise the use of vacant/underused accommodation.

Services

The priority is to address local deficiencies and improve the range and quality of facilities and improve the appeal of places to visitors. The size and distribution of the population and accessibility to centres will influence future investment. The viability of services may depend on innovation in the delivery of schemes. The consultation drew out the main requirements throughout the area and also indications of local service priorities.

Objectives

Further consideration needs to be given to:

- The location of facilities;
- The potential for improved local facilities;
- The investments needed to support better transport networks.

Environment

The diverse natural and cultural heritage of Sutherland – its habitats, species, scenery and artefacts – is a major asset. This must be protected and promoted to maximise the areas economic prospects, including its appeal to visitors. Possible opportunities were identified by the public together with an indication as to where existing investment might be promoted further.

Objectives

Safeguarding and promoting the exceptional natural and cultural heritage should involve:

- Respect for the character of communities and promotion of the highest design standards for new development;
- A balance of measures to protect the environment and maximise development/management of resources.

Next Steps

A series of local meetings/workshops will be arranged during the late summer of 2006 across Sutherland.

Contacts

Colin Mackenzie; Brian MacKenzie; Katie Briggs; Julie-Ann Acheson

You can contact the Sutherland Local Plan team direct by:

- Post at The Highland Council Planning and Development Service, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX
- E-mail at Sutherlandlp@highland.gov.uk
- Phone at 01463 702271, 702271, 702276 or 702266

The Sutherland Area Planning and Building Standards Manager is Allan Todd. He manages the team of local officials based in Dornoch who deal with planning applications and building warrants.

The Local Plan team would welcome any comments or information that you have. Further copies of this newsletter are available at www.highland.gov.uk (do a search for Sutherland Local Plan).

Sutherland County Committee Minutes – September 4 2006

Sutherland Local Plan

There had been circulated Report No. [SU-173-06](#) by the Director of Planning & Development Sutherland Local Plan 'Issues and Options' paper for circulation as widely as possible throughout the Local Plan Area and to all stakeholders with an interest. The report recommended that Members approve; (i) the draft 'Issues and Options' paper and its circulation throughout the Area, and to statutory consultees, interested parties and Community Councils, on the basis of a ten week consultation period; (ii) a series of public meetings and local exhibitions, to be chaired by local Members; and (iii) joint working with SEPA, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland for the purposes of Strategic Environmental Assessment in respect of the Issues and Options paper.

Members heard from C Mackenzie, Principal Planner on the main changes to the draft options and issues paper as a result of comments received back from Members. The Paper will be produced in a user friendly format, and circulated as detailed in the report with the agreement of the local Member on the basis of a 8 -10 week consultation period, with a further report being submitted to the Committee in January 2007.

Mrs A Magee welcomed separate meetings being held in Bonar Bridge and Ardgay but advised that joint discussions in relation to the Industrial Estate would be preferable.

Mrs R Finlayson outlined her concerns that flexibility be retained within the Local Plan..

The Chairman stated that the schedule of meetings be fixed as soon a possible and should avoid the public travelling over the winter months. He also suggested that if a landowner refuses to release land zoned for housing in the Local Plan after a given period of time, it be removed from the Plan and a reserve area introduced.

Mrs A Magee reported that Scottish Water is to provide details of its proposals to deal with constraints up until 2010. A report is to be tabled at the full Council meeting on 21 September 2007, which she hoped will set out dates for improvements.

The Committee **APPROVED** the recommendations subject to members comments detailed above, and **AGREED** that a schedule of dates for public meetings and local exhibitions be compiled, in consultation with Members, at the earliest opportunity.

PUBLIC NOTICES

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN – YOUR CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED

This is the opportunity for you to influence the future of your community. The new Local Plan for Sutherland will identify sites for development and include policies for controlling development, but we are still at the stage of looking at options and exploring issues. We will now be inviting the public and other interested parties to give us views.

As part of preparation of the new Sutherland Local Plan, The Highland Council has produced an issues and options paper entitled “**Sutherland Futures**” which we will soon be publishing. A notice in next week’s Northern Times will provide information on when and where our paper will be available. There will be a period up to **15 December 2006** for interested parties to submit comments. Details of how to make comments are included in the consultation paper.

We have been assessing the ideas set out in “Sutherland Futures” in terms of what they might mean for the environment. Information about this will also be available and open to comment.

On each of the following dates we are holding an **afternoon public exhibition**, which starts at **3:30pm (4pm at Bonar Bridge and Dornoch/ Embo)** and closes at 5:45pm. This is followed by an **evening public meeting** which starts at **7pm**. Dates and venues are as follows:

Lairg	Monday	23 October 2006	Lairg Community Centre
Lochinver	Thursday	26 October 2006	Lochinver Village Hall
Scourie	Monday	30 October 2006	Scourie Village Hall
Rogart	Wednesday	1 November 2006	Rogart Village Hall
Brora	Thursday	2 November 2006	Brora Community Centre
Durness	Monday	6 November 2006	Durness Village Hall
Bonar Bridge	Tuesday	7 November 2006	Bonar Bridge Village Hall
Kinlochbervie	Thursday	9 November 2006	Kinlochbervie Village Hall
Strath/Armadale	Monday	13 November 2006	Strath/Armadale Village Hall
Ardgay	Wednesday	15 November 2006	Ardgay Village Hall
Portskerra/Melvich	Thursday	16 November 2006	Melvich Village Hall
Bettyhill	Monday	20 November 2006	Bettyhill Village Hall
Tongue	Tuesday	21 November 2006	Tongue Village Hall
Golspie	Thursday	23 November 2006	Golspie High School
Helmsdale	Monday	27 November 2006	Helmsdale Community Centre
Edderton	Tuesday	28 November 2006	Edderton Village Hall
Dornoch/Embo	Thursday	30 November 2006	Dornoch Academy

The Plan is only at an early stage of preparation and there is a real opportunity for you to help us by contributing. If you have an interest in the future planning of development for your community then we hope to see you at one of these events and look forward to receiving your written comments on “Sutherland Futures” by the deadline.

Further advice about this consultation can be obtained from: **David Cowie** – tel (01463) 702827; **Brian Mackenzie** – tel (01463) 702276; **Katie Briggs** – tel (01463) 702271 and **Julie-Ann Acheson** – tel (01463) 702266; or Email: Sutherlandip@highland.gov.uk

John D Rennilson
 Director of Planning & Development
 The Highland Council
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 Inverness IV3 5NX

You can have a say in Sutherland's future

Anyone in Sutherland with an interest in the future of development in the community will be invited to have their say on the local plan being prepared for the county, the Highland Council said this week.

Planning officials have produced a discussion document, entitled 'Sutherland Futures', and are keen to get feedback from the public at a series of 17 public exhibitions and meetings, starting at Lairg on Monday, October 23, and ending in Dornoch on Tuesday, November 30.

They will be on hand during the afternoon to record the public's views, and meetings will be held from 7pm.

Councillor Francis Keith, chairman of Sutherland County Committee, urged the public to take advantage of this opportunity to have their say.

"When someone wants to build a new house or other kind of development, they apply to the council for planning permission. In deciding whether or not things can go ahead, our planners and committee look first at the local plan," he said.

"What the plan says about the site, about the type of development or about matters such as the environment will be very important considerations. So it is important to get the local plan right first, and keep it up to date, because it will influence the future of Sutherland communities."

Sutherland Futures will be published soon and will be available widely across the county. It sets out options for development to 2016 and beyond, including a vision, suggesting the kind of place Sutherland should be 20 years from now.

"We believe that Sutherland should be a regenerating place, comprising a network of strong communities. It should be a competitive part in the economy of the Highlands with benefits to Sutherland. It could be better equipped with improved accessibility to services provided locally. Finally, its outstanding heritage will need to be safeguarded by the local people whose area it is. The plan is still at an early stage of preparation and there is a real opportunity for people to help us by contributing. If you have an interest in the future planning of development for your community, then we hope to see you at one of our consultation events and look forward to receiving your written comments on Sutherland Futures by the December 15 deadline.

"We'll carefully consider all comments we receive and decide on what will be in the draft local plan early in 2007."

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Sutherland Futures will be published soon and will be available widely across the county. It sets out options for development to 2016 and beyond, including a vision, suggesting the kind of place Sutherland should be 20 years from now.

"We believe that Sutherland should be a regenerating place, comprising a network of strong communities. It should be a competitive part in the economy of the Highlands with benefits to Sutherland. It could be better equipped with improved accessibility to services provided locally. Finally, its outstanding heritage will need to be safeguarded by the local people whose area it is. The plan is still at an early stage of preparation and there is a real opportunity for people to help us by contributing. If you have an interest in the future planning of development for your community, then we hope to see you at one of our consultation events and look forward to receiving your written comments on Sutherland Futures by the December 15 deadline.

"We'll carefully consider all comments we receive and decide on what will be in the draft local plan early in 2007."

Kinlochberrie joins marine litter clean-up

Highland Council and more than 100 volunteers joined the fishing for marine litter project in Kinlochberrie on Monday, October 23, to help clean up the coastline.

The project is part of the Highland Council's Marine Litter Action Plan, which aims to reduce the amount of litter at sea.

Kinlochberrie is the only harbour to join the project, which is being led by the Highland Council's Marine Litter Action Plan.

The project aims to establish a network of ten harbours with 100 participating boats and to collect 500 tonnes of marine litter over the three-year period.

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On each of the following dates the council is holding an afternoon public exhibition, starting at 3.30pm (4pm at Bonar Bridge and Dornoch/Embo) and closing at 5.45pm. These will be followed by an evening public meeting starting at 7pm. Dates and venues are as follows:

Lairg — Monday, October 23, Lairg Community Centre.
Lochnaver — Thursday, October 26, Lochnaver Village Hall.
Sogairie — Monday, October 27, Sogairie Village Hall.
Rogart — Wednesday, November 1, Rogart Village Hall.
Brora — Thursday, November 2, Brora Community Centre.
Dunness — November 6, Dunness Village Hall.
Bonar Bridge — Tuesday, November 7, Bonar Bridge Village Hall.
Kinlochberrie — Thursday, November 9, Kinlochberrie Village Hall.
Strath/Amsdale — Monday, November 13, Strath/Amsdale Village Hall.

Strath Village Hall
Ardgay — Wednesday, November 15, Ardgay Village Hall
Portskerry/Melviech — Thursday, November 16, Melviech Village Hall
Bettyhill — Monday, November 20, Bettyhill Village Hall
Tongue — Tuesday, November 21, Tongue Village Hall
Golspie — Thursday, November 23, Golspie High School.
Helmsdale — Monday, November 27, Helmsdale Community Centre.
Edderton — Tuesday, November 28, Edderton Village Hall.
Dornoch/Embo — Thursday, November 30, Dornoch Academy.

Further advice about the Sutherland Local Plan consultation can be obtained from: David Cowie on 01463-702827; Brian MacKenzie on 01463-702276; Katie Briggs on 01463-702271 and Julie Ann Achson on 01463-702266. e-mail Sutherlandip@highland.gov.uk

A IMPRSTNE

Northern Times, 13 October 2006

People urged to have their say on future plan

HIGHLAND COUNCIL'S programme of community consultation events is gathering pace and will reach out to further community council areas next week.

Planning staff will be holding public exhibitions and meetings at Strath/Armada on Monday, 13th November, at Strath Village Hall; at Ardgay on Wednesday, 15th November, at Ardgay Village Hall; and at Portskerra/Melvich on 16th November at Melvich Village Hall. The exhibitions run from 3.30pm to 5.45pm and the meetings start at 7pm.

The council invites all sections of the community to attend the forthcoming exhibitions and meetings and to provide comments and ideas in response to the current consultation exercise. The consultation paper, Sutherland Futures, is available locally and on the council's website www.highland.gov.uk.

Malcolm MacLeod, the council's policy and information manager, said: "We are already in our third week of the consultation period. It is important that people come along soon and take part in this consultation, because the deadline for comments is getting closer – it's 15th December.

"We have already had some useful feedback about the local plan issues and options from events held so far, and a number of people have promised us further information and ideas about how they feel their communities can accommodate growth in the coming years.

"This coming week we are discussing a number of option sites for future development in Melness, Strath, Armadale, Melvich, Portskerra, Ardgay and Culrain as well as intentions for the South Bonar Industrial Estate near Ardgay. Many of the option sites provide opportunities for new housing, including affordable housing, although there are also some sites which we have flagged as having potential for business development.

"Better meeting local housing needs and providing sufficient opportunities for new jobs are key issues which we are hearing from communities across Sutherland at events held so far."

Sites identified for consideration in Melvich and Portskerra include land in Melvich in respect of which the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust are in the process of carrying out a feasibility study.

"The trust has recently completed the development of two houses in

Armadale which have been let to an incoming teacher and a tenant requiring amenity housing. It is therefore important that appropriate land is identified in Armadale and Strath areas to meet future needs," said Mr MacLeod.

"It is essential that the options for all of these settlements are considered at this early stage, and the council is hopeful that the consultation will draw feedback on them."

Mr MacLeod added: "In addition to these settlements, there are a number of smaller settlements or townships in these community council areas and we would be happy to discuss the future planning of those with anyone who has an interest. We intend to draw limits to the development of those places and would welcome discussion with landowners and residents as to how and where we should define those limits on the map."

Further advice about the Sutherland Local Plan consultation can be obtained from:

David Cowie (01463-702827);
Brian MacKenzie (01463-702276);
Katie Briggs (01463-702271) and
Julie-Ann Acheson (01463-7022660);
or e-mail Sutherlandlp@highland.gov.uk.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN – YOUR CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED

This is the opportunity for you to influence the future of your community. The new Local Plan for Sutherland will identify sites for development and include policies for controlling development, but we are still at the stage of looking at options and exploring issues. We will now be inviting the public and other interested parties to give us views.

As part of preparation of the new Sutherland Local Plan, The Highland Council has produced an issues and options paper entitled “**Sutherland Futures**” which is now published. Copies are available from: Highland Council Service Points; Highland Council Area Planning and Building Standards Office, The Meadows, Dornoch; Highland Council Headquarters, Glenquhart Road, Inverness; Public Libraries; Post Offices; on our website www.highland.gov.uk; or you can request that a copy be sent to you by phoning 01463 702262. There will be a period up to **15 December 2006** for interested parties to submit comments. Details of how to make comments are included in the consultation paper.

We have been assessing the ideas set out in “Sutherland Futures” in terms of what they might mean for the environment. Information about this will also be available and open to comment.

Our programme of exhibitions and meetings has already begun but there is still opportunity to come on one of the following dates. On each we are holding an **afternoon public exhibition**, which starts at **3:30pm (4pm at Bonar Bridge and Dornoch/Embo)** and closes at 5:45pm. This is followed by an **evening public meeting** which starts at **7pm**. Dates and venues are as follows:

Dornoch	Monday	5 November 2006	Dornoch Village Hall
Bonar Bridge	Tuesday	7 November 2006	Bonar Bridge Village Hall
Kinlochbervie	Thursday	9 November 2006	Kinlochbervie Village Hall
Strath/Armadale	Monday	13 November 2006	Strath/Armadale Village Hall
Ardgay	Wednesday	15 November 2006	Ardgay Village Hall
Portskerra/Melich	Thursday	16 November 2006	Melich Village Hall
Bethyhill	Monday	20 November 2006	Bethyhill Village Hall
Tongue	Tuesday	21 November 2006	Tongue Village Hall
Golspie	Thursday	23 November 2006	Golspie High School
Helmsdale	Monday	27 November 2006	Helmsdale Community Centre
Edderton	Tuesday	28 November 2006	Edderton Village Hall
Dornoch/Embo	Thursday	30 November 2006	Dornoch Academy

The Plan is only at an early stage of preparation and there is a real opportunity for you to help us by contributing. If you have an interest in the future planning of development for your community then we hope to see you at one of these events and look forward to receiving your written comments on “Sutherland Futures” by the deadline.

Further advice about this consultation can be obtained from: David Cowie – tel (01463) 702827; Brian Mackenzie – tel (01463) 702276; Katie Briggs – tel (01463) 702271 and Julie-Ann Acheson – tel (01463) 702266; or Email: Sutherlanddp@highland.gov.uk

John D Renmilson
 Director of Planning & Development
 The Highland Council
 Glenquhart Road
 Inverness IV3 5NX

Your chance to influence Local Plan

As part of its consultation with communities across Sutherland, the Highland Council is seeking comments on new and existing development opportunities for possible inclusion in the new local plan.

Principal planner David Cowie explained: "Some of the site options which we have highlighted for future development are new sites not previously identified. However, others are sites which have already been identified for development in existing local plans produced a few years ago but which, for whatever reason, have not yet been developed. This consultation provides opportunity to consider whether such sites should remain allocated as part of the new plan."

Next week planning staff will be holding public exhibitions and meetings at Bettyhill on Monday, November 20, at Bettyhill Village Hall; at Tongue on Tuesday, November 21, at Tongue Village Hall; and at Golspie on Thursday, November 23, at Golspie High School. The exhibitions run from 3.30pm to 5.45pm and the meetings start at 7pm.

The council's consultation paper "Sutherland Futures" is available locally and on the council website www.highland.gov.uk.

Mr Cowie said: "This coming week we are discussing a number of option sites for future development in Bettyhill, Tongue and Golspie. At Bettyhill sites have been identified, for discussion, which are close to the core of the settlement rather than proposing expanding significantly outwards.

"A variety of fresh sites have come forward for consideration in Tongue from different landowners. This includes a council-owned site south of the Church of Scotland which has potential to accommodate some affordable housing for the village.

"At Golspie, significant expansion is already planned at Drummic and a range of other sites are identified, including opportunities for employment-generating growth and community facilities.

"It is essential that the options for all of these settlements are considered at this early stage, and the council is hopeful that the consultation will draw feedback on them."

The deadline for sending comments to the council is December 15. The council will then have to consider the comments received before deciding on the contents of the plan, which will be published as a draft early in 2007.

Consultation launched on Sutherland local plan

Planners begin a seven-week consultation for the new Sutherland Local Plan with meetings at Lairg on Monday (23rd October) and Lochinver on Thursday (26th October).

The public is invited to attend an afternoon public exhibition between 3.30pm and 5.45pm. This is followed by an evening public meeting which starts at 7pm.

The consultation document "Sutherland Futures", which is now widely available at council service points, libraries, some post offices and on the Highland Council website, puts forward a sustainable development strategy capable of delivering up to 1300 new houses in Sutherland by 2016 – including an

outstanding deficit of 150 affordable homes – and of giving access to 800 new jobs.

The priorities at Lairg are to maintain the momentum of economic and physical regeneration. There are important opportunities to revitalise the village.

A large number of sites are put forward for consideration and there is opportunity to identify a preferred direction for growth.

One of the sites identified is the former Sutherland Arms Hotel, a substantial disused building which occupies a prominent location in the settlement. The local plan could identify potential refurbishment or redevelopment of it. The auction mart site at Lairg Station provides

opportunities for expanded or additional business uses.

In Lochinver, the priorities are to follow up on the outcomes of previous housing study work carried out during 2004 and 2005, and identify sites which can come forward for development over the course of the next few years.

A fundamental consideration is of course the potential offered by the community land interests at Assynt, and the local plan offers an opportunity to look at the servicing and environmental implications of these developments.

Drumbeg and Stoer lie within a National Scenic Area and support local services. At Drumbeg there is opportunity for some infill development. At Stoer

there may be some scope for development of a small site but the water supply is currently constrained.

Councillor Francis Keith, chairman of the Sutherland County Committee, said: "There is clearly a challenge in accommodating growth and making it happen in a way that does not harm valuable features of Sutherland but rather is of benefit.

"This is why we have come up with options for how growth might be accommodated in and around communities and are consulting on them. We envisage that not all of the option sites will be required for development in the next few years, and consultation may show that some sites are not suitable anyway."

The deadline for submission of written comments on Sutherland Futures is Friday 15th December.

The council will carefully consider all comments before deciding on what will be in the draft local plan early in 2007.

Your housing in your hands

SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN
CONSULTATION

7 NOVEMBER 2006

What Development?

How much?

Where?

Give us your thoughts on
how we should answer these questions!

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

4pm - 5.45pm

PUBLIC MEETING

7pm

BONAR VILLAGE HALL



Planning & Development Service
The Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness IV3 5NX

Tel. 01463 702250
Fax. 01463 702208
e-mail. planning@highland.gov.uk

greater now in the light of a new EC Water Framework Directive. And he said that the archaeological concerns over the quarry site were, in his view, "overly restrictive."

It was agreed to approve the application, but also to write to the director of planning suggesting that in the future it would be better if all aspects of wind farm developments were dealt with in one application rather than several.

Emily MacFarquhar, who works for SPP, helped the 43-year-old father of four become a blonde bombshell, by adding the final touches which allowed Roy to adopt his boy-band looks.

Wife Kim and their three older daughters thought the emerging swan was hilarious but eight-year-old Naomi was horrified!

Roy's not sure either and plans to reinvent himself again today (Friday).

Scottish Provincial Press Group.

By the day of the great Bleach Clean Up on Friday, nearly £500 had been pledged.

Trained haidresser

would only do so if they could sponsor him for £100.

Within two hours, £200 had been raised between staff at Method Publishing, The Northern Times and fellow workers within the

But, oooh, suits you sir!

Roy Mackenzie, who is general sales manager for the Golspie-based company, was challenged to dye his jet black (with grey spot colour) hair by his work colleagues, but said he

Well, it was all supposed to be in aid of charity. Need but there's one very regretful looking Roy in the Method Publishing manager dyed his hair for the charity.

Planning exhibition for Embo

Following representations to Jamie Stone MSP concerning Embo residents having to travel to Dornoch for local plan forums, an additional public exhibition has now been arranged for Embo.

Local councillor Duncan Allan has also arranged for a minibus to provide transport to the evening meeting in Dornoch, leaving the Embo bus stop at 6.30pm, and returning

after the closing of the meeting at approximately 9pm.

Highland Council had originally organised an afternoon exhibition and an evening meeting on the Dornoch/Embo Local Plan to be held in Dornoch Academy on Thursday, 30 November.

But several Embo residents had complained that it was unfair that Embo people had to travel no evening public

to Dornoch in the afternoon and again in the evening to attend each, particularly for those without access to cars.

They expressed their concerns to Jamie Stone at his surgery in the village last Saturday morning.

Highland Council planning officer Brian Mackenzie. They emphasised that there was no evening public

transport from the village to Dornoch.

But in an e-mail on Tuesday night to Alec Watt, School Street, Mr Mackenzie said that a minibus had been arranged to take residents to and from the evening meeting and, in addition, we shall stage an additional public exhibition at the Embo Football Club changing rooms between 12noon and 2pm on the day of the

meeting, 30 November. At the exhibition, display material will cover the content of the later meeting, and staff will be available to address questions and issues on an individual basis.

The exhibition will then move to Dornoch Academy and will be open between 4pm and 5.45 pm, prior to the meeting at 7pm, which will discuss the issues for both Dornoch and Embo."

public evening public

public evening public

public evening public

public evening public

Deadline looms for comments on local plan

The deadline for commenting on the Highland Council's consultation paper for the new Sutherland Local Plan is just a week away.

Council staff have completed a programme of exhibitions and meetings and have set a deadline of next Friday, 15th December, for comments.

David Cowie, principal planner, said: "There is still time for anyone with an interest in the future development of their community in Sutherland to send in their views at this important stage in the plan process.

"The exhibitions and meetings have enabled us to gather local knowledge and community views on the issues affecting the future

development of the area. They have added value to the process of preparing the new local plan, which should be a better plan as a result. Our thanks go to all those who have participated so far."

He added: "We are working on the production of a newsletter, which will soon be publicly available and which will summarise the key issues which have been drawn to our attention at the recent consultation events."

The council has placed copies of "Sutherland Futures" in service points, in its area planning and building standards office at Dornoch and in its Inverness HQ, as well as in public libraries and post offices all over Sutherland. It is also available on the council's website

www.highland.gov.uk. Further copies of "Sutherland Futures" can be requested by calling 01463-702262.

Advice about the Sutherland Local Plan consultation can be obtained from: David Cowie (01463-702827); Brian MacKenzie (01463-702276); Katie Briggs (01463-702271); and Julie-Ann Acheson (01463-702266); or e-mail Sutherlandlp@highland.gov.uk.

Written comments should be sent to: Planning and Development Service, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX or may be e-mailed to the address above. A comments form and free-post envelope is available, supplied with the "Sutherland Futures" paper. Letters are also accepted.

Involvement questionnaire results

Planning for the Highlands:

Let us know how you think we should get you involved

It is important that everyone in the community has the opportunity to get involved in the preparation of the Local Plan. For example, this may be an opportunity to read and comment on documents, to provide ideas, to complete questionnaires, to attend exhibitions and meetings or to take part in workshops.

So how do you think we should get people of similar age to you involved in preparing future Local Plans?

Please complete this short questionnaire - you are not required to provide your name or address.

1) How should we tell people of similar age to you in your community about what's happening with the Local Plan?

- Newspaper adverts and articles (5 votes) **17.2%**
- Local radio adverts and articles (3 votes) **10.4%**
- Posters and leaflets (10 votes) **34.5%**
- Website (6 votes) **20.7%**
- Text message (4 votes) **13.8%**
- Other- please state? (1 vote) letter **3.4%**

20 respondents -15 picked one answer, 3 picked 2 answers, 2 picked 4 answers
total of 29 votes.

2) Which of the following ways of being involved would be of most interest to you?

- read and comment on documents (1 vote) **4%**
- provide ideas (11 votes) **44%**
- complete questionnaires (2 votes) **8%**
- attend exhibitions No votes **0%**
- attend meetings (4 votes) **16%**
- take part in workshops (7 votes) **28%**
- Other- please state? No votes **0%**

20 respondents-16 picked one answer, 3 picked two answers, 1 picked three answers
total of 25 votes

3) Which would be of least interest?

- read and comment on documents (5 votes) **17.9%**
- provide ideas (3 votes) **10.7%**
- complete questionnaires (1 vote) **3.6%**
- attend exhibitions (7 votes) **25%**
- attend meetings (9 votes) **32.1%**
- take part in workshops (3 votes) **10.7%**
- Other- please state? No votes **0%**

20 respondents-16 picked one answer, 1 picked 2 answers, 2 picked 3 answers, 1 picked 4 answers,
Total answer 28 votes.

-
- 4) If you were to take part in workshops who would you also like to be there?
- people of a similar age to you (19 votes) **79.2%**
 - working age adults (3 votes) **12.5%**
 - retired age adults (2 votes) **8.3%**

20 respondents -18 picked one answer, 2 picked 3 answers.
Total 24 votes

-
- 5) If you had comments on a Local Plan, how would you most like to provide those comments to us?
- by post (6 votes) **23.1%**
 - by e-mail or through website (12 votes) **46.2%**
 - by text message (2 votes) **7.6%**
 - in person (for example, at exhibitions, meetings or workshops) (6 votes) **23.1%**
 - Other- please state? No votes **0%**

20 respondents-16 picked one answer, 2 picked 2 answers, 2 picked 3 answers
Total 26 votes

-
- 6) Are you involved in any groups outside school?
- Yes (9 votes) **45%**
 - No (11 votes) **55%**

20 respondents

If you would like to tell us which groups you are involved in, please do.

Youth group, football, badminton, golf, corra

There may be opportunity in the future to hold consultation events with specific groups.

- 7) How did you find today's workshop?
- Very good (2 votes) **10%**
 - Good (9 votes) **45%**
 - Average (5 votes) **25%**
 - Poor (3 votes) **15%**

20 respondents –no answer (1 vote) 5%

Name of school you attend:

Kinlochbervie

Which community do you live in or near:

20 respondents

No 1	Durness (10 votes)	<u>50%</u>
No 2	Kinlochbervie (5 votes)	<u>25%</u>
No 3	Scourie (4 votes)	<u>20%</u>
No 4	No answer (1 vote)	<u>5%</u>

Any other comments

No 1 - I really want to learn more about what this is all about and I hope you come back soon but not too soon and thanks for listening to me.

No 2 – I enjoyed the work shop it was very educational and got us thinking.

10 % responded with comments

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

SUTHERLAND AREA COMMITTEE –
19 March 2007

Agenda Item	
Report No	

SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN – “SUTHERLAND FUTURES” – RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

Report by Director of Planning and Development

Summary

The Council is preparing a single new Local Plan to cover the whole of Sutherland. An issues and options paper, “Sutherland Futures”, was published in October 2006 for public consultation and a series of events held to engage the community. This report summarises the main issues raised by representors and seeks Committee’s direction on these and on the main sites for development. Draft Objectives and General Policies for inclusion in the Plan are appended for consideration.

1.

Background

- 1.1 Committee will recall that it approved an Issues and Options Paper, “Sutherland Futures”, for public consultation at its meeting on 4 September 2006. The Paper was subsequently published and consultation ran from late October to mid December. The Paper was circulated widely in paper form to consultees, to others who had previously expressed an interest and to publicly accessible locations and was available on the website. The opportunity for the public to view the paper, to attend consultation events and to comment was publicised through newspaper adverts, posters, articles published in the Northern Times and a news item broadcast on radio. 18 public exhibitions and 17 public meetings were held around Sutherland, based on Community Council areas. Some 446 submissions have been received in response, some covering just one or two matters and others raising a wide range of comment. All those persons or organisations commenting are listed in **Appendix 1**. The text of the representations themselves is available as a background paper.
- 1.2 This report summarises the issues raised by the representations, offers officer comment on them and makes consequential recommendations for the emerging Local Plan. **Appendix 2** contains a set of draft key objectives for the new Local Plan, which the Committee is asked to consider. **Appendix 3** contains a set of draft general policies

for the Local Plan, which the Committee is also asked to consider. These have been developed as ‘generic’ policies in conjunction with the Lochaber and Skye & Lochalsh Local Plan Teams (except policies for housing in the countryside and for retailing, which will not be applicable to all three plan areas). **Appendix 4** contains a draft settlement hierarchy and **Appendix 5** contains discussion on Settlement Development Areas (SDAs) and development allocations (sites), again which Committee is asked to consider. Where sites are referred to by number in this report, those are the site option reference numbers used in the Sutherland Futures document.

- 1.3 Following the consultation events officers prepared notes of the main issues raised, which have been placed on the website. A Newsletter has been produced and circulated to all those who submitted representations. We made use of an ‘Opinionmeter’ at the consultation events, to gauge how useful people found them, and will use the results together with other comments received about how the consultation was carried out to inform how we undertake consultation in the future.
- 1.4 We have also been undertaking work with some of the secondary schools, in order to gather some ideas from pupils of that age, for the future development and improvement of their area. We have also asked them about how best we can engage with them in planning matters in the future.
- 1.5 As part of the consultation we asked people for ideas of actions and projects for their community. Some of these may be capable of being delivered through development or may be relevant considerations for developers. Others require discussion with other services and organisations in order to explore their merit and potential. This work is on-going. We also asked people about what services and facilities are required for their communities. We will be discussing the results of this part of the consultation with relevant service providers as we move towards finalising the Proposed Plan. This will, amongst other things, inform ‘development requirements’ for the allocated sites.
- 1.6 Officers have prepared this report to enable the current Committee to receive the results of consultation on the document that it had agreed earlier for that purpose. This will enable Committee to give officers direction on the preparation of the Proposed Plan. There are some matters on which discussions, for example with landowners, other Council Services and other organisations, are on-going and where further key information is available this will be reported verbally to Committee.

2. Summary of General Issues Raised

- 2.1 The Sutherland Futures consultation paper sought views on the main issues and options for future planning of development. The following is a summary of the main general issues raised by respondents, dealt with loosely under five broad headings: Strategy, Homes, Jobs, Infrastructure and Environment. Officer response is then given to the main issues raised. This is then reflected in the Draft Local Plan Key Objectives which are appended for consideration.

2.2 Strategy

- Some respondents questioned the need for the level of growth suggested in the vision.

- Many agreed with the principles encapsulated in the vision such as trying to retain and attract younger generations to the area and provide for their needs.
- Some concerns raised relate to the longer term visioning for individual settlements in Sutherland Futures, particularly the potential longer term directions for growth indicated on diagrammatic mapping.
- The distribution of development opportunity must include appropriate provisions for rural development and the sustaining of small or dispersed communities. Policies of centralisation could frustrate this.
- Some people consider that there needs to be more scope for growth of their community and a more flexible approach to future development than is provided for by the options consulted upon.
- There needs to be a reasonable degree of certainty about the Plan's proposals. At the same time there needs to be some choice and flexibility- the Plan cannot foresee all development needs.
- The greatest concerns are with delivery. The aspirations need to be stretching but achievable.

Officer Response:

The strategy proposed is to reduce or avoid the negative consequences of demographic trends and to address the needs of communities, through enabling necessary development and growth. Indeed the Local Plan, in doing so, is helping to achieve the Community Strategy for Sutherland.

In providing for growth it is intended that the Plan will indicate positively the areas that are expected to accommodate larger scale development whilst also taking a sensitive approach, especially in rural areas to enable growth which sustains communities. This will include the identification of specific opportunities for growth and also a policy approach which enables appropriate proposals to be supported. The aim will be for sustainable rural development, having regard to assets which require safeguarding.

Regarding the longer term visions for growth of specific settlements, a number of representations have been received and issues raised will need to be explored fully, for consideration in future plan-making. Much of the land involved is not intended for allocation in this Proposed Plan. At this time Committee is being asked to agree matters concerning the SDAs and sites for allocation, including some specific parcels of land for the longer term, and is not being asked to agree wider principles of much longer term growth.

2.3 Homes

- Some question the need for the suggested level of house-building.
- There is a need for a range of house types to suit different market needs, through from affordable housing to executive homes.
- Many consider that affordable housing is essential and that there is a need to integrate it into the community. Several respondents have also identified a need for more housing- and care facilities- to cater for the elderly.
- There is concern about homes in the area being owned as holiday homes and that this does not assist with community participation. There is a danger that this will be

perpetuated if many new homes are likewise bought as second homes.

- The needs of the growth of crofting families should be provided for.

Officer Response:

The provision of up to 1300 new homes in Sutherland from 2006 to 2016, as set out in Sutherland Futures, is part of a strategy for growth which is intended to help achieve the overarching aim of the Community Strategy for Sutherland, namely “Positively influencing population change in Sutherland to achieve, over time, a vibrant, viable and revitalised population that enjoys a high quality of life.”

By providing a range of opportunities through allocations and the policy framework, there will be scope for a range of housing needs to be met. In particular there is recommended a policy seeking affordable housing provision on sites of four or more houses. The intention is to enable the communities’ housing needs to be met. There needs to be community involvement in proposals. The needs of specific needs groups will need to be considered in discussion with the relevant services and organisations involved in provision. If communities can be sustained through house building and jobs growth then there will be a stronger case for investment locally.

The percentage of dwellings in Sutherland which were either vacant or being used as a second/holiday home as at 2004 was 18.2% according to Council tax records, this being the third highest figure in Highland (just a little less than Badenoch & Strathspey and Skye & Lochalsh). Communities are rightly concerned about the impact that part-time occupancy has on their wellbeing. However, for as long as the housing stock is limited to the existing there are real constraints for local people in seeking homes, with little if any availability and choice. By enabling new development, which will include affordable housing provision, they will have more opportunity to stay in or enter the local housing market and meet their housing needs.

2.4 **Jobs**

- There is widespread concern that there may not be enough jobs and a feeling that these need to be created in parallel with housing development.
- There needs to be a combination of both better access, particularly south, to jobs outside Sutherland and the provision of employment opportunities locally.
- There needs to be a greater drive on encouraging economic development.
- Tourism will be very important but there are other sectors of potential growth too, including land and sea based industries and those that take advantage of local assets and products.
- IT and the internet are of increasing importance to business.
- Some feel that important crofting land should be protected, whilst others consider that there should be a flexible, relatively permissive approach to development on crofts.
- There is a need to reiterate support for crofting.

Officer Response:

It is vital that the Plan also enables the growth of a wide range of businesses and other employment development. Sutherland Futures aims for access to 800 new jobs. The

Plan can allocate sites for such development but it is equally important, particularly in the more rural parts of Sutherland, for the Plan to contain policies which provide for such development which is appropriate and if necessary then on sites not specifically allocated for the purpose.

Tourism will not be the only sector developed but it is recognised as being a key potential growth sector for Sutherland. This will require regard to be had to Sutherland's 'tourist offer' including natural and cultural assets and the provision of a range of facilities aimed at encouraging people to stay and to visit again.

It will be very important to monitor jobs growth in order to gauge whether the Plan's strategy is having the desired effect and to take remedial action, including reviewing the Plan, if necessary. Ultimately this could include revising phasing of future housing land release to be over a longer period if insufficient jobs are being created, where necessary through a review of the Plan.

Crofting is supported by the Council through Recommendation A5 of the Highland Structure Plan. It is of importance in Sutherland and the Local Plan will acknowledge that. The importance of good quality croft land is recognised and will be a consideration when dealing with proposals for development. It has also been a consideration when looking at individual settlement and site allocation issues. However, the protection of croft land has to be weighed up with other considerations, particularly the sustainable growth of communities and the need to accommodate strategic development needs. There will be instances where croft land will, eventually, be required for development. Such allocation will be subject to the willingness of the owner to release it.

2.5 **Infrastructure**

- Many are concerned about service provision and feel that there needs to be suitable investment in infrastructure, especially roads, at the outset to bring it up to the required standard to serve the growing population.
- Infrastructure to support tourism will be important but many feel that infrastructure should firstly be improved for the benefit of local communities.
- Many feel that routes should be protected for off-line road improvements, particularly the A9 at Golspie and Brora, and for a Dornoch Firth rail link from Tain to Golspie.
- There is scope for a greater range of public and community transport provision, including shared transport schemes to play a part in sustaining Sutherland's communities.
- When asked where a major new supermarket should be located, if there were to be one, the most popular locations suggested were Golspie, Lairg and Brora. However, many people considered that a major supermarket would be inappropriate as it could harm the viability of existing shops.

Officer Response:

The intention is that the capacity of infrastructure will be considered and that necessary community infrastructure will be required to be provided in step with the development. Where necessary developer contributions will be sought and a policy has

been drafted for inclusion in the Plan which will reiterate the need for these where appropriate.

With regard to roads, TECS is consulted in respect of individual allocations, but the matter of whether the land use strategy as a whole builds a case for greater investment in the road network is for consideration at a strategic level, for example as an input to the Local Transport Strategy (LTS) which is under review. The LTS can also explore scope for a variety of transport methods and their integration.

The Plan will set out 'development requirements' for allocated sites and we will aim to set out wherever possible the anticipated community infrastructure needs, in order to provide a degree of clarity and certainty.

In respect of trunk road improvements, at Golspie representations are generally supportive of the aspiration of an A9(T) by-pass, reflecting concerns regarding the impact of trunk road traffic on Main Street. However, at Brora representations in relation to the potential A9(T) bypass indicated that the Council should not be promoting the safeguard of a route as this was not programmed within the Scottish Executive 10 year programme. The recent draft HiTrans strategy did set out a clear strategic objective for the delivery of bypass of settlements on the A9 north, with research and scheme preparation programmed for the period between 2012 and 2017 and delivery in the period 2017-23. The Council has requested in its response to the draft strategy for clarification as to the settlements referred to. It will then be for Members to decide whether the Local Plan should safeguard a route or merely provide a description in the text. It is expected that the final strategy will be published soon, and the outcomes will be reported to the Council at the appropriate time.

Regarding the suggestion for a Dornoch Firth rail link (Tain to Golspie), the route suggested by the representors would involve at least three substantial engineering projects on the route, apart from the route and stations themselves, namely bridge crossing of the Dornoch Firth, tunnel at Dornoch and bridge crossing at the entrance to Loch Fleet. There is conflict between the route and proposed growth areas at Dornoch. The suggested route is not an advanced proposal and, in particular, is not within a programme of schemes for implementation. (It should be noted that housing proposals at Dornoch are significantly further advanced than this rail link proposal is.) Whilst there is a potential argument that there could be economic and social benefit to parts of Sutherland (and Caithness), the strategy put forward for the Local Plan does not depend upon the provision of this link. Following advice in PAN 75 (paragraph 37) it is not appropriate to safeguard this route in the Local Plan at this time given the early stage of development of the proposal. If the route sought to reuse existing, disused trackbed that had yet to find an active reuse then there may have been potential to safeguard it for future transport uses. However, the suggested route does not follow the old disused trackbed. It may be noted that the route also differs considerably from that considered in the 1980s. If and when rail companies seek to promote the route, the onus will be on them to demonstrate the social and economic benefits of the scheme and to examine its impact on the environment, in accordance with Structure Plan Policy TC13.

With regard to the matter of a new supermarket, the concerns expressed are understandable and we can take these into consideration as we move forward with this

and subsequent plans. A policy has been drafted dealing with retail development, for consideration.

2.6 **Environment**

- There is general support for sustainable development principles.
- There should be greater emphasis on design quality within development, from small scale development through to proposals for settlement expansion and large, stand-alone developments. This would bring benefits for local residents and increase the attractiveness of the area as a place to invest in or visit.
- Development should not be at the expense of the environment, and in particular wind farm development must not be allowed to spoil the attraction of the area and harm the important tourist industry.
- Sutherland's landscape is a valuable asset.
- People are keen to see energy efficiency in new development and many would welcome small-scale and community renewables.
- Brownfield sites and disused buildings should be reused.
- Risk of flooding is of significant concern.

Officer Response:

The overall recognition of the need for sustainable development principles to apply is to be welcomed. This needs to be in a Sutherland context and supportive of rural communities.

Through Strategic Environmental Assessment, regard is being had to the value of landscape, the risk of flooding and other matters in preparing the Plan. The Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines provide a basis for consideration of wind energy proposals and it will be important in Sutherland to consider the consequences of such development on other sectors of the economy, such as tourism. In respect of flood risk we are referring to the SEPA flood mapping and other sources of information.

Brownfield sites and disused buildings can have a negative impact upon the social and economic welfare of an area. They are also a valuable source for new development. As such, the Plan needs to have a policy framework which enables a positive attitude to be taken to appropriate proposals for their reuse.

The Plan must also respond to the place-making agenda by reflecting the drive of PAN67 "Housing Quality", of "Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland" and other key documents. We will look to include the necessary touchstones within the Plan to enable appropriate weight to be placed on design quality and place-making considerations. A policy has been drafted and included in the General Policies section for Committee consideration.

3. **Summary of Settlement and Allocation Issues Raised**

3.1 **Brora**

- Is there any likelihood of the proposed by-pass ever being built, it should not continue to be supported in the plan

- The development of the by-pass is essential for the future development of Brora..
- In-bye croft land should not be identified for housing development.
- Concerned about the vision for long term development on agricultural and crofting land
- Most suitable development sites lie near town centre
- The wastewater situation needs to be addressed
- Use brown field sites in centre for infill development, keep centre alive.
- Population is falling, need new employment opportunities.
- Fountain Square is an eyesore and needs redevelopment,
- Further opportunities exist for tourist related development at Station Square and Fascally.
- Improve access to beach and provision of interpretation.

3.2 **Dornoch**

- Concerns regarding the impact of development on localised flooding and inadequacy of current drainage arrangements.
- Flood risk issues flagged in regard to potential development at Dornoch North.
- Traffic impact of development on local road network particularly Poles, Embo and Lonemore roads.
- Infrastructure and facilities will need improved to accommodate further growth.
- Need to consolidate local business with opportunities for further small scale retail and business, no need for large supermarket.
- Encouragement should be given for young families to stay in the area.
- Level and speed of proposed development will lose identity of Dornoch
- Is there capacity in relation to water and wastewater?
- Development proposals need to take account of archaeology and the environment and should protect and preserve it.
- Concerns regarding building on low lying land and subsequent flood and drainage issues.

3.3 **Edderton**

- Need for single house development opportunities to be identified within village.
- School may require improvement in light of new development.
- Would support greater level of development to help bring services to the village.
- Water and drainage infrastructure inadequate at present
- Development site is on land of archaeological value

3.4 **Embo**

- Major concern regarding building on other side of “by-pass road” serving caravan park
- The current infrastructure is inadequate to service this level of growth
- Feel that expansion of this size is too large for a village of this size
- Seek upgrades to services and infrastructure in order to support further development
- Preference for existing local plan allocations to the north of Embo to be brought forward

- Conflicts identified between traffic flows accumulating from proposed new development, caravan park and pedestrian safety in relation to the 3 sites forming option 4.
- Feelings that the proposed site options to south of the by-pass do not relate well to the existing community, the purpose of the bypass was to remove holiday traffic from the village
- Compulsory purchase of unavailable sites.
- Any further development should be undertaken to the north of the by-pass
- Community land buy-out and development of forest crofts will go a large way to addressing local housing needs.
- Housing that will be built will only go to people outwith the area anyway
- Need investment in the hall and infrastructure before any building happens.
- Affordable housing contributions should be provided as houses and not as a commuted payment. Local people need affordable housing.
- Embo lacks basic facilities to serve further growth

3.5 **Golspie**

- Concerned that the building of a supermarket on the edge of the settlement will destroy the existing main street.
- Lack of land for general industrial use. Business park is underutilised yet not available for this type of use, need to confirm potential on existing allocated land.
- Need to provide for visitors to the area especially in light of the development of the cycle trail, facilities to include accommodation, shops and further activities.
- The by-pass is required, Golspie Main Street is not fit to accommodate trunk road traffic. By-pass is essential in order to regenerate village centre.
- Need employment opportunities to retain and grow economy and population.
- Potential for supermarket - comments for and against were voiced.
- Sites for community composting should be identified.
- Need to identify and preserve open space.

3.6 **Helmsdale**

- Crofting land identified should be retained for crofting use.
- Much of in-bye land is not utilised and proximity to infrastructure makes site at Rockview Road suitable for provision of housing development.
- Need both private and public housing in developments.
- The need for a settlement boundary for Helmsdale was questioned.
- An inadequacy in public transport to other settlements was identified.
- Development of tourist related activities and facilities are important.
- A location for a caravan and camping site should be identified.

3.7 **Rural Settlements**

Several settlements were commented on where it was felt that the development potential should be identified or particular issues existed. This will form part of preparatory work towards the Proposed Plan.

- Seek Evelix – west of Camore area to be identified as rural settlement.
- East Clyne – need to examine existing township boundary.
- Need to confirm development boundary at Dalchalm, concern exist in regard to flood risk
- West Garty – potential was identified for redevelopment of farm steading to housing.
- Potential at Navidale after A9 realignment.
- Opportunities at Ardmore and Balleigh should be investigated

3.8

Arday

- Empty croft houses should be restored.
- Need to concentrate housing near the commercial core of Arday.
- Water supply is already a major issue.
- Parts of Lower Gledfield have poor drainage and there is a fear that if all the site options are used that flooding will be exacerbated.
- A community field between Arday and Bonar Bridge would be welcomed.
- Need to be aware of the setting of historic buildings in Lower Gledfield.
- Suggestion that site 1 (south of Oakwood Place) should be a site of woodland expansion; however this is already an allocated site in the existing Local Plan.

3.9

Bonar Bridge

- More housing is required, especially affordable housing for young people to encourage them to stay in the area.
- Further provision required for small industrial development.
- The existing Migdale Hospital site should be re-used once the new hospital is in place.
- Youth facilities are required.
- Water supply is a major issue, which is currently limiting growth of the area.
- Crofting areas out with the village of Bonar Bridge are being threatened from the pressure to build more houses and they should be protected to save their important cultural landscape.

3.10 South Bonar Industrial Estate

- There was a feeling in the local community that flooding issues need to be resolved before there is any extension, however others feel that further industrial development in Bonar Bridge should be concentrated in the South Bonar Industrial Estate as it is central and has good access.

3.11

Lairg

- The old Sutherland Arms Hotel needs to be redeveloped.
- The Ferrycroft Centre should be better used.

- Affordable housing needed for the younger members of the population, to encourage them to remain in the community. It may also encourage young families to move to the area, especially if new businesses can also be attracted.
- Arable land should not be used for housing, instead use poorer quality land.
- Need to ensure that Lairg does not become over developed.
- Loch Shin should be used for water sports which would encourage tourism. At present there is little in Lairg to encourage tourists to stay.
- Perhaps there is too much emphasis on housing and not enough on business/industry.
- Large scale industry is unlikely to locate in Lairg, however the use of the internet should be encouraged so that businesses could be run remotely.

3.12

Rogart

- Rogart would benefit if more houses were developed in the old centre of the Parish.
- A mixture of private and affordable housing is necessary.

3.13

Rosehall

- Growth must be proportional to what the area will support, particularly in relation to jobs and the capacity of the road system.
- Rosehall requires affordable housing.

3.14 **Culrain-** no key issues raised by public.

3.15

Lairg Station

- The area around the station needs to be made to look more attractive.

3.16 **Invershin-** no key issues raised by public but representation received from owner of the site shown in Sutherland Futures.

3.17 **Assynt Area**

- Deficiency in the water supply at Stoer
- Concern about upsetting the heronry at Culag
- Sites identified by Assynt Crofters Trust for forest crofts, and for the townships, and comment regarding the unsuitability of the site identified in Stoer because it is arable croft land.
- Sites identified near Clashnessie
- The Crofters Commission have expressed their support for the creation of forest crofts in the Ledbeg area.
- Suggestion by the Assynt Crofter's Trust that we should consider additional land north of Inver Park and behind Main St in Lochinver

3.18 **Scourie**

- Identified a deficiency in the standard of street lighting generally in Scourie and in its absence on Scouriemore road
- Crofters Commission object to options 1+3 as they are locally important inbye croft. An application for apportionment is currently being considered for option 8, but it is doubtful that this will progress successfully if the area is zoned.
- Individual sites identified for our consideration at Scouriemore, and croft number 53.
- Jean Balfour points out that it is difficult to find land in Scourie capable of providing for groups of housing. She has submitted comments on the suitability of all the sites suggested.

3.19 **Durness**

- SNH are concerned at the number of sites identified outwith the settlement boundary and believe care should be taken to reinforce the existing settlement pattern. They do consider that there is scope at School road, Sangomore and along the south side of the road at Lerinbeg. The western end of the settlement boundary includes an area of the Durness SAC which may require an appropriate assessment.
- Crofters Commission object to option 3 on the basis that it is an apportionment from the common grazings
- Concern from Historic Scotland that option 7 may affect the setting of C listed, Smoo Lodge
- The Ministry of Defence does not want residential development in Durness to extend westwards increasing proximity to the range
- A couple of objections to the current Local Plan boundary in Durine arguing that the existing houses are not in a straight line, the land is not good agricultural land, and that the ruins of original crofts are well down the fields.
- Site identified roughly 300 metres south of the edge of Durness
- Site identified at Balnakiel

3.20 **Laid**

- SNH recommend that the potential for infill is realised before the boundary is extended.
- The Laid Grazings Committee are disappointed that there is no mention of the super quarry issue and ask us to include the Laid communities' objections to it in the Local Plan. They also support the inclusion of the site option they submitted for Laid.
- Deficiencies identified included: a lack of fire hydrants; and a need for a heritage trail to cover - the wheel house, the well preserved souterrain, and the Bronze Age cemetery.

3.21 **Kinlochbervie**

- The Manse and Free Church are both listed buildings and therefore would need to be appropriately treated within the SDA and the Pier House should be

preserved in situ or by record.

- Community playing fields next to the nursery have a long lease
- A paper submitted by the Community Council providing information of developments at an early stage of consideration; a windfarm at Achriesgill; Loch Clash Harbour Area; and Kinlochbervie pontoons project
- There was an objection submitted by 14 of the residents of Manse Road to the allocation of land beyond the church at Manse Parks. They contend that there is already congestion on Manse Road which this would exacerbate and that the loss of the only good arable land in the settlement would be a waste. They are also concerned about the other site on Manse Road because of traffic and access implications.
- Robert Elrick & Gunn Contractors noted an increase in demand for new housing in the Kinlochbervie area but they feel there has been a resistance by the Planning Authority to grant permission for new sites. They feel that people looking to move to the area want views and privacy and that such sites will usually be outwith village centres and would often involve individual accesses.

3.22 **Strathy**

- One respondent suggested that a dedicated area for quad bikes and motor bikes would be a good idea in order to protect the sensitive areas such as the grassland at the cemetery
- Crofters Commission are concerned that site 4 is operated as part of a croft unit
- Objection by neighbours (Joan and Peter Chester) regarding site 4. There is concern about spoiling the views from the bridge looking down stream and the habitat that could be lost.

3.33 **Armadale**

- Local grazings clerk commented that the sites identified are not suitable as they are actively crofted.

3.34 **Melness**

- Local Plan needs to take account of the rebuild required for Caladh Sona.

4. **Objectives, Policies, Settlements and Allocations**

4.1 As already referred to, draft objectives are set out in Appendix 2 and draft policies are set out in Appendix 3 for Committee's consideration. We have had regard to issues raised through the consultation, including those summarised in this report, in drafting them. A draft settlement hierarchy is set out in Appendix 4 and more detailed analysis of settlement issues, including recommendations in respect of sites, are contained in Appendix 5 for Committee's consideration.

5. **Next Steps**

5.1 The Committee's decisions on this report will instruct and guide officers in working-up of the Draft Local Plan over the coming months. In parallel we will be continuing

to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the emerging Draft Plan. The SEA should inform the content of the Plan itself and it may be necessary as a consequence to recommend to Members additions and changes to the emerging Plan, in the period between the Council Elections in May and the Depositing of the Proposed Plan, which is now scheduled for late summer/ early autumn. The new timetable is influenced by the overall work programme and the challenges arising from and implications of the Planning (etc) Scotland Act 2006, as reported to the Planning, Development, Europe & Tourism Committee on 31 January 2007.

- 5.2 As a consequence, the outgoing Committee is asked to recommend that the new Council, which will be formed after the elections, adopts this Committee's decisions on this report. Clearly the new Development Plan covering Sutherland, irrespective of how it is packaged, needs to be informed by and based upon the valuable consultation already undertaken with the community and by Elected Members' consideration of the results of that process.

6. Resource Implications

- 6.1 The staff resources required for the Plan's stages up to Inquiry are included in the existing Work Programme.

Recommendation

That Committee:

- i. notes the representations received to Sutherland Futures, as summarised in the report;
- ii. comments on the issues raised and the officer response;
- iii. agrees the draft key objectives for the new Local Plan;
- iv. agrees the draft general policies for the new Local Plan;
- v. confirms the roles of the settlements, comments on issues affecting the SDAs and agrees the preferred allocations for development;
- vi. subject to discussion and any amendment, approves the content of Appendices 2, 3 and 4 and recommended settlements and sites in Appendix 5 as a material consideration for development management purposes in the Sutherland area;
- vii. notes the process and timetable set out for the next steps towards production of the Draft Local Plan for Deposit;
- viii. recommends that the new Council, which will be formed after the elections, adopts this Committee's decisions on this report.

Designation: Policy & Information Manager

Date: 08 March 2007

Author: David Cowie 01463-702827

Background Papers: Sutherland Futures (2006)- Local Plan issues and options consultation paper (available on www.highland.gov.uk)

Text of individual representations received to Sutherland Futures.

Appendix 1: LIST OF RESPONDENTS TO SUTHERLAND FUTURES CONSULTATION

The following is a list of those who responded to the Sutherland Futures consultation. They appear in the following order:

- Organisations/ Groups (alphabetically)
- then
- Those Representing others (alphabetically by those represented)
- then
- All other representors (alphabetically by Last Name- those where no last name known appear first in that part of the list).

The 'URN' is a Unique Reference Number assigned to a representor and enables quick access to their representors within the filing system.

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
172, 175	Mr	Michael A	Banks	A Banks & Sons		Dornoch
16	Mr	Norman	Ross	Achriesgill Grazings Committee		Rhiconich
444	Mr	P	Bakker	Altnaharra Estate Ltd		Altnaharra
92	Mr	Sebastian	Tombs	Architecture+Design Scotland		Edinburgh
177	Mr	Bill	Couston	Area Education Office, The Highland Council		Brora
180	Mr	Chris	Chant	Assynt Community Council		Lochinver
89	Mr	Durrant	Macleod	Assynt Crofters Trust		Lochinver
110	Ms	Kirsty	MacLeod	Assynt Crofters Trust		Lochinver
42	Mr	Bill	Ritchie	Assynt Foundation		Lochinver
182	Mr	Mike	Mackay	Bettyhill District Grazings Committee		Inverurie
436	Ms	Jenny	Siddall	Bettyhill, Strathnaver & Altnaharra Comm. Council		Bettyhill
97	Mr	Duncan	McDonald	Blueprint Architecture		Alness
99	Ms	Sheene	Craig	Caithness General Hospital		Wick
109	Ms	Anna	MacConnell	Caithness Partnership		Wick
432	Mr	Angus	Lyll	Calendonian Retreats		Inverness
362	Ms	Susan	Vass	Communities Scotland		Inverness
424	Mr	Howard	Pack	Corus Railway Infrastructure Services		York
340	Mr	Russell	Smith	Creich Community Council		Bonar Bridge
9	Mr	David	Bryan	CRNS (and Golspie Resident)		Golspie
370	Mr	John	Toal	Crofters Commission		Inverness
75	Mr	Nick	Halfhide	Deer Commission for Scotland		Inverness
122	Mr	Kenneth	Daly	Defence Estates		Dunfermline
359	Ms	Sue	Thompson	Dornoch Academy		Tain
404		G	Clunie	Dornoch Community Council		Dornoch
135, 394	Mr	Mark W.	Nortan	Dornoch Rail Link Action Group		Thurso
421	Ms	Myriam	Hengesch	Drivers Jonas		Glasgow
440	Ms	Yvonne	Mackay	Durness Community Council		Durness
100	Mr	W M	Sutherland	East Brora, Dalchalm & Greenhill Grazings Committee		Brora
376	Mr	Robin	Ashby	Edderton Community Council		Edderton
188	Mr	Robert	Elrick	Elrick & Gunn Contractors		Rhiconich
98	Mr	Jim	McGillivray	Embo Trust Steering Group & Kyle of Sutherland SCF		Embo

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
62	Mr	Donald	McLellan	Forestry Commission Scotland		Inverness
402	Mrs	Anne	Ford	Golspie Community Council		Golspie
144	Mrs	Ann	Houghton	Helmsdale Community Council		Helmsdale
431	Mr	William	Kidd	Historic Scotland		Edinburgh
88	Mr	Howard	Brindley	HITRANS		Inverness
61	Mrs	Lesley	Thomas	Inverkirkaig Common Grazings		Lochinver
57	Mrs	Katherine	Campbell	Kinlochbervie Community Council		Rhiconich
129, 164	Mr	Jim	McGillivray	Kyle of Sutherland Branch SCF		Embo
386	Ms	Jenny	MacKenzie	Laid Grazings Committee		Loch Eriboll
355	Mr	Beryl	Leatherland	Mountaineering Council of Scotland		Fife
437	Mr	Ross	Williams	NFU Scotland		Newbridge
407	Ms	Georgia	Haire	North Highland CHP-Sutherland		Golspie
344	Mr	Steven	Robertson	North Highland Forest Trust		Golspie
395		K.A.	Sutherland	Railfuture Scotland		Glasgow
187	Mr	Phil	McGarry	RMT		Glasgow
368	Ms	Donna	Murray	Rogart Community Council		Rogart
364	Mr	Kenneth	Graham	RSPB Scotland		Golspie
6	Dr	John	Logie	Scottish Association for Public Transport		Culloden Moor
423	Mr	Jim	MacPherson	Scottish Crofting Foundation		by Kyle of Lochalsh
366	Ms	Susan	Haslam	Scottish Environment Protection Agency		Dingwall
346	Ms	Valerie	Wilson	Scottish Natural Heritage		Golspie
46	Mr	Tom	Titterton	Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society		Edinburgh
13	Dr	Jean	Balfour	Scourie Estate		Glenrothes
378	Mr	David	Liddell	Sportscotland		Edinburgh
445	Mr	W M	May	Sutherland Highland Homes Ltd.		Dornoch
446	Mr	Chris	Whealing	Sutherland Highland Homes Ltd.		Dornoch
1	Ms	Dorothy	Maxwell	The Highland Council - Planning & Development		Inverness
34	Mr	A.	Usher	The Highland Council - Harbours		Lochinver
134	Mr & Mrs	Martin	Fraser	The Overscaig House Hotel		Loch Shin
183	Mr	Graham	Marchbank	The Scottish Executive		Edinburgh
373	Mr	Angus	Yarwood	The Woodland Trust Scotland		Edinburgh
343	Mr	Alastair	Christie	Thurso Community Council		Thurso

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
181	Mr	Neil	Reid	Tongue Garage		Tongue
190				Tongue, Melness & Skerry Community Council		Tongue
43	Mr	Adrian	Green	Treecraft Woodwork Ltd		Dornoch
353	Mr	Alan	Ogilvie	G.H. Johnston Building Consultants Ltd	on behalf of Brora Investment Ltd.	Inverness
10	Mr	Andrew	Colvin	Colvin Designs	on behalf of HH Roesner Land & Forestry Management	Brora
156	Ms	Shona	Blance	S. Blance Associates Ltd.	on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Alexander Blance	Helmsdale
120	Mr	Ruairidh	MacLennan	CKD Galbraith	on behalf of The Gledfield Trust	Glasgow
83		Occupier				Tongue
193, 194, 196		Occupier				Embo
327		Occupier				Embo
416		Occupier				Embo
417		Occupier				Embo
409		Residents				Kinlochbervie
53		Unknown				
433	Cllr	Dunan	Allan			Dornoch
71	Mrs	S	Allen			Ardgay
382, 408	Mr	Jack	Anderson			Dornoch
252	Mrs	Sheila	Anderson			Embo
380	Mr & Mrs	W	Anderson			Dornoch
24, 435	Mr	John	Ashworth			Tongue
325	Mr	A.	Bakie			Embo
324	Mrs	J	Bakie			Embo
256	Mr	Sandy	Bakie ESQ			Embo
123	Mrs	E.S.	Bakker			Lochinver
403		M	Ballantyne			Brora
374	Mr	Brian	Balmain			Isle of Bute
331	Mrs	M	Bannigan			Embo
84		C.J.G.	Bell			Culbokie
18	Ms	Claire	Belshaw			Lochinver
26	Mrs	Barbara	Bethell			Tongue
398, 426		Naveed	Bhatti			Dornoch
314	Mr		Bisset			Embo
225	Ms	Laura	Bisset			Embo
80	Ms	Donna	Blackman			Bettyhill
156	Mr	Alexander	Blance			Helmsdale
262	Mr	Fraser	Bonthrone			Embo
283	Mrs	Irene	Bonthrone			Embo
332	Mr	J	Bonthrone			Embo
284	Mr	John	Bonthrone			Embo
333	Mrs	K	Bonthrone			Embo

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
205, 318	Mrs	E.A.	Bower			Embo
204, 319	Mr	J.R.	Bower			Embo
427		D.H.	Bremner			Portskerra
167	Mr	Donald	Bremner			Golspie
160	Mrs	Janette D	Bremner			Dornoch
72	Mr & Mrs	Dorothy & Harry	Brown			Ardgay
290	Mr	M	Brown			Embo
291	Mrs	N	Brown			Embo
184	Mr	George	Bruce			Thurso
68	Ms	Lynne	Burgess			Ardgay
414	Mr	Andrew	Burton			Embo
239	Mrs	Christine	Burton			Embo
51	Mr	D L	Butterworth			Rogart
304	Mr	James	Calder			Embo
303	Ms	M.J.	Calder			Embo
15	Ms	Catherine	Cameron			Lairg
279	Mr	Alan	Campbell			Embo
261	Mrs	Lorna	Campbell			Embo
105	Mr	Peter C.	Campbell			Bonar Bridge
107	Mr	Peter C.	Campbell			Bonar Bridge
217	Mrs	Shona	Carlton			Embo
236	Mr	Iain	Carlton ESQ			Embo
94	Mrs	Joan	Chester			Strathy
392	Mr	Peter	Chester			Strathy
342	Ms	Janetta	Christie			Thurso
214	Mrs	Christine	Clark			Embo
270	Mrs	Jean	Clark			Embo
215	Mr	Keith	Clark ESQ			Embo
11, 354	Mr	Reay D.G.	Clarke			Edderton
19	Mr	Scott	Coghill			Tongue
209	Mr	A	Collett			Embo
210	Mrs	A	Collett			Embo
317	Ms	Nancy	Collette			Embo
147	Mr	Kurt	Connell			Embo
143	Mrs	R.A.	Copley			Ardgay
83	Mr	Scott	Cothill			Tongue
65	Mrs	Jan	Cowan			Armadale
101	Ms	Lesley	Cranna			Golspie
102	Mr & Mrs	N.	Crosby			Lairg
275	Mr	Munro	Cross			Embo
276	Mrs	Sharon	Cross			Embo
301	Mrs	I	Cumming			Embo
302	Mr	J.R.	Cumming			Embo
112, 231	Mrs	Jeanette	Cumming			Embo

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
230	Mr	John R	Cumming			Embo
201	Ms	Joan	Currie			Dornoch
443	Mr & Mrs	Ian & Maureen	Currier			East Lothian
81	Ms	Yvonne J.	Daniels			Bettyhill
347	Mrs	Monica	Dargie			Dornoch
221	Mrs	K	Davidson			Dornoch
220	Mr	G	Davidson ESQ			Dornoch
23	Ms	Dorothy	Dick			Scourie
41	Mr	Alex	Dickson			Lochinver
335	Mrs	J	Docherty			Embo
336	Mrs	S	Docherty			Embo
170	Mr & Mrs	Mike & Tracy	Dowling			Ardgay
216	Mr	Andrew	Duff			Embo
126	Mr	Andrew	Elliot			Glashiels
356	Mr	S.J.	Farquharson			Dornoch
36	Mr	J	Farrer			Durness
79	Mr & Mrs	Grant & Helen	Fay			Ardgay
83, 149	Mr & Mrs	John and Kathy	Ferguson			Tongue
396	Mr & Mrs	B & D	Field			Golspie
250	Mrs	Caroline	Fitzpatrick			Embo
251	Mr	Gerry	Fitzpatrick ESQ			Embo
166	Mr	Keith A	Forbes			Brora
271	Mr		Foreman			Embo
272	Mrs	S	Foreman			Embo
83		S.	Fox			Tongue
257	Mrs	Dorothy	Fraser			Embo
242	Mr	George	Fraser			Embo
158	Mr	Ian	Fraser			Lairg
243	Mrs	Jean	Fraser			Embo
49	Ms	Margaret	Fyfe			Brora
197	Mr	John M	Gall			Dornoch
264	Mr	A S	Gamble			Embo
265	Mrs	S M	Gamble			Embo
77	Ms	Brigitte	Geddes			Ardgay
185	Mr	Rob	Gibson MSP			Evanton
132	Ms	Chrisina	Gill			Embo
40	Ms	Isobel	Gillies			Brora
125	Mr	C E	Gilmour			Altass
145	Mrs	G.M.	Glennie			Ardgay
189	Mr	Andrew	Gordon			Tongue
142	Rev.	J.L.	Goskirk			Lairg
141	Mrs	Myra	Goskirk			Lairg
111	Mr	Colin	Grach			
320	Mrs	A.	Grant			Embo
330	Mr	Donald	Grant			Embo

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
281	Mrs	J.	Grant			Embo
228	Mr	Davie	Grant ESQ			Embo
91	Mr & Mrs	A J	Gray			Lairg
52	Mr	Gordon M.	Gray			Bettyhill
328		G	Green			Embo
207	Mr & Mrs	Iain & Liz	Gregory			Lairg
192	Ms	Elena	Grey			Embo
173		Sandi	Grieve			Brora
171	Mrs	Catriona	Grigg			Embo
377	Mr	David	Guild			Edinburgh
235	Mr	G	Gunn ESQ			Embo
83, 345	Mr	Simon	Guttridge			Tongue
212	Mrs	I	Hadden			Embo
321	Mr	William	Hadden			Embo
17	Ms	Mandy	Haggith			Lochinver
293	Ms	Sarah	Hall			Embo
285	Mr	William	Hamilton			Embo
289	Mrs	G	Hammond			Embo
288	Mr	John	Hammond			Embo
20	Mr	J A C	Hampton			By Ardgay
7	Mr	C.B.	Hancock			Helmsdale
308	Ms	Laura	Harkness			Embo
96, 108	Mr	R.W.	Harrison			Helmsdale
150	Miss	Caroline	Hart			Dornoch
28	Mrs	G.E.T.	Hart			Lairg
168	Mrs	J.	Harvey			Golspie
389	Mr & Mrs	David & Rachel	Hird			Brora
305	Mr	David	Holmes			Embo
306	Mrs	Karen	Holmes			Embo
85	Mrs	A.	Houghton			Helmsdale
425	Mr	Tim	Huddleston			
244	Mr	A.D.	Hutton			Embo
245	Mrs	W	Hutton			Embo
87	Mr & Mrs	L & J	Jamieson			Golspie
410	Mr & Mrs	Tom & Jean	Jamieson			Balloch
268	Mr	Bryan	Jones			Embo
267	Mrs	I	Jones			Embo
309		S.M.	Judge			Dornoch
83	Mr	David	Keith			Tongue
83	Ms	Helen	Keith			Tongue
83	Mr	Ian	Keith			Tongue
104	Mr	James	Keith			Durness
83	Mr	Marc	Keith			Tongue
83	Ms	Suzanne	Keith			Tongue
133	Mr	Davide	Khalil			Strathy

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
70	Mr	David	Knight			Ardgay
31	Mr & Mrs	Alex & Helen	Lawson			Embo
391	Mr	Kevin	Lee			Armadale
358	Mr	George	Leligdowicz			Achfary
375	Mr	Anthony	Lennon			Motherwell
393	Mr	Alexander	Levack			Helmsdale
274	Mrs	Elaine	Lindsey			Embo
247	Mrs	Heather	Lyon			Embo
248	Mr	Alexander	Lyon ESQ			Embo
233	Mr	Shaun	MacDoanld			Embo
329	Mr	A.	MacDonald			Embo
295	Mr	Alexander	MacDonald			Embo
21	Mrs	Alexandra	MacDonald			Lairg
213	Mrs	Alexina	MacDonald			Embo
298	Mr	Euan	MacDonald			Embo
334	Mrs	I	MacDonald			Embo
296	Mr	Murdo	MacDonald			Embo
118, 121	Mr	Norman	MacDonald			Bonar Bridge
58	Mr	Robert A	MacDonald			Scourie
297	Mrs	Shirley	MacDonald			Embo
73	Ms	Alison J	MacGregor			Ardgay
50	Mr	M.	MacGregor			Dornoch
371	Mr	John	Maciver			
114			MacKay			Embo
199			MacKay			Dornoch
419	Mrs	A	Mackay			Dornoch
229	Mr	Alick	Mackay			Embo
411	Mr	Angus	Mackay			Bonar Bridge
241	Mrs	Christine	Mackay			Embo
137	Mrs	Coral	Mackay			Embo
420	Dr	D.G.	Mackay			Golspie
227	Mr	Darren	Mackay			Embo
115, 226, 442	Mr	David James	Mackay			Embo
277	Mr	Donald	Mackay			Embo
249	Mrs	Gayle	Mackay			Embo
161	Mr	James S.	Mackay			
136	Ms	Jenny	Mackay			Embo
202	Mr	John	Mackay			Golspie
413	Ms	Joyce	Mackay			Bonar Bridge
326	Miss	Julia	Mackay			Embo
383		L	Mackay			Dornoch
224	Mrs	M	Mackay			Embo
286	Miss	Margaret	Mackay			Embo
287	Mrs	Margaret B	Mackay			Embo
59	Ms	Mary	Mackay			Durness
200	Ms	Maureen C.	Mackay			Dornoch
278	Mrs	Pat	Mackay			Embo

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
240	Mr	Paul	Mackay			Embo
390	Mr	William	Mackay			Dornoch
339	Mr	Ian G.	MacKenzie			
372	Mr & Mrs	Robert & Jennifer	Mackenzie			Golspie
387	Mr	K.W.	MacKenzie Hillcoat			Loch Eriboll
203	Ms	Audrey	MacLennan			Golspie
381	Mr	B.	MacLennan			Dornoch
367	Mr	Durrant	Macleod			
83		J.	Macleod			Tongue
83		R.	Macleod			Tongue
422	Mrs	Madeline	MacPhail			Lochinver
83, 345	Ms	Janette	Macpherson			Tongue
14	Mr	E	MacRae			Brora
103	Ms	Melanie	Macrae			Golspie
63	Brigadier & Mrs	Patrick	Marriott			Golspie
55	Mr	Andrew	Marshall			Kinlochbervie
54	Mr	Charles J.L.B.	Marsham			Durness
83		M	Martin			Tongue
83		N	Martin			Tongue
163	Mr	Jeff	Mason			Tongue
365	Miss	Joanne	Mason			Brora
64	Mr	Hamish	Mathieson			Bonar Bridge
2	Ms	Joan	Matthews			Invershin
234	Ms	Cheryl	McAffer			Embo
119	Mr & Mrs	Evelyn & Angus	McCall			Golspie
292	Miss	Fiona	McCorkindale			Embo
155		Lindsay	McDonald			Lairg
162		L.	McFriel			Embo
191	Mr	James	McGilling			Embo
146	Ms	Elizabeth	McGillivray			Embo
412	Ms	Mary	McGillivray			Bonar Bridge
195		J	McGilly			Embo
232	Mrs		McGrath			Embo
27	Mr	Alastair	McIntyre			Ardgay
169	Ms	Kathleen	McLaughlin			Golspie
363	Mr	Stewart	McLennan			Inverness
130	Mrs	M	Miller			Brora
66, 83	Mr & Mrs	D.A.	Mills			Tongue
83	Mrs	F.M.	Mills			Tongue
428	Mr	Ngair	Mingham			Tongue
300	Mr	Edware	Moffat			Embo
299	Mrs	Lillian	Moffat			Embo
74	Mr	Peter M	Monk			Dornoch

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
76, 388	Mr & Mrs	John & Margaret	Moore			Fortrose
3	Mr	George	Morgan			Lairg
280	Mrs	A	Morrison			Embo
357	Mrs	Barbara	Morrison			Dornoch
48	Mr	John	Morrison			Lochinver
269	Mr	David	Munro			Embo
218	Mrs	Iris	Munro			Embo
219	Mr	George	Munro ESQ			Embo
174	Mr	G.	Murray			Tongue
44	Mr	George M.	Murray			Rogart
441	Mr	Hugh M.	Murray			Golspie
198	Lt. Col. (Retd)	Michael	Napper			Dornoch
60, 83	Mr & Mrs	Belinda & Stuart	Nicholson			Tongue
45	Mrs	Jean	O'Brien			Brora
178	Mr	Alan	Ogilvie			Inverness
47	Mrs	A.D.	O'Hennessey			Lairg
67	Mr	Phil	Olson			Ardgay
56, 206		M	Otter			Rhiconich
351	Mrs	Annette	Parrott			Lairg
95		A.	Pascoe			Helmsdale
39		J.G.	Payne			Drumbeg
83		S.	Plass			Tongue
12, 179	Mr	Dennis	Pryde			Brora
263	Miss	Michelle	Rafferty			Embo
322	Mrs	Patricia	Reed			Embo
323	Mr	William	Reed			Embo
5	Mr	Alistair	Risk			Brora
361	Mr	Bill	Ritchie			
316	Mr	I	Roach			Embo
282	Mr	J.	Roach			Embo
315	Mrs	M	Roach			Embo
406	Mr	J.T.	Robertson			Dornoch
138, 211	Ms	Liz	Robertson			Embo
157	Mr	Struan	Robertson			Embo
384, 385	Mr	Ian	Robichaud			Culloden
379	Ms	Linda	Robichaud			Culloden
153	Mr	Mark	Robinson			Dornoch
33	Mr	Michael	Rochester			Lochinver
4	Mr	Harry	Rook			Ardgay
152	Mr & Mrs		Ross			Brora
338	Mr	George	Ross			Embo
405	Mr	Graeme	Ross			Dornoch

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
337	Mrs	Margaret	Ross			Embo
266	Miss	Wilma	Ross			Embo
113	Ms	Lorna	Sawyer			Dornoch
106	Mr & Mrs	V & P	Scott			Golspie
310	Miss	Amy	Shand			Embo
312	Mr	D.	Shand			Embo
313	Mrs	Marion	Shand			Embo
311	Miss	Zoe	Shand			Embo
151	Mr	P C	Shanks			Brora
127	Ms	Barbara	Shillinglaw			Embo
32	Mr	B.A.	Small			Peterborough
259	Mr	Charles	Smedley			Embo
258	Mrs	Margaret	Smedley			Embo
260	Mrs	Donella	Smith			Embo
165	Mr	Ian	Smith			Bonar Bridge
131	Mr	Russell	Smith			Bonar Bridge
352	Mr & Mrs	Mark & Jan	Snowdon			Lochinver
83		C.	Stokes			Tongue
400	Mr	Michael	Stuart			Forsinard
399	Mr	Gavin	Suggett			Blairgowrie
86	Mr & Mrs	Andrew & Christina	Sutherland			Lairg
8	Ms	Catherine	Sutherland			Golspie
90	Mr & Mrs	G & M	Sutherland			Brora
37, 124	Mr	Iain	Sutherland			Brora
25	Mr	John F	Sutherland			Golspie
82	Ms	Margaret	Sutherland			Rhi-Tongue
35, 159	Mr	Murdo	Sutherland			Tongue
176	Ms	Nancy	Sutherland			Brora
397			Sutherland			Golspie
237	Mr	D	Sutherland ESQ			Embo
238	Mr	Donnie	Swanson			Embo
176	Mr	William	Tait			Brora
69	Ms	Irene	Tankard			Ardgay
348	Mr	Eric L.	Tensley			Embo
350	Ms	Jane	Tensley			Embo
38	Mrs	Lesley	Thomas			Lochinver
30	Mr	C R	Thompson			Dornoch
117	Mr	Andy	Thomson			Dornoch
93	Ms	Isobel	Thomson			Brora
78	Mr & Mrs	K.G.	Thomson			Durness
438	Mr	John	Thurso MP			London
415	Mrs	Nicky	Todd			Dornoch
434	Mr	Allan	Tubb			Golspie
341	Ms	Marion	Turner			Ardgay

URN	Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation/Group	Representing	Address
186	Ms	Evelyn	Walker Smith			Bonar Bridge
255	Mrs	Krys	Walters			Embo
253	Mr	Andrew	Walters ESQ			Embo
254	Mr	Barry	Walters ESQ			Embo
116, 128, 148, 208	Mr	Alex J	Watt			Embo
307	Mrs	Janice	Watt			Embo
223	Mrs	P	Waymouth			Embo
222	Mr	G	Waymouth ESQ			Embo
418	Mrs	E	Whitham			Embo
139	Mr	Peter	Wild			Dornoch
140	Ms	Sarah	Wild			Dornoch
439	Mrs	Sue	Wilkinson			Brora
294	Mr	Christian	Williams			Embo
360	Mr	David John	Williams			Embo
349	Ms	Susan	Williams			Embo
369	Mr	Ian	Wilson			Dunblane
246	Mrs	Liz	Wilson			Embo
273	Mr	Robert	Wilson			Embo
429	Mrs	A.	Winning			Dornoch
430	Mr	C	Winning			Dornoch
154	Mr & Mrs	J.L. & Elizabeth	Woolcombe			Golspie
401	Ms	Jane	Young			
22	Ms	Jane R.	Young			Lochinver
29	Mr	R	Young			Lairg

Appendix 2: SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN: KEY OBJECTIVES

It is appropriate to set key objectives for the Local Plan. This will provide a focus to the Plan and help us to ensure that its individual policies and proposals are relevant and necessary, so that the Plan is ‘fit for purpose’.

For issues and options consultation, the vision set out in “Sutherland Futures” (2006) was presented under just four themes:

- A Regenerating Place: A Network of Strong Communities
- A Competitive Place
- A Connected and Accessible Place
- A Place of Outstanding Heritage: Safe in the Custody of Local People.

The paper set out a long term vision to 2025, set within the overall context of a drive towards sustainability.

It is intended that the new Sutherland Local Plan will play a key role in helping to achieve the community’s strategic objectives. In particular it needs to help deliver those aspects of the Community Strategy/Plan which have land-use planning implications. The Sutherland Partnership developed “A Strategy for Sutherland 2005 – 2009” and has since developed “A Community Plan for Sutherland- an action grid springing from the Sutherland Partnership Strategy” (2006). The overarching aim of the Community Strategy for Sutherland is:

“Positively influencing population change in Sutherland to achieve, over time, a vibrant, viable and revitalised population that enjoys a high quality of life.”

The main theme of the Community Strategy is “Strengthening Our Communities” and under that the Community Plan sets out seven strategic objectives:

1. Promoting opportunities for young people
2. Putting people first
3. Welcoming talent
4. Growing our economy
5. Confident and thriving settlements
6. Promoting environmental benefits
7. Making partnership more effective

The Local Plan also needs to relate to the seven strategic themes of the “Highland Structure Plan” (2001).

The suggested key objectives for the Local Plan are therefore set out below under the seven strategic themes of the Structure Plan and with cross-reference made to the relevant strategic objectives (SOs) of the Community Plan, to ensure consistency and

appropriate ‘nesting’. (NB. Further work will be done on this cross-referencing and drawing linkage.)

1. Conserving and promoting the Highland identity

What does it mean for Sutherland?

- Conserving and promoting Sutherland’s identity, as part of the identity of the Highlands as a whole, whilst recognising the diversity within Sutherland itself and the relationship with adjacent areas;
- Accommodating growth and change in a planned way, ensuring that Sutherland’s valuable assets- natural and other- are conserved. These assets are of key importance to the future growth of the economy, to achieving quality living environments and to identity;
- Respecting evidence of the way in which communities have interacted with their environment, which is a key part of identity;
- Providing opportunity for the continuance of traditional land and sea based activities and industries, particularly crofting, forestry and fishing.

Helps meet SOs.....

2. Adopting a proactive approach to the wise use of the natural environment

What does it mean for Sutherland?

- Importance of the natural environment for its own sake and as an asset to the Sutherland community;
- Inevitably the community’s existence impacts upon the natural environment and it will be important to take the opportunity presented by planning future development to minimise and mitigate against negative impacts;
- Development can also provide positive opportunity to improve upon the richness of the existing, for example through enhancing biodiversity. It can also be sustainable in its own right and may involve activities which use Sutherland’s natural environment in ways which benefit communities and the economy of the area.

Helps meet SOs 6.....

3. Taking an integrated approach to improving accessibility to goods, services and markets

What does it mean for Sutherland?

- Large parts of the Sutherland community will remain car-dependent.
- Recognition that many people already travel far for some services. Furthermore some parts of Sutherland are dependent upon adjacent areas for certain services, for example secondary schooling in Ullapool and Thurso.
- Do what we can to encourage the retention of key services in Sutherland’s communities.
- Focus large scale development on larger settlements which can offer a range of services within easy reach.

- Deliver improvements required to services and facilities in step with housing development. An Action Programme will seek to guide implementation and track progress.

Helps meet SOs 1, 5.....

4. Consolidating the settlement hierarchy

What does it mean for Sutherland?

- This Plan, which is the first Local Plan to cover the whole of Sutherland in a single document, confirms the relevant position of settlements within the hierarchy. It is emphasised that this hierarchy and the settlement development areas identified is for land-use planning purposes and is not intended to identify the wider extent of communities which associate themselves with those settlements.
- There needs to be an adequate supply of land identified for new development.
- Some settlements are expected to accommodate substantial new development in a sustainable way as part of the overarching theme to strengthen communities.
- Some others are expected to provide for community growth but on a smaller scale.

Helps meet SOs 4, 5.....

5. Creating an improved business environment

What does it mean for Sutherland?

- A range of sites for employment development will be provided whilst also operating a framework of policies which accommodate employment-generating development on other sites- particularly where it supports the sustainability of fragile communities and does not harm interests of acknowledged importance.
- This will help accommodate the needs of traditional land and sea based industries whilst also providing opportunity to respond to new small and medium scale enterprise and entrepreneurialism.
- A range of opportunities for housing provision, including affordable housing, linked with planning of services and facilities, including infrastructure investment, will help provide for the needs of prospective employees.

Helps meet SOs 1, 3, 4, 5.....

6. Addressing the need for quality living environments

What does it mean for Sutherland?

- Of high importance is the need to aim for quality living environments.
- This is relevant in looking at the details of individual planning proposals as well as the context within which various proposals fit in with the existing built environment and relate to the natural environment.
- In Sutherland we should do what we can to encourage the retention of key services in communities and to seek good design quality in new development.

Helps meet SOs 1, 5, 6.....

7. Working in partnership with the community and other agencies

What does it mean for Sutherland?

- This Plan is prepared by the Council with the involvement of the community and other agencies and linkage is being made with the Community Plan.
- An Action Programme will be developed, setting out how the Local Plan will be implemented. This will indicate which organisations will be involved and a timescale for implementation.
- The Local Plan and the Action Programme will be subject of monitoring and a Monitoring Report will be published regularly. It is important to monitor progress towards achieving the objectives of the Plan and the agreed actions, both generally and in detail where necessary. Only by undertaking such monitoring will the Council know whether the Local Plan remains fit for purpose or requires review.

Helps meet SOs 2, 7.....

Appendix 3- GENERAL POLICIES

The fundamental part of this Plan strategy is to direct the right sorts of development to the right places, thereby *making better places*. The Plan sets out below a range of general policies to achieve its objectives.

Please note that planning applications will be assessed against *all* policies and legislation relevant to that proposal and location and that conformity with a single policy will not necessarily indicate that a proposed development is acceptable.

1 Settlement Development Areas

The Plan highlights the importance of supporting existing communities. As a result, we have defined *Settlement Development Areas*. These are the preferred areas for most types of development, including housing. This is consistent with the Structure Plan Policy H3, which says that housing development will generally be within existing and planned new settlements. Because of this, we hope to meet the majority of the 1300 house requirement (2006 to 2016) within the *Settlement Development Areas*. This makes best use of existing infrastructure and services and protects the character of the surrounding countryside. When defining settlement development areas we have taken account of a number of things, including:

- the quality of neighbouring croft or agricultural land;
- the type of land;
- the ability of the landscape to allow for development;
- the pattern of existing settlements; and
- the availability of infrastructure.

The Plan aims to allow enough room for future development (including infill development) while recognising the physical limits due to the landscape and ground conditions. As a result, where possible we have drawn the boundaries of the settlement development areas relatively widely around the existing built-up areas.

For each of the *Settlement Development Areas*, the Plan will set out a number of *Development Factors* and *Developer Requirements* which will need to be taken into account in that particular area. This will include for example, important views which should be retained or other improvements required.

Policy 1 Settlement Development Areas

We will support proposals within *Settlement Development Areas* (as shown on the Proposals Map insets) as long as they meet the requirements of Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for Sustainability, as shown on page ** of this Plan.

We will also judge proposals in terms of how compatible they are with the existing pattern of development, how they conform with existing and approved adjacent land uses, and the effect on any natural and cultural heritage feature within these areas (see Policy 4, Box 1 and Background Maps).

Developments which are judged to be significantly detrimental in terms of the above criteria shall not accord with the Local Plan.

2 Land allocations

The Strategy recognises that most of the future growth in Sutherland will be in the main settlements, for which *Settlement Development Areas* have been identified. These include the communities:

- which have experienced the greatest development pressures;
- where the main services are;
- where the best transport links are; and
- where larger-scale industrial and business development is the most practical.

The *Settlement Hierarchy* set out in the Plan provides an indication of main settlements which are most likely to be able to accommodate larger-scale development sustainably.

Within the *Settlement Development Areas* we have allocated sites for the following types of land use.

Allocation	Type of Land Use
H	Housing
AH	Affordable Housing
C	Community
OS	Public Open Space (safeguard from development)
LT	Long Term (land indicated for development in the next Plan period)
R	Retail
MU	Mixed Use (acceptable uses specified in developer requirements text)
B	Business
I	Business and Industry

The Plan also identifies a number of *Developer Requirements* which are associated with these sites and which must be addressed by developers in taking proposals forward on them. These have been identified through consultation or through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. In some cases the Action Programme which will accompany the Plan will identify the need for a development brief or master plan to be prepared prior to the site being developed.

Policy 2 Development Factors and Developer Requirements

Developers must take account of the details set out on the Proposals Map insets. We will give particular consideration to the total effect of private water and sewage systems.

3 Wider Countryside

It is recognised that in a rural area like Sutherland, there will continue to be demand for development outwith the settlement development areas. The Local Plan seeks to balance recognising the countryside as an economic resource with development potential against the possible effect of any development on the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area. The general approach to development outwith the settlement development areas is set out in Policy 3.

Policy 3 Wider Countryside

Outwith Settlement Development Areas, proposals may be acceptable where they help repopulate communities, strengthen services and reflect the character of development in the surrounding area. Suitably designed proposals will be supported if they:

- are consistent with other policies in the Highland Structure Plan and this Local Plan;
- are in accordance with the existing settlement pattern; and
- account for drainage constraints or can otherwise be adequately serviced and do not involve undue public expenditure or infrastructure out of keeping with the rural character of the area.

4 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

The outstanding natural, built and cultural heritage of Sutherland has to be fully considered when development proposals come forward throughout the area. The Plan identifies three categories based on the type and importance of natural, built and cultural heritage they contain. These categories are local and regionally important, nationally important and internationally important.

- **Local and regionally important** features are mostly identified by The Council, and contribute to the identity of Sutherland.
 - Areas of Great Landscape Value
 - Category B and C listed buildings
 - Sites and Monuments Record archaeological sites
 - War memorials
 - Settlement setting
 - Inventoried semi-natural woodland
 - Amenity trees
 - Views over open water
 - Remote landscapes of value for recreation
 - Locally important croft land
 - Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest
 - Geological Conservation Review sites
 - Isolated coast
 - Archaeological Heritage Areas

- **Nationally important** natural and cultural heritage features are identified by national organisations or by The Council under national legislation.
 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments
 - Category A listed buildings
 - National Nature Reserves
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - Inventoried Gardens and Designed Landscapes
 - National Scenic Areas
 - Inventoried Ancient and Long-Established Woodland
 - Tree Preservation Orders
 - Conservation Areas

- **Internationally important** natural and cultural heritage features are identified under government directives and European conventions.
 - Special Protection Areas (including proposed)
 - Special Areas of Conservation (including candidate)
 - Ramsar sites

How sensitive these features are to development depends on their level of importance and on the nature and scale of development and the likely effect on the feature in question. Policy 4 therefore sets out the tests against which all development which affects these heritage features must be assessed. Only the most important feature is shown on the Proposals Map, and other features may exist beneath these. The impact on all natural and cultural heritage features must be addressed however when considering and assessing development proposals, and the Background maps which are contained in Appendix * of the Plan set out the locations of all these different features.

Policy 4 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

When making decisions on development proposals we will take account of the level of importance of, and the effect on, the natural, built and cultural heritage (see Box 1 and Background Maps).

1. In areas of **local/regional importance** we will allow developments if we believe that they will not have an unreasonable impact on the amenity and heritage resource, particularly where it can be shown that they will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.
2. In areas of **national importance** we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the amenity and heritage resource. For national designations, where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.
3. In areas of **international importance** we will allow developments if they will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. Proposals that would adversely affect the relevant interest for which the site is designated will only be allowed if there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive) would be affected prior consultation with the European Commission is required, unless the development is necessary for public health and safety reasons.

5 Affordable housing

The Council's Local Housing Strategy identifies the existence of unmet housing need in Sutherland and its Area Delivery Plan for Sutherland seeks opportunities to increase the supply of both affordable rented housing and low cost affordable houses. There is an outstanding deficit of around 150 affordable homes and a feeling in communities that there is a significant amount of hidden need. To help meet need for affordable homes, the local plan aims to make sure that new housing development makes a contribution towards the supply of affordable housing. This applies to development on both allocated and unallocated sites.

Policy 5 Affordable Housing

In accordance with the Development Plan Policy Guideline on Affordable Housing, on allocated sites with an indicative overall capacity of four or more houses the Council will expect to either negotiate a Section 75 Agreement with the landowner(s) and other interested parties, or utilise other mechanisms to provide for a 25% contribution towards affordable housing (as defined in the Guideline). Negotiations will be subject to market and site conditions, and the contribution may be in the form of land, housing units or a financial contribution and will be on the following proportions:

On these allocated sites, and to prevent the subdivision of larger plots, where an application is made for less than four houses, developers will be expected to provide a financial contribution in proportion to the number of units proposed, and a Section 75 agreement (or other mechanisms) will be required to ensure that any further development on the site will include an appropriate proportion of affordable housing.

This will also apply to proposals for development on sites not allocated within this Local Plan and which would be expected to accommodate four or more houses at density levels consistent with the existing settlement or density patterns. When making decisions on development proposals we will take account of the level of importance of, and the effect on, the natural and cultural heritage (see Box 1 and Background Maps).

6 Designing for Sustainability

Highland Structure Plan Policy G2 sets out the requirement for all development to be designed for sustainability. As a result, The Council will encourage planning applicants to demonstrate, by means of a Sustainable Design Statement (SDS), that their proposals take account of sustainable design practice. For example, applicants will be expected to investigate the use of grey water and micro renewable energy systems.

Policy 6 Designing for Sustainability

We will judge development proposals against a 'Design for Sustainability' statement which we will encourage developers to submit with their planning applications in line with the Development Plan Policy Guideline on Designing for Sustainability.

7 Waste Water Treatment

The best way to deal with the effluent generated by larger developments and/or settlements is by means of a 'publicly' maintained network of sewers and related sewage plants. SEPA as the relevant environmental agency has adopted a policy to encourage such treatment. However, it is necessary to allow other private sewage

treatment options in certain circumstances, in particular within parts of Sutherland, where settlements are smaller, more dispersed in pattern and often not served by adequate existing or programmed existing public sewage systems.

Policy 7 Waste Water Treatment

Connections to the public sewer will be required for development proposals in the main settlements identified in the plan with a population equivalent of more than 2000 and wherever significant development is proposed. Elsewhere a connection to the public sewer will be required, unless the applicant can demonstrate that:

1. Connection is not feasible, for technical or economic reasons, or,
2. The receiving waste water treatment plant is at capacity and Scottish Water has no programmed investment to increase that capacity; and
3. The proposal is not likely to result in or add to significant environmental or health problems.

Planning permission for developments with private waste water systems will only be allowed where proposals satisfy (1) or (2) above, and satisfy (3). Any such systems in areas adjacent to waters designated under EC Directives must discharge to land rather than water.

8 Waste Management

Sustainable waste management remains an important consideration for The Council. The role of the Plan is to direct waste management uses to the most appropriate locations, which are generally either existing or former waste management sites or on business and industrial land where they are compatible with existing or proposed uses. The Highland Structure Plan sets out the strategic policy framework for all types of waste management use, but the Highland Area Waste Plan and the National Waste Strategy are very important considerations. The Settlements section of the Plan will set out specific waste facility site safeguards.

Policy 8 Waste Management

Proposals for waste management facilities will be assessed in line with the approach set out within the Highland Structure Plan and take into account the Highland Area Waste Plan and the National Waste Strategy.

In line with the Highland Structure Plan, waste management facilities will be supported on business or industrial land provided they are compatible with surrounding uses and meet other criteria relating to environmental impact and transportation.

Proposals for redevelopment of existing waste management facilities [listed in Annex *] will be assessed against the Area Waste Plan and National Waste Strategy, and will be subject to consultation with SEPA.

The Council will also take into account the extent to which development proposals effectively manage and promote the reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery of waste.

9 Flood Risk

Coastal and fluvial flood risk is only likely to increase with projected climate change. It is therefore important not to allocate land at risk for inappropriate development. Flood risk has been an integral to the choice of site allocations. Additional guidance on these issues - including maps of the medium to high flood risk areas - may be sought from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA).

Policy 9 Flood risk

Development proposals in areas susceptible to flooding will need a flood risk assessment (which the developer must pay for). Development proposals outwith the medium to high flood risk areas (1:200 or greater annual probability of flooding) will generally be acceptable unless local circumstances dictate otherwise.

However, development proposals *within* the medium to high flood risk areas (1:200 or greater annual probability of flooding) will normally be restricted to:

- Within built-up areas - residential, commercial and industrial development, providing that flood-prevention measures to the appropriate standard already exist or are under construction. Water resistant materials and construction methods should be considered to mitigate the effects of flooding.
- On undeveloped or sparsely developed areas - essential infrastructure, navigational, recreation, transportation, environmental or conservation uses, as well as job-related residential uses with a locational need. Alternative lower risk locations should always be explored first, and any essential infrastructure should be designed to remain operational during floods.

Developments may also be possible where they are in accord with the flood prevention or management measures as specified within a Local Plan allocation or a Development Brief. Any developments, particularly those on the flood plain, should not compromise the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.

10 Other Development Considerations

Physical Constraints

There are a range of public health and safety factors that need to be assessed when considering development proposals. These are listed in the policy below and cover issues such as noise, odour, slope stability and pollution.

Policy 10 Physical constraints

Development proposals must consider whether they would be located within areas of constraint (as set out **below** and, where possible, shown on the background maps). Within these areas, developers must show that their proposal is unaffected by the constraint or that action will be taken to reduce or remove the negative effects.

- Poorly drained areas
- Within 1,000m of large wind generators
- ESI Standards 43-8: “Overhead Line Clearances” (distance from power lines)
- Areas of excessive slope (with a gradient of over 1 in 7)
- Existing or former waste management sites
- Land with possible contamination issues
- Areas that could erode or subside
- Safeguard areas around sewage treatment works
- Within 400m of an active quarry
- Next to waters that the EU Shellfish Directive apply to
- Next to waters that the EU Shellfish Hygiene Directive apply to
- Next to waters that the EU Bathing Waters Directive apply to

Protected Species and Habitats

Certain species are protected under European and/or UK law and their presence on or near a development site will require consideration. Similarly, certain habitats are a general development consideration.

Policy 11 European Protected Species

We will assess development proposals for any disturbance to a European Protected Species, as listed below, or damage to a breeding site/resting place. Any development in such an area requires a separate licence from Scottish Ministers (or the local authority under a recent consultation) to enable works to proceed.

Animals

- Bats (all species)
- Wild Cat
- Otter
- Dolphins, porpoises and whales
- Loggerhead turtle
- Green turtle
- Kemp’s Ridley turtle
- Hawksbill turtle
- Leatherback turtle
- Natterjack toad
- Great crested newt

Plants

- Killarney fern
- Slender naiad
- Yellow marsh saxifrage
- Floating-leaved water plantain

Policy 12 Article 10 features

Article 10 features of the Habitats Directive (see Glossary) – We will assess development proposals for any adverse effects on natural heritage features that form part of wildlife corridors, including woodlands, lochs, watercourse margins and wetlands.

Policy 13 Scheduled Species

The presence of species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, will be considered as a material consideration in any proposals for development.

Surface Water Drainage

Localised flooding can be caused or worsened by inadequate surface water drainage arrangements in new developments. Best practice can be encouraged by a general policy requirement.

Policy 14 Surface Water Drainage

Development proposals must meet the guidance set out in the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Design Manual for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Developer Contributions

It is necessary and appropriate to mitigate the impact of new development. Existing deficiencies can be made worse by new building and new deficiencies created. The principle of proportionate developer contributions is underpinned by the general policy below and more specific requirements listed within each individual settlement section of the Plan.

Policy 15 Developer Contributions

The Council will seek appropriate developer contributions in association with development proposals emerging from partnership activity, from the development plan process and from planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale, nature, impact and planning purposes associated with the development, and may be in addition to contributions made by a developer as part of an Affordable Housing agreement.

Housing in the Countryside

This policy is necessary in order to conform to Structure Plan Policy H3.

Policy 16: Housing in the Countryside

The Council will presume against housing in the open countryside of hinterland around towns as defined within the Local Plan (see Proposals Map, Structure Plan Policy H3: Housing in the Countryside and the approved Development Plan Policy Guideline). Exceptions to the policy will only be made where:

- a house is essential for the management of land and associated family purposes (see Development Plan Policy Guidance);
- social housing is required to meet demonstrated local affordable needs that cannot be met within settlements
- development involves the conversion or reuse of traditional buildings or the redevelopment of derelict land.

Where exceptions are justified, all proposals should accord with the general policies of the Plan, and indicate suitable drainage and other servicing, avoid conflict with natural and cultural heritage interests and hazards, and be suitably sited and designed [Structure Plan Policy G2].

Retail

This policy will provide a context for consideration of retail developments within Sutherland.

Policy 17: Retail

Proposals for retail development within the main settlements should be consistent with the development plan. Outwith sites allocated for such use, it is for developers to demonstrate that proposals satisfy the sequential approach to site identification, that there is no individual or cumulative impact on vitality of centres and that proposals meet with identified deficiencies in centres. (Scottish Planning Policy 8: Town Centres and Retailing refers)

Place-Making

This policy seeks a high quality of design in development within Sutherland and the creation of high quality environments in which people can live and work. It responds to the place-making agenda by reflecting the drive of PAN67 “Housing Quality”, PAN68 “Design Statements”, “Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland” and other key documents.

Policy 18: Place-Making

We will judge proposals in terms of their contribution to place-making. New development should be designed to make a positive contribution to the architectural and visual quality of the place in which it is located. It should have regard to the historic pattern of development in the locality and should, where relevant, be an integral part of the settlement. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate local distinctiveness of architecture and design in their proposals. We will examine proposals to ensure that people may move safely and conveniently within the development and, where appropriate, to facilities in other parts of the settlement.

Definition of Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage Features

Natural and cultural heritage features – **International Importance**

Type	Background	Policy framework
Special Protection Areas (SPA) (including proposed)	Classified by Scottish Ministers under the EC Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), which provides for the protection, management and control of all species of wild birds. SPAs form part of the EU Natura 2000 network of nature conservation protection.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies N1, G6 and G2.
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) (including candidate)	Designated by Scottish Ministers under the EC Habitats and Species Directive (92/43/EEC), aimed at the maintenance or restoration of certain natural habitats and wild species at favourable conservation status. SACs (including candidate) form part of the EU Natura 2000 network of nature conservation protection. Certain qualifying features are of “European Priority Interest” (e.g. active blanket bog) where additional regulatory provisions apply.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies N1, G6 and G2.
Ramsar Sites	Approved by Scottish Ministers under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as waterfowl habitat, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. Such sites are wetland sites of international importance, usually because of their value to migratory birds.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies N1, G6 and G2.

Natural and cultural heritage features – National Importance

Type	Background	Policy framework
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Designated by Scottish Ministers under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as being of national importance.	National Planning Policy Guideline 5 “Archaeology and Planning” (January 1994) and Structure Plan Policies BC1, G6 and G2.
Category A Listed Buildings	Compiled by Scottish Ministers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 as being of national importance by virtue of special architectural or historic interest.	National Planning Policy Guideline 18 “Planning and the Historic Environment” (April 1999) and Structure Plan Policies BC5, G6 and G2.
National Nature Reserves	Declared under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as areas considered to be of national importance for their nature conservation interest.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies N1, G6 and G2.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Designated by Scottish Natural Heritage under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and in future the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 as areas of land or water which are of special interest by reason of flora, fauna, geology or physiography.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies N1, G6 and G2.
Inventoried Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Contained within the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland compiled and maintained jointly by Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.	National Planning Policy Guideline 18 “Planning and the Historic Environment” (April 1999) and Structure Plan Policies BC4, G6 and G2. Under the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Scotland) Order 1992, both HS and SNH must be consulted on any proposed development that may affect these sites or their setting.
National Scenic Areas	Established by Order under planning legislation by the Secretary of State in 1981 on the basis of “Scotland’s Scenic Heritage” (Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1978). They are defined as areas of “national scenic significance of unsurpassed attractiveness which must be conserved as part of our national heritage”.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies G6 and G2.

Type	Background	Policy framework
Inventoried Ancient and Long-Established Woodland	Contained within the Inventory of Ancient, Long-Established and Semi-Natural Woodland prepared by the former Nature Conservancy Council (1989) and updated by more recent surveys of woodland cover. Specifically this includes ancient woodland and long-established woodland of semi-natural origin. They are regarded as having the greatest value for nature conservation.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies G6 and G2.
Conservation Areas	Designated by The Council under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 as areas of special architectural and historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Planning permission will be required within such areas for specific types of development that would otherwise be permitted development, including demolition.	National Planning Policy Guideline 18 “Planning and the Historic Environment” (April 1999) and Structure Plan Policies BC5, G6 and G2.
Tree Preservation Orders	The Council has specific powers to protect trees and woodland if it appears to them to be “expedient in the interests of amenity”. The principal effect of a Tree Preservation Order is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping or wilful damage of trees without the specific consent of the Planning Authority. Special provisions also apply to trees within Conservation Areas.	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1999, Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order and Trees in Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 1975 (and 1981 amendments) and Structure Plan Policy F5

Natural and cultural heritage features – **Local/Regional Importance**

Type	Background	Policy framework
Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)	Identified by The Council by virtue either as being large scale areas of regional importance for scenic quality, or as being small scale areas of local scenic and recreational value. Large scale proposed AGLVs are indicatively identified in the Structure Plan.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies G6 and G2.
Category B and C Listed Buildings	Included by Scottish Ministers within a list of buildings (broadly defined to include for example walls and bridges) of special architectural or historic interest to ensure that any alteration, extension, repair or demolition of such interest is controlled.	National Planning Policy Guideline 18 “Planning and the Historic Environment” (April 1999) and Structure Plan Policies BC5, G6 and G2.
Sites and Monuments Record Archaeological Sites	A record maintained and continually updated by The Council’s Archaeological Unit of all known archaeological sites in Highland, including a location and brief description. The importance of such sites in terms of protection or professional recording prior to disturbance is advised on a case-by-case basis.	National Planning Policy Guideline 5 “Archaeology and Planning” (January 1994) and Structure Plan Policies BC1, G6 and G2.
War Memorials	Highlighted in order that the ambience and setting of war memorials should not be adversely affected by inappropriate or unsympathetic development and in order that the Royal British Legion Scotland should be consulted where The Council believes such an adverse effect may occur.	Structure Plan Policy G2.

Type	Background	Policy framework
Settlement Setting	Identified by The Council between groupings of settlements in close proximity to each other (allowing for any expansion provided for by the Settlement Development Areas) to protect the open land from development that would lead to settlements coalescing and losing their individual identity. This recognises that development should generally be within existing settlements.	Structure Plan Policies H3 and G2, Scottish Planning Policy 3 “Planning for Housing” (February 2003) and National Planning Policy Guideline 15 “Rural Development” (February 1999).
Inventoried Semi-Natural Woodland	Contained within the Inventory of Ancient, Long-Established and Semi-Natural Woodland prepared by the former Nature Conservancy Council (1989) and updated by more recent surveys of woodland cover. Specifically this includes long-established woodland of plantation origin, other woods on “Roy” woodland sites (1750 map) and other semi-natural woodland areas identified by ground survey. They are regarded as being important for nature conservation.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies G6 and G2.
Amenity Trees	Areas of woodland (both broadleaved and coniferous) identified by The Council as having local amenity importance by virtue of contribution to landscape value, providing framework and containment for settlements, informal recreational opportunities or association as community woodlands. In so doing they contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” and Structure Plan Policy G2.

Type	Background	Policy framework
Views Over Open Water	Identified by The Council to protect relatively narrow areas of land between roads or railways and the coastline or lochshores where such land provides a foreground to scenic views.	Structure Plan Policies T6 and G2.
Remote Landscapes of Value for Recreation	Identified by The Council to recognise that certain areas have value for more demanding forms of outdoor recreation. These areas also offer qualities of remoteness, a relative lack of evidence of human activity or change, a seeming high degree of naturalness, and a sense of enclosure or space.	National Planning Policy Guideline 11 "Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space" (June 1996) and NPPG 14 "Natural Heritage" (January 1999) (in the context of wild land) and Structure Plan Policy G2 and paragraph 2.5.22 (in the context of wild land).
Locally Important Croft Land	Identified by The Council on advice from crofting interests where it is considered that the continued use of the land for agriculture is important locally for the viability of crofting in the area. This work has not yet been undertaken.	Structure Plan Policies A1 and G2.
Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest	Identified by The Council on advice from groups with expertise in local nature conservation interests, such as Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Groups. These sites have local importance for habitats and species. These sites are provisional and require to be refined following detailed survey or assessment and in consultation with SNH and landowners.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 "Natural Heritage" (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policies N1 and G2.

Type	Background	Policy framework
Geological Conservation Review Sites	Identified by Scottish Natural Heritage or by a Regionally Important Geological Site Group, being sites of local or regional importance for the protection and study of geology and geomorphology.	National Planning Policy Guideline 14 “Natural Heritage” (January 1999) and Structure Plan Policy G6.
Isolated Coast	Identified by The Council, being remote stretches of coast (including islands) characterised by an absence of settlements or other onshore development, no presence of offshore activity, and affording extended views lacking obvious signs of human activity, both onshore and offshore. This work requires to be carried out on a Highland wide basis and has not yet been undertaken.	National Planning Policy Guideline 13 “Coastal Planning” (August 1997), Planning Advice Note 53 “Classifying the Coast for Planning Purposes” (October 1998) and Structure Plan Policy G2 and paragraph 2.5.22 (in the context of wild land).
Archaeological Heritage Areas	Identified by The Council as being of exceptional archaeological and historic significance by virtue of the importance, number and location of features, density of monuments/sites, and opportunities for interpretation. There are no occurrences of this feature in Wester Ross.	National Planning Policy Guideline 5 “Archaeology and Planning” (January 1994) and Structure Plan Proposal BC3 and Policies G6 and G2.

Appendix 4- DRAFT SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

This settlement hierarchy provides a strategic framework for future development, having regard to the role played by settlements and to the opportunity to accommodate sustainable growth. There are Settlement Development Areas identified for all of these main settlements. In addition there are smaller townships and housing groups which may, subject to consideration of the Plan's policies, provide opportunity for some small scale development. The hierarchy provides an indication of main settlements which are most likely to be able to accommodate larger-scale development sustainably, namely those towards the top of the hierarchy.

MAIN CENTRES (these are the LOCAL CENTRES from the Structure Plan)

Dornoch
Golspie
Brora
Lairg
Lochinver
Kinlochbervie
Bettyhill

OTHER KEY VILLAGE

Bonar Bridge
Ardgay
Helmsdale
Durness
Tongue
Scourie

SMALL VILLAGE

Rosehall
Culrain
Embo
Invershin
Edderton
Rogart
Laid
Drumbeg
Stoer
Achfary
Melvich
Portskerra
Melness
Armadale
Strathy

Appendix 5- SETTLEMENTS AND ALLOCATIONS

A5.1 Brora

Comments received referred to many different points, the potential to make the settlement more attractive through redeveloping the Fountain Square was a main project highlighted other suggestions included building on opportunities at Station Square and Fascally, improvements to the harbour area removing storage areas and making the whole area including the beach area more accessible to visitors.

Concern was voiced in respect of the long term vision for development of croft and farmland to the north east, proposals are not in place for future development but this does give an indication of where future investigations may seek to identify development potential.

Comments in relation to the potential A9(T) bypass indicated that the Council should not be promoting the safeguard of a route as this was not programmed within the Scottish Executive 10 year programme. The recent draft HiTrans strategy did set out a clear strategic objective for the delivery of bypass of settlements on the A9 north, with research and scheme preparation programmed for the period between 2012 and 2017 and delivery in the period 2017-23. The Council has requested in its response to the draft strategy for clarification as to the settlements referred to. It will then be for members to decide whether the Local Plan should safeguard a route or merely a description in the text. It is expected that the final strategy will be published soon, and the outcomes will be reported to the Council at the appropriate time.

Points in respect of the definition of the settlement boundary seek exclusion of areas outwith the main core of the settlement, removing croft land, both on the east and west, from within the settlement boundary. Infill opportunities within the settlement boundary will be acceptable subject to consideration against supporting policies.

The future use of Scotia House (new woollen mill) has been mentioned in the context of a variety of different reuses. Although underutilised at present, potential development opportunities can be accommodated within the context of the existing use needing no further affirmation in the Proposed Plan.

Site Options

1 East Brora Muir RETAIN SITE: Existing site in adopted plan, local authority ownership, regard to be had to proximity to golf course in design.

2 Tordale - Braambury Road RETAIN TORDALE PART OF SITE DO NOT CONFIRM BRAAMBURY ROAD PART OF SITE Objections were received from the local common grazing committee and the Crofters Commission in respect of the inclusion of this in-bye land. A portion of this site previously had the benefit of planning permission for development of 3 houses, but was not decrofted. The Local Plan inquiry found that in terms of land supply there was no requirement for the land and that it should remain in crofting use. Given the current effective supply of housing land it is unlikely that the land would be required before the next review of

the plan, therefore the site should not be confirmed in the Proposed Plan.

3 West of Masonic Hall RETAIN SITE Existing site in adopted plan, requirements for development of this site include requirement to improve access and addressing SUDS issues.

4 Rosslyn Street/former Mackay's Yard RETAIN SITE/CONFIRM SITE Existing site in adopted plan, Rosslyn Street part of the site is currently under development. Potential lies in the adjoining land at Mackay's yard for further housing development, subject to investigation of potential contamination issues.

5 south of Academy Street/north of Industrial Estate CONFIRM PART OF SITE This site, in-bye croft land, has brought comment from the Dalchalm and Greenhill Grazings Committee and the Crofters Commission. Reference has been made to the other available allocations throughout Brora, however, outwith sites with or currently under consideration for planning the only remaining land available for development is at Tordale. There is a need to offer an element of choice for future development and we seek to confirm part of the site (1 ha) adjacent to Academy Street for housing while retaining access to the remaining croft land.

6 former Woollen Mill RETAIN SITE Existing site in adopted local plan, site now has the benefit of planning permission for 43 houses, including affordable units.

7 former Radio Station RETAIN SITE Existing site in adopted local plan, site now under consideration for 24 houses. The suitability of the site for housing will be established through assessment of issues relating to potential erosion, flood risk and ground stability and potential impact on natural heritage interests. The site should be retained within the proposed plan with uses indicated for potential as visitor/study and/or outdoor activities subject to improved access and coastal protection.

8 Carrol House RETAIN SITE The site is the subject of a planning application for redevelopment to provide 17 flatted units.

9. adjoining Industrial Estate RETAIN SITE Existing site in local plan for further development of industrial estate.

A5.2 **Dornoch**

Issues raised relate primarily to the level of expansion proposed within the settlement. Concerns centred on the ability of the settlement to absorb this growth without significant detriment to the character of Dornoch. The ability of infrastructure and services to cope was also brought into question. The levels of development proposed are consistent with the growth strategy contained within the vision. Dornoch has experienced significant population growth (+15%) in the intercensal period 1991-2001, whilst also accommodating over 25% of the total house building within Sutherland. The demand for housing within Dornoch is apparent and there is a need to ensure that this can be accommodated in a planned way. Development should take account of the environment and incorporate footpath linkages and greenspace within design proposals.

The need for economic growth alongside increases in population/house building was the focus for further comments and the development of the expansion area to the north should seek to accommodate this requirement to some degree with the inclusion of small scale retail and business opportunities.. There is a need to progress further investigation to augment the provision available at the industrial and business park. The development of educational and training opportunities within the settlement should be further investigated with the North Highland College. It was felt that the development of tourism facilities require further development of information, interpretation and accommodation. The scope for a tourism related development was identified, the potential for a facility providing accommodation and catering services along with associated retail sales should be further investigated.

In relation to demands on existing services, liaison with other agencies ensures that their programming takes account of the need to reinforce these where necessary. In terms of roads, water and drainage infrastructure the requirement to upgrade these falls to the developer as a condition of any planning approval.

Concerns were raised with regard to the flood risk posed on some sites and also to potential flood risk issues as a result of development taking place. The Council will utilise guidance contained within Scottish Planning Policy 7: Planning and Flooding when adjudging the risks in respect of flooding.

The consultation has also brought forward suggestion of a further site option for housing development at Pitgrudy which is considered below.

Site Options

1 Dornoch North RETAIN SITE The extent of the existing site in the adopted local plan should be retained. This site offers potential for the long term growth of Dornoch. Issues raised relate to the impact of the level of ultimate development on the roads, water and drainage infrastructure. Flood risk has been highlighted, both in terms of the flood issues currently affecting the site and surrounding area and how this is best addressed through any potential development. Part of the site (19% approx) falls within the “medium to high risk area” as defined in SPP7, there is an opportunity to require mitigation including the provision of flood prevention measures.

The development of the site will be required to take account of relevant impacts to infrastructure and necessary improvements will fall to be provided by the developer.

There is a need to address issues relating to road and junction capacities at Poles Road/Evelix Road and to the A9(T) other measures such as extension to 30mph limit, realignment, road widening and footpath provision will all need addressed.

Proposals for the development of the site should take account of the historical pattern of development of Dornoch. Potential for the inclusion of mixing of residential and business uses should be considered allowing opportunities for places to work and live and provide a sustainable development. A range of densities will be expected to deliver a variety of housing choices through flatted, terraced and detached properties. Phasing will control the level of growth allowing integration of the development with

the existing community.

An area of land to the north of the site was proposed as a further addition to the Dornoch North expansion area, this formed part of the proposal for housing at Pitgrudy. Potential on this addition to Dornoch North would more appropriately be the subject of the next plan review and should be pursued further at this stage.

2 Bishopsfield RETAIN SITE Existing site in adopted plan, local authority ownership. Potential for further development of site, provision for direct pedestrian and cycle linkages.

3 Earl's Cross RETAIN SITE Existing site in adopted local plan, site now has the benefit of planning permission for 9 houses and is currently under construction.

4 Meadows Park Road RETAIN SITE Existing site in adopted plan, has the benefit of an extant planning consent for a 49 house development. A recent application seeks to increase the overall number of houses to 101, employing an entirely new design and layout incorporating a variety of styles and sizes of housing more closely reflecting the style of the older settlement. The development is to be progressed in a phased manner over several years with delivery of affordable housing relating to each phase.

The Council is minded to grant outline planning permission subject to submission of further matters of detail and also information to allow SNH to determine potential impact to the Dornoch Firth SAC, SPA and RAMSAR site.

5 Meadows Park Road (south) DO NOT CONFIRM SITE Existing capacity of sites identified within the existing Local Plan is in excess of the higher end of the housing requirement for the settlement. The site is promoted as having significant potential for retirement housing and is situated in a location accessible to the town centre. In terms of overall need for the development this cannot be shown from any quantitative viewpoint given the level of existing allocations. The site is located south of the single track Meadows Park Road on low lying ground outwith the current extent of the settlement boundary. The area of land is low lying and concerns relate to the high water table and whether surface water drainage can be achieved, these issues have not been addressed through the recent planning application, currently pending. The potential impact of surface water drainage to the Dornoch Firth SPA, SAC and RAMSAR sites has also not been demonstrated. In the absence of this information there remains uncertainty at this point in regard to the potential effects of development of this site and a precautionary approach should be taken at this time.

6 Sutherland Road RETAIN SITE Existing site in adopted local plan, site now has the benefit of planning permission for 33 houses, including 12 affordable units. This position should be reflected in the Proposed Plan.

Pitgrudy

1. DO NOT ACCEPT SITE An additional site was proposed for housing development at Pitgrudy, the proposal was for the development of a retirement village and general housing.

The site is located around 1 mile outwith the settlement boundary on the Poles Road on a site north of Pitgrudy Farm buildings. The site falls well outwith the settlement boundary and is dislocated from the community although reference is made to the provision of a foot/cycle path to connect to Dornoch.

Scottish Planning Policy 3 (SPP): Planning for Housing indicates that wherever possible most housing requirements should be met within or adjacent to existing settlements. The area identified falls within the extent of the hinterland around towns as indicated within the Council's approved Structure Plan and as such is subject to policy H3 Housing in the Countryside which holds a presumption against development in these areas. The policy seeks to strengthen the role of settlements, making efficient use of existing infrastructure and services in line with national guidance and sustainable principles.

In terms of the need for this scale of allocation, that already identified within the adopted local plan provides already for a level of development beyond the period that this plan review is seeking. There is progress on the delivery of large housing allocations in Dornoch and these are likely to meet the development needs for the plan period and beyond. In terms of the specific requirement for retirement housing it is felt that these could be accommodated in closer proximity to centre of Dornoch within land already identified.

Given the conflicts with policy and the adequacy of land allocations within the settlement there is no justification for the inclusion of this site.

2. In addition potential for redevelopment of the Pitgrudy farm buildings was raised in the context of Planning Advice Note 73 (PAN): Rural Diversification. Further support of this type of activity is contained within SPP 15: Planning for Rural Development and the Council's approved Structure Plan, these indicate general support for development of recreational use of the land or provision of tourist accommodation. The suitability of the site for these uses would require assessment against other relevant policy. Given the support in principle for this form of development proposals can be best dealt with through existing policy.

A5.3 **Embo**

In Embo, comments centred on the level of development proposed being far in excess of the figure for some 35 houses over the ten year period that the Council has indicated. In particular, concerns were raised in regard to the proposed site options (4 a, b & c) sited to the south and west of the bypass. The majority of the community indicated that preference was to seek the continued allocation of sites north west of Embo and north of Station House. Land availability is a major factor in the potential for effective delivery of housing land in these locations.

Many comments related to impact on the settlement of Grannie's Heilan Hame on water and wastewater also traffic impact especially during the summer months. Scottish Water is currently addressing issues in regard to the water supply. Further development in the settlement would have to address any network issues related to wastewater drainage.

The potential for a community land buyout was identified as holding potential for the re-establishment of crofts in the area offering both employment and housing opportunity for young local people. This local initiative should be supported in terms of the economic benefit and potential associated housing opportunities it offers. There is still however, a need to seek to allocate land for housing to meet overall housing need. Allocations should also incorporate potential for the development of business premises.

Concern was expressed that if further housing development was to proceed these would be out of the reach of local people. The application of the Council's affordable housing policy would secure 25% of any housing development for the provision of affordable housing.

Necessary improvements to infrastructure as a result of development would be funded by the developer; this includes local road improvements, upgrades where necessary to the Dornoch-Embo Road, and water and drainage improvements as required by Scottish Water.

2 North west of Embo: RETAIN SITE FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION The landowner of the allocation north west of Embo has indicated that he does not wish to release the land for development. This allocation does have the support of the community and the potential of acquiring release of all or part of the site requires further investigation.

3 North of Station House, Embo: RETAIN AND EXTEND SITE TO ACCOMMODATE FURTHER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT This site option has potential for further development to the north of Embo, the extension of this site would provide an option that would address many of the concerns of the community. The potential to form an adequate access to serve development remains in question and further investigations are required to clarify whether acceptable standards can be met. Potential impacts of nearby natural heritage interests need to be considered. Opportunities exist to develop linkages with local footpaths, the football ground and beach area.

4 South & West of Embo: CONFIRM OPTIONS 4(a) & (b) TO THE WEST OF THE BY-PASS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION DO NOT CONFIRM SITE SOUTH OF EMBO 4(c) Although not supported by the majority of the local community, given the constraints present on other site options there is a need to retain options and further investigate the potential for development of land to the west of the by-pass. Potential for development in this area would require significant measures to traffic calm by-pass traffic or preferably re-routing of the road to the west and south of the site.

Golspie

Comments received in relation to Golspie indicated broad agreement with the housing site options identified within the Sutherland Futures document. The option to include land for a potential supermarket met with differing opinions as to the merit of this proposal. Concern was voiced in regard to the effect that this may have on the Main Street shops although others indicated that this could stimulate the economy. The lack

of available land for industrial uses inappropriate for the business park was flagged.

The opening of the cycle trail was seen as a major opportunity for the community and the greater Sutherland area, development of cycle routes on the road network to complement the trail can maximise the potential in terms of tourism. Further development of accommodation and services to complement this development was encouraged.

General support was indicated for the aspiration of a trunk road by-pass, reflecting concerns regarding the impact of trunk road traffic on Main Street. The recent draft HiTrans strategy did set out a clear strategic objective for the delivery of bypass of settlements on the A9 north, with research and scheme preparation programmed for the period between 2012 and 2017 and delivery in the period 2017-23. The Council has requested in its response to the draft strategy for clarification as to the settlements referred to. It will then be for members to decide whether the Local Plan should safeguard a route or merely a description in the text. It is expected that the final strategy will be published soon, and the outcomes will be reported to the Council at the appropriate time.

1 Woodland Way RETAIN SITE: Existing site in adopted plan suitable for small scale housing development, regard to be taken to mature trees on site.

2 Sibell Road RETAIN SITE: Existing site in adopted local plan, site now has the benefit of planning permission for 40 houses, including 10 affordable units. This position should be reflected in the Proposed Plan.

3 Adjoining Macleod House RETAIN SITE: The site forms the remainder (0.6 ha) of an existing local plan site. Development of the site subject to suitable access.

4 MacKay House Hostel RETAIN SITE: The former hostel received general support for its redevelopment and is suitable for a variety of uses.

5 Rhives Farm RETAIN SITE: Site has the benefit of planning consent subject to a S75 agreement (legal agreement).

6 Rhives Farm RETAIN SITE: Site allocated in the adopted local plan as having potential for development of caravan and/or camping use. Will require suitable upgrades to access to accommodate potential traffic flows.

7 Drumbuie RETAIN SITE: This site reflects the existing adopted local plan allocation for business commercial and housing development. The site has been brought forward through the current development of office accommodation at the Technical College. The adjacent land to the east is currently the subject of a planning application for residential development.

8 Golspie Business Park RETAIN SITE The site currently operates as a business park the Proposed Plan will continue to promote the use of the site and seek to accommodate appropriate uses.

9 Drumbuie (South) CONFIRM SITE FOR MIXED USE The site met with a

variety of responses in regard to the requirement for a supermarket to serve east Sutherland and beyond, the potential for tourist related development or accommodation was also recognised. The site was also the subject of comments seeking the provision of land for general industrial uses. Development of the site would require setback of development from the trunk road, significant landscaping and planting to create an attractive approach to the settlement. Potential exists for the delivery on this site in combination with the business park for delivery for a range of business and general industrial uses in addition to potential for retail, and commercial provision.

10 Ben Bhraggie Drive RETAIN SITE Existing site in adopted plan suitable for small scale housing development subject to the creation of suitable access provision.

A5.5 **Helmsdale**

Issues raised in relation to Helmsdale related in the main to the relative lack of house building activity within the settlement and the consequent lack of housing opportunities for local people within the settlement. Sites identified in the existing local plan have not been brought forward for development since the plans adoption in May 2000.

In regard to infrastructure comments centred on the lack of transport links in terms of frequency of the bus service and also the need for improvement to the A9(T) road. Improvements to a stretch of the A9(T) at Navidale seek to improve 2.1 km of road. The realigned section of the A9(T) will significantly improve the alignment. Together with the introduction of the climbing lane, the project will reduce journey times on this route while improvements to the alignment and the standard of the carriageway will make the road safer for all road users.

The Council does acknowledge that transport by car is the dominant mode of transport throughout Highland but the tendered bus network has given improved services to several communities and the Council will continue to seek to improve and develop the bus network. Likewise improvements to travel times and frequency of services on the rail network have support from the Council.

The identification of a site for potential development of a caravan site was identified as still an aspiration for the community and would help retain visitors in the settlement.

In terms of the options identified within Sutherland Futures there was general support for the majority of sites indicated for Helmsdale; site specific points are addressed below.

1. north of Rockview Place: RETAIN SITE The site option consists of 2 parts, an area of land (0.74 ha) to the west reflects the existing land allocation within the local plan, this site is in Council ownership. A further area of land (0.66 ha) to the east was identified on in-bye croft land to offer a choice to the housing land allocation and also to consolidate the built form of the settlement and utilise the existing road and drainage infrastructure.

The identification of in-by- croft land brought varying comments with tenant crofters indicating that the land was generally under utilised with most crofting activities taking place on land more distant from the settlement boundary. The Crofters Commission have indicated that they do not wish to see the land released for housing and wish it maintained for uses associated with operational need and occupation of the registered crofts.

Further issues relating to the site involve the need to address junction locations when identifying access to the site. There is also a need to provide adequate off street parking for both new and existing development at Rockfield View.

The area of land referred to involves the use of a fairly small amount of 3 crofting parcels, but has the potential to make available an area of readily serviceable land that is well related to the existing settlement for the provision of housing. Access to the remainder of the field parcels can be incorporated within any housing proposal.

2. north of former caravan site / west of primary school: RETAIN PART OF SITE WEST OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AND DO NOT RETAIN PART OF SITE NORTH OF FORMER CARAVAN PARK. The land identified within this proposed allocation west of the primary school relates to land currently allocated within the adopted local plan and forms 0.6 ha of land and a further 1.7 ha of croft land, north of the former caravan site, lying outwith the current settlement boundary.

Issues in relation to access being relevant to both parts of the site with access to the site being problematic. Access from Golf Road as indicated within the Sutherland Futures document is likely to be difficult to achieve, access to the western part of the site through the existing road by the golf course club house is not capable of required widening and improvement. The most achievable access is through the road servicing the school, this would require improvement to the current access and creation of footpath access.

The Crofters Commission have indicated that they do not wish to see the land, north of the former caravan park, released for housing and wish it maintained for uses associated with operational need and occupation of the registered crofts.

In terms of overall requirement the site north of the caravan site is likely to be required for housing beyond the immediate 5 year time frame of the local plan. Given restrictions regarding the potential access and also the concerns of the Crofters Commission in regard to the loss of a sizeable area of in-by- land this site should not be confirmed but be the subject of review beyond the current review.

It is recommended that the land west of the primary school be confirmed within the upcoming draft with relevant requirements specified in relation to the provision of a suitable access.

3. St. John's Church: RETAIN SITE WITH MODIFIED BOUNDARY The St John's Church has the benefit of planning permission relating to the reuse and conversion of the church to 4 private dwellings. Issues relating to the proposal relate to maintaining the integrity of the building and road safety. The remainder of the site,

outwith the church and immediate grounds is unlikely to be viable for any level of housing development. The site boundary should therefore be redrawn to reflect the extent of land with planning permission.

4. Shore Street: RETAIN SITE The potential to redevelop this site received widespread support from members of the public attending the public exhibition. The site was felt to offer an opportunity to provide an attractive development that could encompass mixed use including visitor interpretation, business and residential use. The site is highly visible from the A9 and redevelopment from the current use would assist in making the village more attractive to visitors. The proposal would require the relocation of the existing garage service potentially to the industrial estate.

5. Simpson Crescent: RETAIN SITE, RESTRICTING DEVELOPMENT TO NORTHERN PART OF SITE This area of land relates to an existing local plan allocation. SNH have indicated that the site conflicts with the Landscape Capacity Study in terms of the scenic resource of the site, but have offered mitigating measures in respect of design and layout. Setback of development from the slope to the shore road is also an issue with potential for slippages and will dictate the extent of built form of the site. The identified archaeology relating to WWII should be safeguarded within any proposal.

6. Simpson Crescent East: DO NOT CONFIRM SITE This area of land relates to a new site suggested by the landowner. SNH have indicated that the site conflicts with the Landscape Capacity Study in terms of the scenic resource of the site, but have offered mitigating measures in respect of design and layout. Setback of development from the slope to the shore road is also an issue with potential for slippages and will dictate the extent of built form of the site. This area is also indicated within the cordon sanitaire of the existing Local Plan. Guidance in terms of safeguards from waste water treatment (WWT) now indicates that the potential to build housing in close proximity to WWT should be assessed individually. On the basis, however, of previous advice and in the absence of evidence to show no odour risk is present I would recommend not confirming this site at present, subject to review following completion of building on adjacent land.

7. North of industrial estate: RETAIN SITE This site relates to the existing allocated industrial site. This option received general support through the consultation, offering potential for new and existing business alike. Identify requirements for improved access.

A5.6 **Edderton**

The consultation exercise indicated the community's desire to accept housing development, but that that this should be accompanied by further opportunities for development of business. Opportunities for business development within Edderton are restricted to a small area of land behind the metal fabricating business. There is a need in the preparation of the draft plan to seek suitable land to provide a further supply of effective land for business development. Concerns regarding the lack of capacity are to be addressed by Scottish Water.

1. West of Station Road: RETAIN SITE This site is identified within the recently

adopted Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan. A recent planning application is currently under consideration. The determination of the application will take into account issues relating to safeguarding the archaeology on site.

A5.7 **Ardgay**

Comments received suggested that the land between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield should be developed in the future. There was also concern about potential flooding issues if all 3 site options in Lower Gledfield were taken forward and it was stressed that the setting of listed buildings needed to be taken into account. There was a suggestion that land that had been in previous local plans, but that had not been brought forward for development should be removed if nothing continues to be done on the sites. There was support for continuing the business uses of the land at the railway yard.

Site 1 South of Oakwood Place – TAKE FORWARD. This is an allocated site in the existing Local Plan and is an example of a site that has not been implemented. The blue line on the map shows how the site is mapped in the existing local plan. The red line indicates the revised site line taking on board the woodland. Access would be from Oakwood Place. Drainage outfall is an issue. Careful monitoring of the site output will be required to ensure that the site does not add to uncertainty of development in the future. SNH would like development to be phased from north-west heading south.

Site 2 Adjacent to Ardgayhill Road – REJECT. There are drainage problems and is in close proximity to power lines.

Site 3 North of Church Street – TAKE FORWARD. Access a problem; needs to be through site option 4. Proximity to listed buildings needs to be taken account of. Sites 3 and 4 should be included as one site option to allow access issues with site 3 to be considered from the beginning of any development; it will also allow the careful design and siting issues to be considered for the wider area as a whole.

Site 4 Adjacent to Primary School, Lower Gledfield – TAKE FORWARD. There are drainage problems. Proximity to listed buildings needs to be taken account of. This is an allocated site in the existing Local Plan.

Site 5 South-east of Lower Gledfield – REJECT. LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT. Access would be to the east. There are drainage problems. This is an allocated site in the existing Local Plan. This site could be looked at in the longer term alongside further land between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield.

Site 6 Ardgay Railways Station yard (north) – TAKE FORWARD. Access could be brought up to adoptable standards. There are drainage problems. Need to be aware of proximity to listed footbridge. This is an allocated site in the existing Local Plan.

Site 7 Ardgay Railways Station yard (south) – TAKE FORWARD. Existing access okay.

Site 8 South of Oakwood Place – TAKE FORWARD SUBJECT TO CHANGE

OF PROPOSED USE. This should change from proposed business use to housing and become part of site 1. This allows for all business/industry activities to be located on the eastern side of the A836 and will create a less industrial look to the entrance of the village. Access should be at least 50 metres up Oakwood Place. There are drainage issues. This is an allocated site in the existing Local Plan.

New sites suggested by representors via Sutherland Futures Consultation:

- **Land between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield. LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT.** The land on either side of the road between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield is potential future development. If the site south of Oakwood Place is not brought forward for development during this Local Plan the land between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield could provide alternative sites.
- **Land north of Manse Road – LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT.** This area along with further land between Lower Gledfield and Ardgay and land at site 5 could provide potential longer term land for development and is not therefore being recommended as an allocation. Access to the west over the Railway Bridge would need to be closed off with pedestrian access only. Access from the east is acceptable. If the site south of Oakwood Place is not brought forward for development during this Local Plan this site could provide an alternative site.
- **Land south of Ardgay - REJECT.** This land is just out with the settlement boundary of Ardgay, parallel to the A836 and is part of the area that separates Ardgay and Kincardine.
- **North of Ardgayhill - REJECT.** This is out with the current settlement boundary.

A5.8

Bonar Bridge

It was indicated that affordable housing was required for Bonar Bridge to try and encourage young people to stay in the area. Following from the lack of affordable housing there was concern from many members of the community about the problems with the lack of water supply limiting the growth of the area.

Comments were received that the existing Migdale Hospital should be re-used once a new hospital is built.

Site 1 Cherry Grove – TAKE FORWARD. There are drainage problems there may be some archaeological remains (pill box) that require investigation. Existing Local Plan allocation which had a master plan included. Access, especially pedestrian access, onto Migdale Road should be preserved through what is site 4 (east of Am Mhuilin). This site is close to the village centre and local services and could provide phased housing development for the village. SNH would like the development phased from the west.

Site 2 South of Cherry Grove – LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT. This is a

potential longer term development which could allow extension from the site at Cherry Grove. There are drainage problems.

Site 3 Swordale – TAKE FORWARD. The remainder of the site should be developed with low density development. Remainder of site should be serviced from rural access further to the south. This is an existing Local Plan allocation.

Site 4 East of Am Mhuilin - REJECT. The western section of this site needs to be reserved to maintain pedestrian access into site 1 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 – REJECT. Site is potentially full with limited potential for further infill houses. Access not suitable for further houses. This is an allocated site in the existing Local Plan. 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 school – REJECT. Not recommended as an allocation. Planning permission granted for 2 houses on southern end of site, so the site is now unsuitable for a business site allocation. This could be a potential longer term development given the proximity to the school and the future potential redevelopment of Migdale Hospital.

Site 7 North of the village – REJECT. Steep access. Consolidate business development at South Bonar Industrial Estate.

New sites suggested by representors via Sutherland Futures Consultation:

- **Land opposite school - REJECT.** This could be a potential area of development in the longer term alongside site 6.
- **Migdale Hospital – LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT.** Not recommended as an allocation in the Local Plan, however the Local Plan will provide discussion on the redevelopment of this site. The NHS has indicated that this site will become surplus to requirements in the future.
- **Land north of Bonar Bridge, adjacent to Tulloch cottage - REJECT.** This land is out with the settlement boundary. The proposed potential tourism use will be covered under general policies for tourism in the Local Plan.
- **Forestry Commission land – REJECT.** This land is out with the settlement heading towards Lairg. There will be regard to this type of development when developing the general policies for Housing in the Countryside.
- **Amenity development to NW of bridge - REJECT.** Not recommended as an allocation. Success of existing amenity area in Bonar Bridge will be mentioned in the Local Plan. Is at risk from SEPA 1 in 200 year flood risk.

A mixture of comments were received about the Industrial Estate. Some comments suggested that no further development should take place on the site until flooding issues were resolved. Others thought that any future business growth in the area should be concentrated at the site with future expansion as necessary. The good access and central location were cited as positive reasons for concentrating on the Industrial Estate.

Site 1 South Bonar Industrial Estate – TAKE FORWARD. A Development Brief for this site was published in September 2005. There is scope to enhance the visual impact of the existing estate and there is some minor work required on the access. The Industrial Estate is an important site for local business and should be supported. There is land available to the west of the existing site, but the existing site should be fully developed before any extension is taken forward. Any longer term development including possible extension would need to assess potential flood risk and include appropriate flood mitigation measures.

A5.10 **Lairg**

In Lairg there was a great desire for the Old Sutherland Arms Hotel to be developed as some kind of hotel facility and in the process to improve the appearance of Lairg. By encouraging this alongside limited development at the former Sutherland Transport and Trading Company site, it should make the entrance to Lairg more attractive for locals and visitors alike.

There were numerous site options for housing expansion in Lairg. The preferred direction is site 1 to the south-west of Main Street. This site would allow for phased level of housing development and would provide affordable housing. It is also close to the locals services in the village. There were comments on the fact that no land for housing had been identified on the opposite side of Loch Shin. A proposal has now been put out forward for the site south of Ord Place, subject to further discussions. There are areas to the north-east and the north-west where there could be housing expansion. However, it is suggested that these are longer term expansion areas.

Site 1 South-east of Main Street/between caravan site/former Sutherland Arms/Black Bridge – TAKE FORWARD. New access required onto A836. This development should be phased to provide a range of housing for Lairg and should be carefully designed to fit into the landform. Pedestrian access onto Main Street should be provided which would allow easy access to the local services. This will encourage the growth of Lairg around the existing services and towards the housing at Ord Place. This site should take priority for development over site 3 north-west of Lochside.

Site 2 North of Milnclarin towards Lairg Muir – LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT. Some archaeological remains which need protected. SEPA 1 in 200 year flood risk around Allt a Choin-duinn, at southern end of site which may limit development capacity. There is also concern from the Crofters Commission about using croft land.

Site 3 North-west of Lochside – LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT. Archaeological conditions may be required. Potential roundabout off A836 with 30

mph speed restriction moved and access via Site 10. Manse Road would require an extension to the footpath. This site is further away from the centre of the village and whilst it has development merits, it should not be given development priority over site 1 south-west of Main Street. There is also concern from the Crofters Commission about using croft land. It is a site that could however provide longer term development growth for Lairg.

Site 4 Former Hotel/outbuildings – TAKE FORWARD. Current planning application with the Council. Allocated in the existing Local Plan.

Site 5 North of Manse Road – TAKE FORWARD. Allocated in the existing Local Plan and is an example of a site that has not been implemented. Careful monitoring of the site output will be required to ensure that the site does not add to uncertainty of development in the future.

Site 6 West of Manse Road – REJECT. There are drainage issues. This site is not recommended as a site for allocation however it will remain in the SDA for Lairg and therefore could be subject to infill or windfall development.

Site 7 East of Manse Road – TAKE FORWARD. No access problems, but drainage required. Allocated in the existing Local Plan and is an example of a site that has not been implemented. Careful monitoring of the site output will be required to ensure that the site does not add to uncertainty of development in the future.

Site 8 North of Clash Breac – REJECT. Flooding issues.

Site 9 Builnatobernich – REJECT. Some room for limited infill. Some archaeology requires protection. Possible flooding issues. Access road suitable for another 2 infill housing, but after that would require upgrading.

Site 10 West Lochside - REJECT. Potential roundabout off A836 with 30 mph speed restriction moved, with development in combination with Site 3 north-west of Lochside. Site 3 has been identified as potential longer term development growth for Lairg.

Site 11 Adjacent to Post Office depot – REJECT. This site would elongate Lairg along Main Street and priority should be given to redeveloping business/industrial land at site 12 former laundry and to consolidating the land at site 14 west of Church Hill Road. There is also potential for some form of business use at the former Sutherland Transport and Trading Company land.

Site 12 Former laundry – TAKE FORWARD. Allocated in existing Local Plan. This site would be suitable for light industry/business and buffering should be provided between the site and the boundary with the school.

Site 13 Opposite fire station – REJECT. Limited development potential and there are drainage issues. Priority should be given to redeveloping business/industrial land at site 12 former laundry and to consolidating the land at site 14 west of Church Hill Road. There is also potential for some form of business use at the former Sutherland Transport and Trading Company land.

Site 14 West of Church Hill Road – TAKE FORWARD. Suitable for one further unit. Allocated in existing Local Plan.

New sites suggested by representors via Sutherland Futures Consultation:

- **Clunel, Lairg – REJECT.** East of Lairg, out with settlement. There will be regard to this type of development when developing the general policies for Housing in the Countryside.
- **Sutherland Transport and Trading Company site - TAKE FORWARD.** Not recommended as an allocation in the Local Plan but the site will be discussed in the Local Plan as an important part of improving the entrance of Lairg. Suitable for limited development. Access from north car park.
- **Ord Place – TAKE FORWARD SUBJECT TO FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION WITH SEPA.** Capable of suitable access, but flooding is an issue. Will draw an SDA around this part of Lairg and this site will be within that boundary.
- **Ledmore – REJECT.** Out with settlement. There will be regard to this type of development when developing the general policies for Housing in the Countryside.

A5.11 Rogart

Comments were received that Rogart needs a mixture of private and affordable housing and further housing growth should be located out with the centre of the village of Rogart as well as within the village. There were concerns raised about the future of the former mart site.

Site 1 Mart and adjoining land– TAKE FORWARD SUBJECT TO CHANGING TO MIXED USE. Drainage issues and some potential 1 in 200 year flood risk along western fringe of site. Rogart Community Council is no longer pursuing housing on the site. Change allocation from housing to mixed use because whilst the site may have some development constraints it is still a well located site for housing.

Site 2 Opposite the garage – TAKE FORWARD. Access to west of site.

New sites suggested by representors via Sutherland Futures Consultation:

- **Up past McDonald Place – TAKE FORWARD SUBJECT TO FURTHER CONSIDERATION.** An SDA should be put around Pittentrail, including this site, but separate to the one suggested around Rogart.
- **East of playing field - REJECT.** Access is a problem which could have cost implications for any development. This is a potential site for longer term development.
- **Dalreavoch Woods and Scibercross woodland – REJECT.** There will be

regard to this type of development when developing the general policies for Housing in the Countryside.

A5.12 **Rosehall**

There were concerns raised that any future growth in Rosehall must be proportional to what the area as a whole can support in relation to jobs and the capacity of the roads. It was suggested that the local road network needed improved before further houses were built. Comments were also received on the lack of affordable housing in the area and that any housing development should contain at least an element of affordable housing.

Site 1 Rear of the post office – TAKE FORWARD. Possible archaeological remains to be protected. No problems with access but access must be staggered with site 2.

Site 2 Opposite the post office – TAKE FORWARD. No problems with access but must be staggered with site 1. Eastern end of site may be at risk from 1 in 200 year flooding from River Cassley. This may limit the development capacity of the site.

Site 3 East of the road – REJECT. No problems with access but must not be opposite access to site 4. Possibly a longer term site.

Site 4 West of the road - REJECT. No problems with access but must not be opposite access to site 3. Possibly a longer term site.

After the Sutherland Future Consultation period ended, two outline planning applications have been submitted to The Council for Rosehall House; they are for 12 houses, a subdivision of one house into 7 apartments and the conversion of 3 coach houses to detached houses.

A5.13

Culrain

Culrain is a small local centre with a tight settlement form and the open setting of Culrain needs to be maintained.

West of hall – REJECT. Drainage and potential flooding issues. The existing SDA around Culrain will remain and the site will be included within the SDA, however the recommendation is to not include the site as an allocation.

A5.14 **Lairg Station**

Lairg Station is an important strategic rail freight and commuter halt in Central Sutherland. Land around the rail yard could be used to enable expansion of business opportunities. There were also concerns raised that it should be made to look more attractive for visitors arriving in Lairg.

A5.15

Invershin

Former Balblair Workings – TAKE FORWARD BUT ALLOCATE AS A SPECIAL USE. Southern end of the site is affected by SEPA 1 in 200 year flood risk. The site is a disused and partly re-instated sand and gravel quarry.

There is already one outline planning permission for a house on this site and a proposal has been brought forward for up to another 12 houses to be built on the old quarry workings at Balblair, with 25% affordable housing on site. The site is 24 hectares and the proposal suggests that each house will have a plot size which will include land holdings.

By recommending that the site be allocated as a special use, with further detail of the particular characteristics of the proposed use and development requirements set out in the text of the Local Plan, it indicates that this site is not being proposed for large numbers of typical residential plots and is identified in recognition of the circumstances of the site and its location where it can strengthen the local community.

A5.16 Assynt Area (including Lochinver, Stoer, Drumbeg, Achfary)

Past trends show that the vast majority of development has been accommodated in the townships North and South of Lochinver rather than in the settlement itself. It is important through this review to offer scope within the townships where the landscape and the infrastructure permits and to define the Settlement Development Areas (SDA's) as widely as possible. However these townships have soaked up a lot of pressure and their infrastructure in many cases is close to or at its capacity. It is therefore vital that there is a rigorous attempt to identify land within Lochinver and close to its services.

Lochinver is currently close to capacity for waste water treatment however it has been identified in the top priority category for lifting this constraint and Scottish Water have obligated themselves to write out a capital expenditure form for the upgrade required when development becomes committed (i.e. planning permission has been granted). Part of the reason that Lochinver was identified as a top priority by the Highland Council in this exercise with Scottish Water was because of its affordable housing need.

Further discussions with TECS and a meeting with the Assynt Estate Factor once they have the results from their studies will help determine the level of allocation that should be considered in Glencanisp. Also of consideration will be the results of the landscape assessment which has been carried out on the site and will be available shortly.

There were a lot of new sites put forward after the consultation for the communities north of Lochinver. These were identified by the Assynt Crofters Trust through the Local Grazings Committees for Stoer, Clashnessie, Drumbeg, and Culkein of Drumbeg. Therefore there will be a workshop later in spring to consult with the communities on these sites before deciding what should be identified in the Proposed Plan.

A5.17 Lochinver

1 North of filin Baddidarrach ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED

This site should be discussed with the residents at Glendarroch and SNH to potentially resolve objections. SNH would prefer no further housing in this area because of the value of the oak woodland which contributes to the character and setting of Lochinver. TECS confirm that the resurfacing of the road has resolved the access issue.

If land can be satisfactorily accommodated then we should include it given the pressing need for sites in and around Lochinver.

2 North of Albyn Development at Inver Park ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED

The area identified will depend on the outcome of forthcoming discussions with Assynt Estate factor. Access would be suitable on the same grounds as the Albyn development. The Assynt Estate are working with the Baddidarrach Grazings Committee to identify suitable land in the Proposed Plan.

3 South of the pottery CONFIRM THIS SITE AND INCLUDE A DEVELOPMENT FACTOR TO COVER COASTAL DEFENCE

An effective site which the Pottery wish to be included in the Proposed Plan. TECS advise of a coastal defence issue.

4 Sheep stock pens north of Inver Park ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED

The area identified will depend on the outcome of forthcoming discussions with the Assynt Estate factor. The Assynt Estate are working with the Baddidarrach Grazings Committee to identify suitable land in the Proposed Plan. TECS have advised that access can be achieved.

5 Cnoc A Mhuillin CONFIRM THAT THERE WILL BE AN ALLOCATION HERE FOR HOUSING BUT ALLOW SCOPE FOR THE BOUNDARY SHOWN IN SUTHERLAND FUTURES TO BE REDEFINED

The area identified will depend on the outcome of forthcoming discussions with Assynt Estate factor. The Assynt Estate view this as their priority area for development within Lochinver and are looking to extend the boundary of the Sutherland Futures site eastwards. They are doing some work on access arrangement and the siting of housing and will update us shortly. SNH support this site but want the eastern area to be limited to 1 ½ storey housing and stress that careful siting will be vital. This site is at the entrance to the village, prominent, and any application will need to be accompanied by a design statement.

TECS advise that access would require significant engineering because of the topography. They also point out that the speed restriction would have to be moved and a footpath link into the site provided.

6 Canisp Road/ Culag bridge CONFIRM THIS BY INCLUDING THIS SITE WITHIN THE SDA BOUNDARY

There have been no objections to this site. There is limited scope here due to the topography, access constraints and pylons running through the site. Therefore it should be included within the SDA boundary to give policy support for infill development.

7 South of Culag (1) CONFIRM THIS SITE AS AN ALLOCATION FOR BUSINESS/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

There have been no objections to this site and so it should be progressed into the Proposed Plan. However SEPA have identified a possible flood risk at South Culag so this will need to be discussed.

8 South of Culag (2) ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED

Concern has been expressed about the heronry which is located close to this site. The Assynt visitor centres' countryside ranger, Andy Summers has commented that the herons should not be disturbed by felling close to the site between March and August but stressed that they were unfazed by existing activities at the harbour.

The site offers a good location for a range of possible commercial activities. However it is contrary to the Landscape Capacity Study and there is an SNH objection to this site. Further discussions with SNH required regarding their reason for objection before determining whether it should be identified in the Proposed Plan. Also SEPA have identified a possible flood risk at South Culag so this will need to be discussed.

9 South of Culag (3) ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED

This site also offers a good location for a range of possible commercial activities. However it is also contrary to the Landscape Capacity Study and there is an SNH objection to this site. Further discussions with SNH required regarding their reason for objection before determining whether it should be identified in the Proposed Plan. Also SEPA have identified a possible flood risk at South Culag so this will need to be discussed.

10 Glen Canisp CONFIRM A HOUSING ALLOCATION IN THIS LOCATION. ONGOING – WITH FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE THE CORRECT LEVEL OF ALLOCATION

Site 2 at Glencanisp has triggered a mixed response with positive support and concern expressed. The reasons for concern include the quality of the views (detraction of visitors approach to Suilven) and the sites location outwith the village and its services. However notably the Assynt Community Council '*heartily endorses the plans of the Assynt foundation for a plot of affordable housing on its Glencanisp estate*'.

SNH point out that this site lies in the centre of an NSA and at the edge of a SNH search area for wild land. However the Highland Council has now refined these search areas and the Glencanisp site option is well outwith the boundary of the wild land designation that will be shown as a constraint in the Proposed Plan. SNH feel that within the cnocan landscape there may be scope for up to three houses.

However even though it is within an NSA I feel that with attention paid to the careful siting and design of the development the impact of more significant development on the landscape could be suitably mitigated. Results from the Assynt Foundations landscape study will be available shortly.

TECS are still assessing the access requirements so the level of allocation can not be determined at this stage. However they have clarified that the public road is in poor condition and will need some upgrading and that the private road will require major upgrading to get it up to adoptable standards. The private road could not cope with any more development at the moment.

A5.18 1 Stoer south DO NOT CONFIRM WITHIN THE SDA

There was an objection from the Assynt Crofter's Trust because the land is arable croft land.

2 Drumbeg – south of B869 CONSULT ON THIS ALONG WITH THE NEW SITES IDENTIFIED BY THE ASSYNT CROFTERS TRUST

TECS confirm that development on the U class road below the B869 would be ok for 2 houses maximum and the other section is fine. The areas fit with the existing settlement pattern and there have been no objections.

3 Drumbeg – southwest of Loch Ruighean an Aitinn CONSULT ON THIS ALONG WITH THE NEW SITES IDENTIFIED BY THE ASSYNT CROFTERS TRUST

There appears to be some scope here although there may need to be some amendment to the boundary.

A5.19 1 Achfary north CONFIRM WITHIN SDA

There have been no objections and it fits with the settlement pattern.

2 south Alt Achadh Fairdh CONFIRM WITHIN SDA

The boundary needs to be amended somewhat to exclude the land which is identified as a flood risk in the SEPA flood mapping.

A5.20 Scourie

A lot of the land that was identified in Sutherland Futures for Scourie will not make it into the Proposed Plan. Some of the constraints encountered included: the ground conditions; availability of the sites; and the local importance of croftland.

There has been a difficulty in identifying suitable and effective sites for housing so it will be vital that the SDA is drawn widely where possible in order to offer sufficient scope for infill development. Apart from option 4, East of the football pitch, Mrs Jean Balfour is the owner of the sites identified in Sutherland Futures. She has submitted initial comments on these sites however it will be essential to meet up with her in due course to discuss further.

1 west of the caravan/campsite DO NOT CONFIRM THIS SITE

The Crofters commission objected on the basis that this is not good inbye croft land.

2 south of the church ONGOING REQUIRING FURTHER EXAMINATION

The individual crofters have not contacted us back to say whether they wish their land to be identified in the Proposed Plan. However the Grazings committee are happy for the land at the south which forms part of the common grazings to be identified.

Therefore it could be available depending on Dr Jean Balfour's response. Historic

Scotland were concerned that site option 2 lies to the immediate west of the B-Listed house next to the post office. However the common grazings is at south end of the site so that would not be of concern here.

3 west of Park Terrace DO NOT CONFIRM THIS SITE

Crofter's commission objection as this is good inbye croft land.

4 east of the football pitch ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED

The owner contacted us prior to the consultation meeting to express an interest but has not confirmed the lands availability. There is a need to find his contact details so we can confirm. SNH are concerned because this site is a sensitive setting.

5 west of the school CONFIRM A SITE HERE BUT ONGOING WORK REQUIRED TO DETERMINE THE BOUNDARY

This site was well supported by the public at the Sutherland Futures meeting. Compensatory parking would need to be provided onsite for any lost through forming the access. There is capacity in the septic tank here for an additional five units.

SNH feel that only a small part of this site on the eastern edge may be suitable for development and the landowner did express some concern in her comments that this is quite an exposed site. Therefore there will need to be further discussions with SNH and the landowner before identifying land in the Proposed Plan.

6 east of the school DO NOT CONFIRM BUT INCLUDE WITHIN THE SDA

It emerged that soil drainage tests have been done in the past and suggest that this land may be unsuitable for development. I propose to include within the Settlement Development Area so that if an opportunity emerges within it for some infill development then it has policy support.

7 north of the Free Church CONFIRM WITHIN THE SDA

Suitable for infill so should be identified within the Settlement Development Area.

8 south of the Free Church CONFIRM WITHIN THE SDA

Crofter's commission advise that an application for apportionment is currently being considered but that it is doubtful that this will progress successfully if the area is zoned.

A5.21 Kinlochbervie

The consultation feedback and further survey work by TECS to evaluate the sites in Kinlochbervie has helped in considering which sites should progress into the Proposed Plan. Concern has been expressed about the proposed access arrangements to the two major sites for housing identified for Kinlochbervie: at the north end of Manse road and north of Innes Place. Either or both of these options would allow a long term direction for growth within the settlement.

However SNH are concerned that the Manse Road site would affect the setting of the village and the Church, whilst it has also been objected to on the basis that it is some of the only arable land in Kinlochbervie.

There are some access issues at Innes Place which would require the relocation of the playpark and the provision of compensatory parking. The Crofters Commission have expressed interest because it is croft land; however it is not of arable quality. Therefore with appropriate setback from the loch the Proposed Plan should include this land whilst protecting access further north.

There are also various smaller opportunities that exist for housing. In addition there is the possibility that some of the land suggested at the consultation will be suitable: southeast of the Kinlochbervie Hotel and west of Cnoc Ruadh. This will become apparent after discussion with SNH and once TECS have undertaken the survey work.

1 Manse Road CONFIRM THAT THE SDA BOUNDARY SHOULD BE DRAWN TO ALLOW FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THE SOUTH OF MANSE ROAD ON THE EAST SIDE WITH THE RELEVANT DEVELOPER FACTORS/REQUIREMENTS. DO NOT RETAIN THE ARABLE LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE CHURCH.

SNH feel that allocating the land to the north of the church would compromise the setting of existing buildings and extend the settlement envelope.

Objections were raised from some of the residents of Manse Road regarding the possibility of further housing feeding from this road. This is partly due to existing congestion problems and the inconvenience of having to park at a distance from their houses. Also there was concern that the site north of Manse road should not be lost as it is the best arable land in the village.

Subject to off street parking and a footpath to the main road TECS would not object to limited development at the southern end of Manse Road with a cautionary note regarding flooding off the hill. The suitability/viability of the site north of the church was questioned due to the engineering required for access.

2 north of Innes Place CONFIRM A HOUSING ALLOCATION HERE

Crofters Commission state that this is inbye land currently used for traditional crofting purposes; however the land is not of arable quality. SNH's comment is that this area should remain open to safeguard views so there will be further discussions with SNH. The boundary will also need to be amended to bring some setback from the loch due to the flood risk.

TECS advise that compensatory parking would be required and the playpark would need to be relocated.

3 south of Mackenzie Square AMEND THE SITE TO REMOVE CATHEL MORRISON'S LAND BUT RETAIN THE REST OF THE ALLOCATION WITH A DEVELOPMENT FACTOR TO COVER THE POTENTIAL SUBSIDENCE ISSUE

Through the consultation process it was established that this land is not council owned but comprises part of several crofts. Mr Morrison did not want his land included in the review but the others concerned were happy for their land to be identified in the Proposed Plan. However some concern was expressed at the public meeting about the ground conditions on this site.

4 adjacent the garage CONFIRM WITHIN THE SDA BOUNDARY BUT DO NOT CONFIRM AS AN ALLOCATION

This was identified by an agent working on behalf of the Northern Constabulary. They subsequently appointed a new representative and have submitted a planning application to knock down the existing premises at Rhiconnich and rebuild. The site in Kinlochbervie they identified would need an assessment of potential contamination issues.

5 between Loch Bervie - Loch Clash pier RETAIN WITHIN THE SDA

Historic Scotland ask us to pay particular attention to preserving any physical or visual link between the Church and its Manse so this should be included as a development factor.

6 Loch Bervie Harbour CONFIRM THIS SITE FOR INDUSTRIAL USES

TECS advise that the ground conditions on this site are poor. Although there is a doubt over its effectiveness I feel the site should be in the Proposed Plan so there is policy support should a solution be forthcoming.

A5.22 Durness & Laid

The community clearly have aspiration for growth but have spread the sites they have suggested fairly evenly through its adjoining communities. Sutherland Futures included the majority of these sites. They were identified by the community and had the backing of the grazings committee and the landowner. However for some of these sites there was an element of doubt in terms of their effectiveness or suitability.

The concern would be not to identify land where its balance in terms of its suitability is unfavourable. There is sufficient suitable and effective land for an adequate land supply to be provided in the Proposed Plan. There is less concern about identifying additional land where the doubt lies with its effectiveness. In this case you can allow for a slight over allocation - allowing for a choice of sites.

In terms of suitability the school road sites are not straight forward because of the pedestrian safety concern. Also the Crofters Commission's have objected to site option 3 on School Road because it was recently apportioned. Also identifying land behind the crofts in Durine would be of detriment to the settlement pattern. However there is scope to define the SDA to reflect the staggered building line that exists.

Outwith Durness other sites have been put forward for possible inclusion. One site identified lies 300 metres south of the edge of Durine. This may prove a suitable site for some housing in the future and would be assessed against the policy framework of the Local Plan and the Housing in the Countryside Policy. However it does not lie next to an existing township or settlement and therefore the Local Plan should not consider allocating land here. Another site has been suggested at Balnakiel and this is being assessed in terms of its suitability and effectiveness for possible inclusion.

Following discussions with the local community, proposals are being developed by Ian Wilson in relation to his mineral interests on the West side of Loch Eriboll. The scale and nature of these proposals, the associated environmental impact and the social and

economic benefit to the local and Highland economy have yet to be determined. However, there is merit in continuing discussions with Mr Wilson as we progress through the Local plan process. We will be seeking further details as to the exact nature of the proposal which may appear in the Proposed Plan.

A5.23 **Durness**

1 adjacent to shop CONFIRM THIS SITE AS SUITABLE FOR A MIX OF USES EXCLUDING INDUSTRIAL

TECS have still to do further survey work here but the initial indication was that there might be an access difficulty if the western area is unable to be developed due to poor ground conditions.

However this site is central to the village and should be confirmed because the doubt that might remain would be over its effectiveness not its suitability. Other sites in Durness could come forward if at a later date a feasibility study ruled it out. The next time the Sutherland Local Plan was reviewed would then be the time to remove the site.

2 west of School Road (n) CONFIRM THIS SITE

TECS are concerned about a possible allocation here but feel that if the road was stopped off to through traffic then this would alleviate the pedestrian safety issue. However a solution like this would be dependant on community support. It could be confirmed in the Proposed Plan but with a requirement to provide an acceptable solution to address road safety concerns.

3 west of School Road (s) DO NOT CONFIRM THIS SITE

There is an objection from the Crofters Commission because this land has recently been apportioned from the common grazings. Therefore it should not be included in the Proposed Plan.

4 east Sangomore (n) DRAW THE SDA BOUNDARY TO ALLOW SCOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT HERE BUT EXCLUDE THE SITE WHICH WOULD BREAK THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN

This option 4 in Sutherland Futures did not reflect the land the grazing committee wanted us to examine so they submitted a new map indicating different sites. These sites would require: the adoption of the road which runs between options 5&6 (the cost of which should be shared with site 5); a not insignificant extension of the road from where the mast lies; plus the locations identified do not lie close to the existing drainage network. This obviously has significance for the effectiveness of development in this area.

I recommend that the site which does not fit with the settlement form should be excluded from the SDA boundary. Although there is a doubt over the viability of development in this location it is a suitable location for limited development.

5 north Sangomore (n) CONFIRM THIS AREA WITHIN THE SDA BUT INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT FACTOR TO ENSURE SEPARATION FROM THE MAST

This would also require the adoption of the road so the cost should be shared between

4 and 5. Separation from the mast should be maintained.

6 west of Village Hall CONFIRM AS A HOUSING ALLOCATION

This site requires to be serviced by a single access from the main road. A planning application is currently being considered on this site for one house. It is my understanding is that the site is available for 3 houses.

7 smoo CONFIRM THE AREAS EITHER WITHIN SDA OR AS AN ALLOCATION AS APPROPRIATE BUT EXCLUDE AREA TO WEST OF SMOO LODGE WHERE ACCESS CANNOT BE TAKEN

Any development to the east of the Smoo Lodge will have to respect its setting. The site east to the village hall can take its access from the road serving the hall and/or off the public road. It has a significant capacity and is close to connection for waste water treatment. It should be confirmed as an allocation suitable for a mix of uses to offer flexibility as it is a suitable location for a range of uses - commercial, community or housing. The site immediately across the road should also be confirmed as suitable for mix uses. The two sites to the south which are 150 metres plus from the waste water network should be identified within the SDA but not allocated.

A5.24 Laid

DO NOT CONFIRM WITHIN THE SDA

The land put forward for our consideration follows the existing pattern of development. However TECS are concerned about an extension to the existing ribbon development and SNH feel that there is potential for infill development that should be exploited before the boundary is extended.

A5.25 Tongue and Farr Area

Melness, Armadale and Strathy

Strathy East is at capacity because of its junctions with the A838. There are several infill sites remaining within Strathy West and the existing Local Plan site which is common grazings is still available. It is considered that this is an effective site and it seems to be a matter of demand which has left it undeveloped. The site option identified below Steven Terrace could offer choice and flexibility and would be able to connect to the spare capacity in the sewerage treatment which amounts to 7 houses.

Armadale has had significant development in its own terms with the recent completion of the Albyn development. In Armadale the options identified were an attempt to examine the effectiveness of the sites with capacity for more than infill development. These 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 inbye land and are actively crofted and therefore understandably the Local Grazings clerk has objected to them. To compensate and allow enough potential for infill within the SDA boundary it should be extended to the south. This would include common grazings land.

At the public meeting in Melness, the future of the Caladh Sona was highlighted and we will liaise with social work on this matter. There have been no objections to the

sites identified in Melness and the community have identified their own sites which we are considering and have passed these to our TECS colleagues for assessment. They are the result of community consultation themselves and where appropriate these can be identified in the Proposed Plan. However there is a concern about identifying ribbon development. This should not be encouraged due to its: servicing, landscape impact and its affect on settlement form.

1 west of Joseph Mackay Court, Melness CONFIRM AS A HOUSING ALLOCATION

SNH are concerned about development here affecting the views inland to distant mountains but support the north eastern area for allocation. However this site is one of few suitable and effective opportunities for development in Melness and I believe that appropriate mitigation can ensure some development of the western area without undue impact on views. Developer requirements can stipulate low density housing and care to be taken over siting and design.

Access can be taken off the existing court and/or at the western end of the site.

2 rear of Craggan Hotel, Melness RETAIN THIS AS AN ALLOCATION

This is an existing Local Plan allocation. The road would need to be brought up to an adoptable standard here. Also SNH have commented that development would need to be well sited and designed to fit with the existing strong settlement pattern.

3 Armadale DO NOT CONFIRM BUT RETAIN WITHIN THE SDA AND AMEND THIS TO ENCOMPASS THE COMMON GRAZINGS LAND TO THE SOUTH

After discussion with the Local Grazings clerk this is the clear way forward which retains scope for development in Armadale whilst not allocating locally important croft land.

4 below Steven Terrace, Strathy ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED, BUT IF INCLUDED THE BOUNDARY WOULD BE AMENDED TO EXCLUDE AREA OF FLOOD RISK

It has been difficult to establish the address of the owner of this croft as he lives away. However in the meantime a letter has been sent to his Strathy address to try to confirm the availability of this site.

The land is part of a croft and the Crofters Commission have commented on this in addition to SNH raising a concern with its identification. Furthermore it has also had an objection from a neighbouring property.

However the development of this land would enable connection to the spare capacity for 7 houses in the waste water treatment for Strathy and could be serviced from a new access with cattle grid off the A836.

The boundary needs to be amended to cover the higher ground and possibly to take into account availability but I want to offer some choice and flexibility for development in Strathy. Therefore this site should not be ruled out until/unless it is unavailable.

5 south of A836, Strathy (west) CONFIRM THIS SITE AS A HOUSING ALLOCATION

This is common grazings which the committee are in favour of maintaining as a Local Plan allocation. No objections have been received and some support has been given and therefore it should progress into the Proposed Plan.

A5.26 Portskerra/Melvich

Most of the options identified in Sutherland Futures can be progressed into the Proposed Plan but the consultation did suggest that we should look to allocate more land in Portskerra if possible. Therefore I have written back to the local grazing committee and will take any suggestions to our discussions with SNH and forward any suitable sites onto TECS so they can investigate possible access. As it stands enough land can already be identified however some degree of over allocation to provide choice and flexibility would not be of a concern. However any additional land identified must be suitable.

1 east of Pentland Terrace RETAIN THIS ALLOCATION

Access to be taken from the industrial estate. This is an existing Local Plan allocation which should be retained in the Proposed Plan.

2 west of Pentland Terrace CONFIRM THIS ALLOCATION

Access is preferred from Bayview Avenue. Part of this site was an existing allocation and the HSCHT are interested in buying it, but they are no longer looking at the whole site. The proposed extension is not contrary to the Landscape Capacity Study and there have been no objections. The site should be confirmed by the Proposed Plan.

3 north of Mackay Terrace ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED

The availability of this site will be checked with the owner. Contrary to belief of the community council chair, no planning application has been submitted for this site.

4 Bayview Terrace CONFIRM AN ALLOCATION BUT AMEND TO PLACE FURTHER BACK FROM THE ROAD THAN BAYVIEW TERRACE

A suggestion was put forward during consultation to setback development from Bayview Terrace in order to avoid creating a continuous street. There is merit in this idea since it would maintain the sense of openness at this point. Furthermore TECS have found no problem with this new arrangement so this should be confirmed in the Proposed Plan.

5 south of Sutherland House DO NOT CONFIRM

Concern expressed by the community chairman that infill development here would close off the sense of openness.

A5.27 Bettyhill

The Education department are looking to find a solution to the parking problem for the schools in Bettyhill. They asked us to advise them of the position with regards to several sites in Bettyhill. One of the options they identified was the Munro Place site. The Highland Small Communities Trust (HSCHT) have submitted a planning

application on this site for 4 houses. This is an existing Local Plan site, is already serviced, and should be retained for housing development. We will continue to work with Education and TECS and will seek to allocate appropriate land for parking.

Outside the SDA boundary some additional flexibility will be ensured through the new policy framework proposed whilst still protecting the natural heritage features. Since there is no appropriate resource to support it - we cannot spatially show the agricultural constraint in the way the existing Tongue and Farr Local Plan has. However the Structure Plan Policy A1 which offers safeguard to locally important agricultural land will have to be considered in any planning application coming forward. Also assessed will be the level of constraint on that site; alongside its compliance with the Housing in the Countryside policy.

The SDA's for the surrounding townships will be drawn as widely as possible taking into account the capacity of the landscape and infrastructure. Unfortunately the Newland's area does not have any spare capacity due to the road network. Since there are no mitigating measures that can be achieved, an SDA should not be identified here.

1 west of the school CONFIRM THIS SITE AS A HOUSING ALLOCATION

The site to the north already has outline planning permission for six houses. TECS advise that a suitable access can be taken from the main road or through Munro Place. SNH advise that housing can be accommodated here subject to suitable mitigation with development restricted to a single row of houses on the upslope half of the site. There have been no objections to this site and it should be confirmed in the Proposed Plan.

2 Munro Place CONFIRM THIS SITE AS A HOUSING ALLOCATION

This site can be confirmed as a housing allocation but TECS advise that it is only suitable for two houses instead of the four that have been proposed for this site by the HSCHT. An application is currently being considered for four houses on this site. There have been representations from the residents of Munro Place who feel that this site is inappropriate due to existing parking problems. They want this area to be reserved as a dropping off area for the school.

Although the Proposed Plan will not set the numbers in stone TECS have advised that the site is suitable for just two houses which will be a matter for the individual planning application's consideration.

3 north of Gordon Terrace ONGOING - REQUIRES FURTHER EXAMINATION

This site is an existing Local Plan allocation that the Grazing Committee want to retain in the Proposed Plan. TECS have advised that a one way system could allow for modest development here of up to six houses. The Education department are interested in using some land here for parking to serve the schools. There is a need to continue to liaise with both the Education department and TECS before deciding on the allocation of this site in the Proposed Plan.

4 Farr Bay Road ONGOING - REQUIRES FURTHER EXAMINATION

Several sites were identified here but the Crofter's Commission are concerned that this is all inbye land. However some of this land is of arable quality and some of it is not.

Therefore I recommend that although the arable land should not be identified for development, the other inbye land should still be considered. Therefore the crofters of the non arable land will be contacted to find out whether they are willing to release any of their land before identifying it in the Proposed Plan.

A5.28 **Tongue**

There are several sites that have been identified. Some of these were on a map which was consulted on locally to identify sites and which was submitted to us just prior to consultation last year. Others have been subsequent individual submissions. These are currently being assessed in terms of their suitability and have been passed to TECS to examine whether there are any access issues.

However some of the options identified suggest a ribbon type development which should not be encouraged due to its: servicing, landscape impact and the effect on settlement form. Also some of the sites have been identified within the Designed Landscape for Tongue House which is a feature of national importance.

There have been objections to the existing Local Plan site at Varich Place along with the suggestion that a site to the North be identified in its place. However there is no material reason to remove this site so I consider that it should be confirmed within the Proposed Plan.

Sites 2, 3 and 5 are sensitive because of their location close to the A listed church, and B listed manse and steading. Historic Scotland stated their case to resist any development which might affect the setting of the A Listed St Andrews Church and its relationship with the associated Manse and Steading.

1 west of Varich Place RETAIN AS AN ALLOCATION

A petition was submitted from the residents of Varich Place to object to this site and the Tongue, Melness and Skerry community council also objected.

There is concern about the landscape impact and the effect of development here in terms of Tongue's setting. However in the Sutherland Landscape Capacity Study this site was considered as an area of potential housing to reinforce the existing cluster of buildings. Also SNH have not raised any issue.

In terms of odour nuisance the Scottish Executive produced a code of practice on how this should be assessed but there are no easily applicable distance limits which can be applied from this. Rather it suggests if there is a possible issue then an individual assessment would be required.

However guideline distances were established in the Wester Ross Local Plan with a 25 metre safeguard given for main septic tanks and 45 metres for a small waste water treatment facility. In Tongue the facility is in excess of 45 metres from the proposed site.

TECS have advised that in terms of access the road would need to be widened to 5.5 metres.

2 west of the Manse CONFIRM AS AN ALLOCATION SUITABLE FOR A MIX OF USES BUT REFINE THE BOUNDARY TO PROTECT THE SETTING OF THE MANSE AND THE CHURCH

This site is owned by the Highland Council and has been marked as surplus to requirements. The policy is therefore in the first instance to look at affordable housing provision. There has also been some interest in this site for a village hall. With Sutherland Estates interested in providing affordable housing in the area this site may be available for other uses. It would be a good site for either affordable housing or a community use due to its central position.

3 north of St Andrews Church CONFIRM SITE AS SUITABLE FOR A MIX OF USES

Outline consent for a fire station on part of this site expired at the end of January this year. Historic Scotland have confirmed that since this is adjacent to the southern boundary of the Tongue House Designed Landscape extra care should be taken in terms of siting and design.

4 south of Loyal Terrace CONFIRM AS AN ALLOCATION BUT AMEND BOUNDARY

The site boundary needs to be amended to reflect the effective land here. The Crofters Commission have confirmed that part of this site is a working croft. This should be excluded and the some additional land to the east suggested by the local grazings clerk should be included within the site boundary.

TECS advise access should be from the main road rather than Loyal Terrace.

5 north of Kirkiboll Burn ONGOING – FURTHER EXAMINATION REQUIRED

Historic Scotland are concerned about the development of this site in terms of affecting the setting of the surrounding listed buildings. TECS have confirmed that more than 4 houses off either of the accesses would require public adoption of the road.

There is a need to clarify the owner's intentions before deciding whether to allocate or perhaps just leave within the SDA boundary.

Committee Minutes - March 2007

2. Sutherland Local Plan – “Sutherland Futures”- Response to Representations Received

There had been circulated Report No. SU/64/07 by the Director of Planning & Development outlining the responses received to the issues and option paper ‘Sutherland Futures’ published in October 2006 for public consultation as part of the preparation of the Sutherland Local Plan. The report recommended that Members; (i) note the representations received in response to ‘Sutherland Futures’, as summarised in the report. (ii) comment on the issues raised and the officer response; (iii) agree the draft key objectives and draft general policies for the new Local Plan; (iv) confirm the roles of the settlements and comment on issues affecting the Settlement Development Areas and the preferred allocations for development; (v) consider and approve the content of Appendices 2, 3 and 4 and the recommended settlements and sites in Appendix 5 as a material consideration for development management purposes in the Sutherland area; (vi) note the process and timetable for the production of the Deposit Draft Local Plan; and (vii) recommend that the new Council, to be formed after the elections in May 2007, adopts the Committee’s decisions in respect of the report.

The Chairman suggested that a special meeting be held on Monday 2 April 2007 with this item being the sole item on the Agenda, to allow sufficient time for detailed consideration of the report. Mrs A Magee reported that she was unable to attend on that date, and Members agreed to proceed to consider the settlements and sites within Mrs Magee’s ward.

The Committee heard from the Principal Planner in expansion of his report, outlining the main elements contained therein and detailing the content of the various appendices. He indicated that clear direction is being sought from Members to inform the next phase of the development of the Sutherland Local Plan.

The Graduate Planner presented the recommendations for settlements and sites, with accompanying maps, in respect of Mrs Magee’s ward, as outlined in Appendix 5 to the report.

Mrs A Magee reported on the outcome public consultation meetings held in her Ward and listed the main points arising as follows;

Ardgay

The separation between Ardgay and Lower Gledfield is artificial, and they should be developed as one community.

Support was expressed for business development at Ardgay Station, but on the basis this is limited to the eastern side of the A836 to create a less industrial look to the entrance to the village

Site 1 south of Oakwood Place had been included in the Local Plan for housing for the past 10 years but has never been developed. Therefore it should be excluded from

the new Plan and other alternative sites for housing identified. In the meantime Site 1 should be reallocated for community woodland.

Concern had been expressed that the constraints on the water supply is restricting development in the community.

Concern had been expressed at the number of business closures in the village.

Bonar Bridge

The proposed construction of a new Migdale Hospital, included in the NHS Highland Capital Programme, may impact on potential housing allocations, and therefore it may necessary to identify more sites for housing, in addition to those indicated on the maps

The existing Migdale Hospital is to be declared surplus to requirements and therefore the opportunity exists for redevelopment of the building, the suggestion being that its conversion into apartments would be an appropriate and beneficial use for the community.

A major issue expressed at the consultation meeting had been the lack of land available for business and industrial use, the unanimous view being that the existing site at South Bonar Industrial Estate should be developed. Mrs Magee noted that the decontamination of the site and environmental improvements are nearly complete. The potential expansion of the site to the west should also be explored within the lifetime of the new Local Plan.

Concern was expressed that the constraints on the water supply is limiting growth in the area.

The lack of sports facilities in the area had been highlighted.

The development of paths and other recreational uses in the Kyle of Sutherland should be pursued.

Lairg

Mrs Magee noted that the site of the former Sutherland Arms Hotel is now the subject of a planning application for its redevelopment

Development should not be limited to one part of the village, there also being potential for housing development at Ord Place

Greater use of Ferrycroft Centre should be encouraged. Mrs A Magee noted that there are plans to refurbish the premises as part of Highland 2007.

Concern had been expressed about the loss of agricultural land should sites 1 and 3 be developed for housing.

Rosehall

Development should be proportionate to what the area can support in relation to jobs and the capacity of the roads and water supply.

Invershin

Mrs A Magee noted that the proposal exists to develop 12 houses with land holdings at the former quarry at Balbair, identified at Site 6 on the relevant map, which she considered merited inclusion.

Culrain

Development must be kept within the existing setting of the buildings

Concluding Mrs A Magee advised that a common theme in all the public meetings held in her ward had been the importance of maintaining the existing railway link. Further development of Lairg Station to expand on the various business uses located there should also be investigated.

The Committee **AGREED** to continue consideration of this item at a special meeting on 2 April 2007, on the basis that Mrs A Magee's comments in respect of her Ward be taken into account when considering the recommendations for settlements and sites as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.

Minutes of Planning & Development Committee – April 2007

1. Sutherland Local Plan – “Sutherland Futures”- Response to Representations Received

With reference to Minute of Meeting of 19 March 2007, Item 2, there had been re-circulated Report No. SU/64/07 by the Director of Planning & Development outlining the responses received to the issues and option paper ‘Sutherland Futures’ published in October 2006 for public consultation as part of the preparation of the Sutherland Local Plan. The report recommended that Members; (i) note the representations received in response to ‘Sutherland Futures’, as summarised in the report. (ii) comment on the issues raised and the officer response; (iii) agree the draft key objectives and draft general policies for the new Local Plan; (iv) confirm the roles of the settlements and comment on issues affecting the Settlement Development Areas and the preferred allocations for development; (v) consider and approve the content of Appendices 2, 3 and 4 and the recommended settlements and sites in Appendix 5 as a material consideration for development management purposes in the Sutherland area; (vi) note the process and timetable for the production of the Deposit Draft Local Plan; and (vii) recommend that the new Council, to be formed after the elections in May 2007, adopts the Committee’s decisions in respect of the report.

The Committee heard from the Principal Planner in expansion of his report, advising that direction is being sought from Members to inform the next stage of the work programme, with a further report being brought forward after the Council elections in May 2007.

The Principal Planner explained that there must be certainty within the Local Plan to ensure sites are deliverable, and as an example of this advised that discussions are ongoing with the Sutherland Area Housing Development Forum to establish certainty in relation to potential housing sites. Sites must also be monitored closely in the future to ensure that development proceeds, on the basis that those which remain undeveloped, may be deleted.

The Principal Planner proceeded to summarise the content of the various appendices to the report, and invited comments from Members.

Mr I Ross referred to Appendix 3 on General Policies. He queried how explicit Policy 3 - Wider Countryside, will be in terms of development in the hinterland when linked into Policy 16 - Housing in the Countryside,

Referring to Policy 5 - Affordable Housing, he suggested that the policy be clearer in terms of the threshold, and suggested that there may be developments where it is appropriate to seek more than a 25% contribution. The Area Manager cautioned that the affordable housing policy should be framed so as to prevent developers from circumventing the policy.

Turning to Policy 6 - Designing for Sustainability, Mr Ross expressed the view that the Plan should actively promote this element rather than merely 'encouraging' developers. Linked into this the Plan should identify the requirement for streetscapes, particularly in relation to larger developments.

With reference to Policy 9 - Flood Risk he commented that it should also refer to coastal flooding which is a major concern for some communities in Sutherland. Landowners should also be made more responsible for flooding in terms of their working practices, citing the recent example where run off from the hills had caused flooding.

Referring to Policy 17 - Retail, Mr Ross highlighted the need to retain a strategic network of key services e.g. post offices and access to filling stations. He expressed concern that major supermarket developments may impact on smaller rural filling stations, and that this should be highlighted in the Plan together with the need to provide assistance to this sector. Finally he reported that the Sutherland Partnership had produced a Transport Vision for Sutherland, which he recommended be tied into the new Local Plan.

Responding to the points raised, the Principal Planner confirmed that with reference to Housing in the Countryside, Policy 16 specifically picks up on Structure Plan policy H3 which relates to the hinterland of Tain. It is intended that the Local Plan will define more precisely and formalise the area of the hinterland.

He accepted the need to place a stronger emphasis on design for sustainability, and to adopt a tougher approach within the Plan.

Referring to Policy 5 - Affordable Housing, the Senior Planner acknowledged that a contribution greater than 25% would be appropriate if it could be proven that there is a need for a high level of affordable housing in the area. He indicated that the Council's affordable housing policy in conjunction with Local Action Plans, will be used to inform decisions in relation to appropriate levels in each application.

Discussion also followed on the requirement to include indicative density levels in relation to housing sites contained within the Plan.

In terms of flood risk the Principal Planner reported that the information is based on mapping provided by SEPA which does not include such factors as flooding directly from run-off from hills.

He also acknowledged the concerns in relation to the policy on retail, confirming this is an important consideration for Sutherland. Mrs R Finlayson expressed concern that recent planning approvals for major supermarket developments elsewhere will result in the closure of local filling stations and potentially there will be no fuel provider between Helmsdale and Wick. Mr A Mackay advised that a similar scenario could occur on the north coast. Mr F Keith indicated that the Local Plan is limited in what it can achieve and that there was a need for Central Government intervention to address this issue.

Following on from this Mrs R Finlayson referred to Appendix 4 - Draft Settlement Hierarchy, and sought approval to have Helmsdale included as a 'Main Centre' rather than a 'Key Village' on the basis of its population and the fact it is located on the trunk road, and main railway line.

The Committee **AGREED** that Appendix 4 of the report be amended so that the village of Helmsdale is categorised as a Main Centre.

Thereafter Members were presented with the recommendations for settlements and sites, with accompanying maps, as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report, as undernoted;

Brora

Mrs R Finlayson commented as follows;

Local concerns exist in relation to the croft land at Site 5, south of Academy Street. The Senior Planner indicated that the local Grazings Committee did not object to the inclusion of part of the site as detailed in the map, and that crofting land within the settlement boundary will be protected by background policies.

A query existed over whether Dalchalm should be included within the settlement boundary for Brora. The Senior Planner advised that this area will be assessed for inclusion in the Plan as a separate small rural development.

The Chairman also queried whether Lower Brora could be extended towards the former radio station identified at Site 7. The Senior Planner reported on concerns in relation to the ground stability in this area and retention of open space.

Dornoch

Mr D Allan commented as follows;

Flood issues in respect of Site 1, Dornoch North must be addressed. The Senior Planner confirmed that the developers are investigating flood prevention measures.

The existing European conservation designations around Dornoch must be protected.

The concept of 'streets', as opposed to roads, must be defined more broadly within the Plan.

Additional hotel accommodation in Dornoch is urgently required to meet demand from visitors. Mr D Allan suggested that a Travelodge type development would be appropriate.

The North Highland College should be extended and developed as a centre of excellence for tourism

Currently there is a lack of indoor sport and recreational facilities within Dornoch, and therefore planning gain should be directed towards such facilities.

The concept of retirement villages should be opposed.

Industry should be encouraged to locate to an area off the Poles Road, and away from the entrances to Dornoch.

The area adjacent to Meadows Football Park should be zoned for recreational use.

The Dornoch Common Good Lands, and Dornoch Links should be protected from any building development.

A design guide should be produced for developers with a view to improving the quality of design.

Embo

Mr D Allan commented as follows;

The development of a new community centre be identified as a priority for the village within the Plan.

There should be no further extension to the Grannies Heilan Hame Caravan Park.

Golspie

Mr I Ross commented as follows;

Greater emphasis should be placed on the gateway experience into Golspie. He suggested that light engineering business could be located into the existing business park, expressing concern that if Site 9, Drummuie (South) is developed for industrial uses then this could create problems with the gateway experience into the village. The Senior Planner indicated that the development of Site 9 would require suitable landscaping and planting and that development of retail, commercial or industrial uses would be setback from the trunk road; Mr Ross concurred with this approach.

The Blaize Pitch within the village should be included within the Plan with a view to creating an amenity area with appropriate landscaping. The Senior Planner indicated that improvements at the blaze pitch were suggested as an action/project within the consultation; the potential for this will be investigated in the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

The route of the proposed trunk road by-pass should be safeguarded in the Plan and highlighted in the narrative. The Senior Planner indicated that the finalised HiTrans Strategy document would indicate the likely timescale of by-passing communities. This would inform decisions to be made by Council on how the issue should be addressed within the Proposed Plan.

Referring to the ongoing development at Drummuie, Mr Ross indicated his wish for the 30mph limit to be extended further west.

Access issues in relation to Site 10, Ben Bhraggie Drive require to be clarified.

Site 9, Drummuie (South), has the potential to be partly developed as an amenity area, making a contribution to nature conservation, and this should be flagged up in the Plan.

The Station Yard has evolved into a site for housing and this should be reflected in the Local Plan. The potential of Site 9, Drummuie South, to accommodate industrial uses sought to address the loss of this area as well as a general shortfall.

Helmsdale

Mrs R Finlayson commented as follows;

Referring to Site 2, west of the Primary School, she expressed concern at any proposal to gain access through the School, acknowledging that any other access would be difficult to achieve. The Area Roads & Community Works Manager confirmed that an access off Golf Road could not be realistically achieved.

The Principal Planner reported on the need for discussions with the Education, Culture & Sport Service with a view to an access separated from the school being developed, thereby allowing the site to be retained within the Plan.

Account should be taken of the fact that part of Site 1, north of Rockview Place has been allocated for a new fire station. Additionally the adjacent croft land is not used and therefore should be developed for housing.

Edderton

Mr D Allan commented as follows;

Mr D Allan stated that while welcoming the proposed housing development at Site 1, west of Station Road, he was not content with the roads design for the development. This forms part of the consideration of the current planning application.

Rogart

Mr I Ross commented as follows;

As a general point of information, he indicated that the name 'Rogart' referred to the parish and 'Pittentrail' to the main village. Referring to Site 1, Mart and adjoining land, he cautioned in relation to the allocation of mixed use rather than housing, his concern being that this should not result in development which is unsuitable for the village.

The Area Manager suggested that if the main problem with the site relates to decontamination issues, its allocation for mixed use may not improve the likelihood of

its development. The Graduate Planner confirmed decontamination is an issue and this is the reason the allocation had been changed to mixed use, in order to widen development options for the site. The Principal Planner explained that the constraints affecting the site will be highlighted within the text of the Plan.

Concern existed over the agricultural status of Site 2, opposite the Pittentrail Garage.

Mr Ross welcomed housing development along Macdonald Place, stating that development in this area will be crucial to meeting housing demand in the area and that there should be efforts to achieve greater connectivity between the two parts of the village.

Lochinver

Mr F Keith commented in respect of Lochinver and the other villages within his Ward as follows;

The road at the Glencanisp site is substandard, and planning gain should be sought from the Assynt Foundation to improve the road.

Stoer & Drumbeg

There is a need to identify other land suitable for development around Stoer.

Scourie

Site 3 represented the logical place to extend the village, however the landowner will not release the land. There are also active crofting interests in the area.

Achfary

No comments.

Kinlochbervie

Mr F Keith expressed his reservations in respect of Site 2, on the basis of the impact housing development will have on the existing residents at Innes Place

The old pier is located to the west of Site 5, and therefore the opportunity exists for an upmarket harbour development in this area.

Durness

Mr F Keith expressed his reservation in relation to Site 1, adjacent to the shop, advising that technical difficulties with the ground conditions, and visibility had been encountered when the site was being considered as a potential location for the new village hall.

Mr F Keith also expressed some concern about option 3 West of School Road being dropped. It had been excluded in light of the crofter's commission's objection because it had been previously apportioned from the common grazings for a specific crofting use. Mr F Keith pointed out that this had been some ten years previous.

Laid

No comments.

Strathy

The Graduate Planner provided an update on Site 4, Steven Terrace, advising that since the preparation of the report, the landowner had confirmed the site is unavailable, and therefore that it will be removed from the Plan.

Mr A Mackay proceeded to comments on the other villages within his Ward as follows;

Armadale

No comments.

Melness

The Social Work Service had identified a site for the new unit to replace Caladh Sona, and he expressed his extreme concern that this needs to be identified and allocated as such in the Plan.

The existing settlement boundary is too restrictive and should be extended to provide more flexibility within the Plan. The Planner responded that the proposed general policies applying to development in the wider countryside will provide some flexibility and scope for appropriate development, as mentioned in paragraph A5.27 of the report but which is a general point applying to the wider area.

Melvich

The existing settlement boundary is too restrictive and should be extended.

Bettyhill

Concern existed locally that the smaller communities had not been included in the Plan e.g. Clachan. The Senior Planner reported that these communities will be included in the section of the Plan relating to Small Rural Settlements, and confirmed that this would form part of consultation on the Proposed Plan.

The lack of parking at Farr High and Primary Schools was highlighted. Mr A Mackay reported that a site for parking had been identified by the Education, Culture & Sport Service but no further progress made.

He advised that the opportunity existed to renovate 4 houses at Newlands, but that planning consent would be difficult to obtain due to problems that exist with the junction. The Area Roads & Community Works Manager confirmed that the junction is substandard and that an initial assessment of the works required is being carried out.

The Planner advised that an area could perhaps be included at Newlands for development, subject to an improvement being delivered for the road junction. The Area Roads & Community Works Manager advised that delivering that through developer contributions is unlikely due to small scale and piecemeal development- it is more likely that it would have to be looked at and considered as a capital scheme.

It was agreed that the possibility of identifying an area for development at Newlands be investigated further.

Tongue

Proposals for allocation of Site 2 to the west of the Manse need to maintain the possibility of accommodating a new village hall on the site.

Responding to the points raised by Mrs Magee in respect of her Ward at the meeting of the Committee on 19 March 2007, the Principal Planner;

Accepted the view that Ardgay and Lower Gledfield should be developed as one community which will guide development consideration in the longer term.

Recommended that Site 1, south of Oakwood Place, Ardgay be retained in the Plan meantime on the basis that site will be closely monitored and potentially removed from a future Plan if development does not proceed. Members were informed that removal of the site from the Plan would result in insufficient available sites in Ardgay.

Following discussion the Committee **AGREED** to retain Site 1, south of Oakwood Place, Ardgay, in the new Plan, on the basis that progress with development of the site will be closely monitored.

Accepted that the construction of the new Migdale Hospital, could impact on potential housing allocations within Bonar Bridge, but that the recommended allocation of Sites 1 and 3, and if necessary Site 2, as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report, for housing development will give sufficient flexibility to meet housing demand.

Confirmed that the potential expansion of the South Bonar Industrial Estate will be explored within the period of the new Local Plan.

Confirmed that housing development within Lairg will not be restricted to one part of the village, with proposals for development closer to Ord Place as set out in the report.

Confirmed the recommendation in respect of Sites 1 and 3 in Lairg, indicating that these will be longer term developments and therefore there will be no rapid loss of agricultural land.

The Committee **AGREED** to (i) note the representations received in response to Sutherland Futures as detailed in the report, (ii) approve the contents of Appendices 2, 3 and 4 and recommended settlements and sites in Appendix 5, and use those as a material consideration for development management purposes in the Sutherland area, subject to Members comments and amendments as detailed in the Minute of Committee of 19 March 2007 and above, (iii) note the process and timetable for the production of the Draft Local Plan for Deposit, and (iv) recommends that the new Council, following the elections in May 2007, adopts the Committee's decisions on the report.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

26 SEPTEMBER 2007

Agenda Item	
Report No	

SUTHERLAND LOCAL PLAN

Report by the Director of Planning & Development

SUMMARY

This report refers Committee to a draft of the Sutherland Local Plan following on from consideration of representations to an earlier 'issues and options' consultation paper by the then Sutherland Area Committee on 19th March 2007 and 2nd April 2007. The Sutherland Area Committee agreed to recommend to the new Council that the Council adopts its decisions on that report and those decisions have been the basis of further work by officers on the Plan since then. In accordance with the minutes of the Planning, Environment & Development Committee meeting of 15 August 2007, officers have since discussed the emerging Plan with a joint business meeting of Wards 1 and 5 held on 3 September 2007 and points arising have been taken into consideration in finalising this report. This paper therefore seeks Committee approval of the Draft Plan as the Proposed Plan which the Council wishes to adopt and authorisation to publish it for 'deposit' purposes. Committee is also asked to agree that the Proposed Plan be a material consideration for development management purposes in the Sutherland area with immediate effect. Progression of the new Sutherland Local Plan is a step towards the new generation of Plans which are to be prepared within the Administration's Programme, contributing in particular to a planned culture of enterprise and growth and it also contributes to sustainable communities by allowing for provision of homes including affordable homes through its strategy for growth.

1.

Introduction

1.1 Progression of this Local Plan is assisting in moving towards a new generation of

Plans by, for example, streamlining the development plan through the development of a set of 'general policies' which, in the interests of consistency and to help 'carry weight', are largely the same as those proposed for the other emerging Local Plan (the combined Local Plan for Lochaber and Skye & Lochalsh) with differences in policy only where necessary.

- 1.2 It is important to progress the Plan swiftly now through statutory stages, given the need for an up-to-date planning policy framework to deliver growth of communities in a planned way. There has been extensive community engagement undertaken on the Local Plan and the public and other interested parties are expecting this new Local Plan. Finally there is a need to free up resources during next year for other development plan work, especially the Highland Local Development Plan, as indicated in a separate report to this meeting on that matter.

2. Background

- 2.1 Preparation of a new Local Plan for Sutherland started in 2005. The new Plan will replace four existing Plans in their entirety, some of which are very old. For clarity, on the basis of the Plan Area comprising the whole of the 'new' Wards 1 and 5 then there will also be some small parts of other Plans (Wester Ross Local Plan, Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan, Caithness Local Plan) which will be replaced upon adoption of the new Sutherland Local Plan. Generally these are remote areas with very limited pressure or scope for development. The notable exception to that is the village of Edderton.
- 2.2 We published the "Sutherland Futures" issues and options paper for consultation in Autumn 2006 and representations received were considered by the then Sutherland Area Committee at its meetings on 19 March and 2 April 2007. Further work on the Local Plan since then has been guided by the decisions of that Committee, further technical consultations, further targeted community engagement, briefings with Ward Members since the elections and most recently the Joint Wards Working Group meeting of 3 September 2007.
- 2.3 The Joint Wards Working Group (established by this Committee at its meeting on 15 August 2007) considered a draft of the Local Plan Written Statement-comprising the Introduction and Context, Plan Objectives, General Policies, Key Forecasts, Strategy and Vision together with a list of settlements for which 'settlement development areas' were being prepared and a list of proposed allocations with intended use indicated. The Joint Wards Business Meeting discussed the draft and, subject to a number of points which have since been taken on board by officers, recommends the draft to the Planning, Environment and Development Committee for inclusion in the Proposed Plan for publication.
- 2.4 If there are any further matters that arise by way of further suggested changes or points of clarification for the Local Plan prior to the meeting of Committee, these will be reported in presentation to Committee.
- 2.5 The recommended Written Statement element of the Plan is appended to the

report. The associated Proposals Mapping, which also form part of the Plan is available in the Members' Library. When published for consultation, the whole Proposed Plan will be accessible on the Council's website.

3. The Emerging Local Plan

3.1 The emerging Local Plan's main thrust is to provide for the sustainable growth of Sutherland's communities and key aspects include the following:

- Meeting the development needs of communities- homes, jobs, infrastructure- whilst protecting valuable assets;
- Helping deliver the Community Plan for Sutherland and, in particular, addressing demographic issues through growth opportunities.

3.2 The Draft Plan includes land provisions sufficient to meet housing development in accordance with the Plan's strategy for at least a ten year period whilst also providing a choice of sites. Whilst major sites are allocated, there will also be some small-scale development on non-allocated sites. The housing provisions of the Plan are balanced with a range of potential for development of workplaces, in terms of allocated sites and other locations. In preparing the Plan, regard has been had to the capacity of services and regard has been had to important environmental assets requiring safeguarding. Policies in the Draft Plan (especially those on sustainability, developer contributions, the natural, built and cultural heritage and those concerning development in the countryside) are key to addressing such issues in respect of individual planning applications. The delivery of affordable housing in Sutherland is a fundamental part of the Plan.

3.3 Main changes that have been made within the general policies section since reporting to Area Committee in March, including responding to specific matters raised by the Working Group, include:

- The commitment to sustainable development principles and good design has been firmed up;
- The policy on flood risk has been given greater clarity in terms of its meaning and the Council's approach to dealing with the issue in respect of planning proposals;
- The policy framework for the consideration of proposals in the countryside, including in/around rural settlement not defined by settlement development areas, has been worked up to provide for a consideration of the merits of the proposal and balancing of the other relevant planning issues in each case;
- Within that, the local importance of croft land and of landscape value have been more clearly acknowledged as considerations;
- The housing in the countryside policy has been amended to reflect better the existing Development Planning Policy Guideline on the subject and the boundary of the 'hinterland of Tain' has been refined for the purposes of the policy;
- The affordable housing policy has been amended to better reflect the Development Planning Policy Guideline on the subject as currently under review and, in landward areas, to apply the threshold to the cumulative total of development on land in the same ownership (advice on the implementation of this should be included in the DPPG);

- Explanation of the policy on developer contributions has been clarified, in terms of the Council's current position on this and to give a better idea of what will be expected;
- The retail policy has been expanded and retitled 'Commerce', now covering retail, office and leisure development and also better reflecting SPP8 "Town Centres and Retailing", with a recommended hierarchy of centres, such centres being promoted and strengthened through the policy.

3.4 The following matters are also highlighted:

- Potential A9 bypasses of Golspie and Brora. These are referred to in the Strategy and in the Vision. The recommended approach is that in the absence of agreed, programmed routes at this stage, the Plan is unable to identify and safeguard routes, but the Plan can contain the text suggested which is factual in its reference to potential future schemes.
- Potential Dornoch Firth Rail Link. This is referred to in the Vision. The recommended approach is that in the absence of an agreed, programmed route at this stage and in the absence of support and commitment to a project by the rail industry, the Plan is unable to identify and safeguard a route, but the Plan can contain the text suggested. We understand that further work is being undertaken on behalf of campaigners for the link, assessing the 'draft route' that they have suggested. Any detailed proposal for such a rail link would need to be examined carefully in terms of its costs and benefits and there is a dimension which extends beyond Sutherland. The Highland Structure Plan contains Policy TC13 "Tain – Golspie rail link" which acknowledges the future possibility of such a link. The Council will be able to review that policy when preparing the forthcoming Highland Local Development Plan.
- Monitoring and review of the Local Plan. The importance of monitoring the effectiveness of the Plan's strategy, policies and proposals and if necessary undertaking a review of them, is now highlighted in the Strategy section.

4. Strategic Environmental Assessment

4.1 In parallel with and integral to the preparation of the Draft Local Plan has been Strategic Environmental Assessment. Specifically this has included:

- Analysis of other plans and strategies
- Establishment of baseline data
- Assessment of policies against SEA objectives
- Assessment of site options against SEA objectives
- Preparation of the Environmental Report.

4.2 SEA has informed the preparation and contents of the Plan now recommended for consideration by Committee, for example in terms of the sites allocated and, where necessary, any mitigation specified as 'developer requirements'.

4.3 There are requirements for consultation in relation to the SEA and this will be undertaken as a distinct part of the overall arrangements for consultation in

relation to the Local Plan.

4.4 We have also identified a need for an Appropriate Assessment to look at the potential impact of certain proposals on the international tier of sites of importance for wildlife interests. This will be progressed in parallel with SEA. The need to satisfy the requirement relating to Appropriate Assessment arises from the European Court of Justice ruling that the UK is not compliant with the Habitats Directive because the transposition of the Directive to the UK Habitats Regulations does not specifically require land use plans to be considered under Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the Directive. Local Plans can not therefore be approved (adopted) by planning authorities unless:

- There has been a determination by the planning authority based on objective information that the provisions of the plan are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site; or
- An appropriate assessment has been carried out in respect of the provisions of the plan in line with the requirements of Article 6.3 and 6.4 of the Habitats Directive.

4.5 Additionally, the public sector duties on race, disability and gender require that equality considerations are integrated into all the functions and policies of the Council. A key part of the new public sector duties is the requirement to impact assess all of our policies to ensure that we do not inadvertently create a negative impact for equality groups. Under these Equalities Assessment requirements we have been scoping our Plan. We have made a number of observations from this about our policies but we consider that it will not be necessary to undertake an in-depth equalities assessment of any part.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Once agreed by Committee officers will complete preparation and printing of the Local Plan documentation and the making of the arrangements for 'deposit'. The minimum period normally provided for representation at this stage of plan preparation is 6 weeks. However, it is suggested that Members may wish to authorise a lengthened period of up to 12 weeks for this stage, as set out in the indicative timetable below and reflected in the recommendation. This could provide opportunity to aim for a close fit with consultation on the Core Path Plan for Sutherland, which is subject of a separate report to this meeting. A further report to Committee, dealing with the draft Development Plan Scheme, comments on issues concerning the future undertaking of community engagement on our development plans.

5.2 There is opportunity for the Joint Wards Working Group to inform further work on the Local Plan, specifically once representations are known and in advance of a full report on matters raised for consideration by this Committee.

5.3 In view of the need to achieve an adopted Plan swiftly, we are expediting matters by flagging to The Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals the

potential timescale for the start of an inquiry so that they can consider programming Reporter resources.

- 5.4 The following timetable is provisional, particularly given that we do not yet know how many representations, especially objections, will be received or the range of topics they will cover.

September 2007	Committee Approval of Proposed Plan/Report to Wards Forum	Including arrangement for publicity and community engagement
October 2007-February 2008	Publication of Proposed Plan accompanied by Report of Publicity and Environmental Report (Strategic Environmental Assessment)	Invitation for objections and representations. Ward-based consultation
April 2008	Report to Working Group on Representations	
May 2008	Report to Planning, Environment and Development Committee on any pre-Inquiry changes to the Plan	
Autumn 2008	Public Local Inquiry/Hearing	Subject to unresolved objections
	Post-Inquiry Modifications	
Winter 2008	Adoption of the Local Plan	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee agrees:

- (i) the Deposit Draft Sutherland Local Plan
- (ii) the publication of the Deposit Plan together with the opportunity for objections over a 12 week period.
- (iii) arrangements for local Public Meetings and Exhibitions as necessary

- | | |
|------|--|
| (iv) | completion of the statutory procedures towards adoption of the Plan |
| (v) | that the Proposed Plan be a material consideration for development management purposes in the Sutherland area with immediate effect. |

Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning & Development

Date: 19 September 2007

Author: David Cowie (Tel: 2827)

Ref: DC/SLP

Background Papers: "Sutherland Futures" issues and options consultation paper (October 2006).

Appendices: Draft Sutherland Local Plan- Written Statement

Committee Minutes – September 26 2007

13. Sutherland Local Plan

There had been circulated Report No. [Ped-23-07](#) dated 19 September 2007 by the Director of Planning and Development referring the Committee to a draft of the Sutherland Local Plan, following on from consideration of representations to an earlier “issues and options” consultation paper by the then Sutherland Area Committee on 19 March 2007 and 2 April 2007. A copy of the proposed Plan was also circulated.

The former Sutherland Area Committee had agreed to recommend that this Council adopt its decisions on that earlier report, and those decisions had been the basis of further work by officers on the Plan since then. In accordance with the minutes of the Planning, Environment and Development Committee meeting of 15 August 2007, officers had since discussed the emerging Plan with a joint business meeting of Wards 1 and 5 held on 3 September 2007 and points arising had been taken into consideration in finalising the circulated report. The paper therefore sought Committee approval of the Draft Plan as the Proposed Plan which the Council wished to adopt and authorisation to publish it for “deposit” purposes. Members were also asked to agree that the Proposed Plan be a material consideration for development management purposes in the Sutherland area with immediate effect. Progression of the new Sutherland Local Plan was a step towards the new generation of Plans that were to be prepared within the Administration’s Programme, contributing in particular to a planned culture of enterprise and growth, and also to sustainable communities, by allowing for provision of homes including affordable homes through its strategy for growth.

The Committee was apprised of a number of issues facing Sutherland, including a decreasing population and workforce, an ageing population, increased housing costs and the negative impact on communities where holiday homes were only used for perhaps two weeks per year, and a lack of affordable housing and rented accommodation.

In response to further points raised, Members were advised that (i) the housing capacity figures set out in Local Plans were indicative only and each application would be judged on its own merits, (ii) a report on the provision of fuel in rural Highland locations was being prepared for submission to Council, (iii) a new allocation of industrial land had been identified at Golspie, and (iv) the potential creation of a Regional Woodland Park for Golspie and East Sutherland was given reference in the Draft Plan and could be investigated and the reference updated in future drafts of the Plan. In response to requests that the Housing in the Countryside Policy be revisited with particular reference to the Hinterland of Towns outwith the Inner Moray Firth catchment area, Members were advised that, whilst Hinterland areas in the Sutherland Local Plan had been refined, the Highland-wide Local Plan would be the arena for revision of the Hinterland Policy itself.

The Committee **AGREED**:

- i.** the Deposit Draft Sutherland Local Plan;
- ii.** the publication of the Deposit Plan together with the opportunity for objections over a 12 week period;
- iii.** arrangements for local Public Meetings and Exhibitions as necessary;
- iv.** completion of statutory procedures towards adoption of the Plan; and
- v.** that the Proposed Plan be a material consideration for development management purposes in the Sutherland area with immediate effect.

Section 3 Note of consultation list

There are currently 2320 contacts on the database for Sutherland Deposit Draft plan. The list is made up of people and organisations who have been involved from the beginning of the plan process, and those who have become aware of the plan as it has been publicised. It also consists of people and organisations whose land is adjacent to allocated sites (neighbour notifications).

The list can be broken down into the following groups:

- 16 Highland Councillors
- 17 Community Councils
- 22 Organisations
- 16 Members of Parliament (including Scottish and European)
- 71 Grazings Committees

The above will be sent a copy of the deposit plan.

- 20 Highland Councillors
- 108 organisations
- 661 persons who have responded previously

These will be informed that the plan is on deposit.

- 1287 Neighbour notifications
- 102 landowners of allocated sites

These will also be formally notified that the plan is on deposit.

