

Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Small Village
2005 Estimated Population	161
Housing Completions 2000-2007	2
Primary School (Melvich)/Secondary School Capacity	47% / 55%
Water Capacity	Capacity
Sewerage Capacity	Unknown Capacity is currently under assessment

Prospects

Melvich and Portskerra sit at the mouth of the River Halladale with local services and amenities shared between the two communities. The septic tank which serves both Portskerra and Melvich is possibly nearing capacity. When there is no capacity left and Scottish Water has no programmed investment for increasing the sewerage capacity there will still be opportunities for infill development. However this must respect the existing dispersed pattern of development; the use of individual septic tanks will only be acceptable where the proposal is not likely to result in or add to significant environmental or health problems.

There are significant opportunities within the SDA on the lower road. However it is important that these opportunities are taken forward in an appropriate manner. In order to retain the sense of character when viewed from a distance and achieve a consistency when viewed from the street single plot development needs to come forward with a degree of coherence.

The consistency should be achieved by reference to traditional Highland forms, proportions, materials and massing (1, 1½, 1¾ storey and 40°- 45° roof pitch). With larger floor areas its shape should be broken down into at least two distinct elements, akin the 'extended croft house' and perhaps utilise different materials.

The settlement development area has been drawn to reflect the settlement pattern in the village and promote appropriate siting of housing in Portskerra. Also the traditional relationship between the house and its land is maintained to help protect the lands agricultural use.

Development Factors

- Low downward emission design street lights;
- Care should be taken to avoid skylining development;
- Development proposals will have regard to the proximity of the North Caithness Cliffs SPA and the Strathy Coast SSSI;
- Any developments served by private waste water system (in compliance with General Policy 7) will require to drain to land to safeguard water bodies.

