

Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Main Centre
2005 Estimated Population	1117
Housing Completions 2000-2007	28
Primary School Capacity/Secondary School Capacity (Roll/Physical Capacity)	73% / 84%
Water Capacity	Limited Capacity
Sewerage Capacity	Capacity

The settlement of Dornoch is a Royal Burgh whose history stretches back to the sixth century. Dornoch is sited at the edge of the Dornoch Firth with a south facing aspect and excellent views to the south. The settlement also enjoys a favourable micro-climate having one of the lowest rainfalls in Scotland.

The settlement functions as a service centre, this providing many of the local jobs, tourism is also a major source of income for the area with visitors being attracted by the history of the settlement, the quality of the local environment and the Royal Dornoch golf course.

Dornoch has showed strong population growth in recent years and this is reflected in pressures on the housing market. This has made for a more difficult environment for first time buyers in the area and there is a need for variety in the market to cater for all sectors of the housing market.

Facilities for visitors can be found at the links area to the south of the settlement where the caravan park is situated. This area provides an essential part of the setting of the settlement and also has great value as a tourist and recreational resource. However increasing pressure on the sand dunes from use by residents and visitors and potential for disturbance to wintering or breeding birds means there is a need to assess any effect arising from new development due to European protection.

Prospects

Development on larger land allocations has been slow since 2000, but recent proposals have moved forward and contribute to the planned development of the settlement. Developments at Meadows Park Road and Sutherland Road will offer choice and variety to the local housing market and contribute to meeting the need for affordable housing provision.

A significant area for development is planned for Dornoch North, which will serve the expansion needs of the community. The development of this new neighbourhood will be led by the development of a masterplan which will guide the integration and phasing of development of the overall site. The developer will undertake consultation with the community to seek views on the provisions of the masterplan. The masterplan will guide the fit with the existing urban structure, pedestrian and physical connections with the core of the settlement, the provision of facilities and infrastructure, landscaping and open space and phasing, underpinned by traffic, drainage, environmental and water and waste water network assessments as necessary.

The Dornoch Business Park is likely to become fully developed over the next few years as local businesses relocate to the site. There is limited potential for infill of small business units at the Station Square Industrial Estate. There is a need to identify a possible new site for longer term development of business and industrial development. Opportunities for longer term larger scale provisions are likely to lie outwith the settlement and the Council will continue to investigate suitable locations.

The educational role of Dornoch is well defined with primary and secondary education and also the North Highland College. The College continues to offer a growing number of courses that reflect the distinctive needs and strengths of the area.

The development of a leisure facility for Dornoch is a long held aspiration of the community; the delivery of a sports hall at the Academy is being progressed.

Waste water treatment is the subject of European Directives in terms of outfall quality and level of treatment; the plant itself has significant capacity. Water supply limitations are being addressed within Scottish Water's current development programme.

Development Factors

- Need to integrate and phase larger scale development;
- The high quality of Dornoch's historic core;
- Coastal location adjacent to the Moray Firth SAC;
- Capacity of waste water network;
- Development proposals will have regard to the proximity of the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, Dornoch Firth and Morrich More Special Area of Conservation, the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area, the Tree Preservation Order at Station Wood and Earls Cross and the Dornoch Cathedral and grave yard A-listed building and Scheduled Monument;
- Any developments served by private waste water system (in compliance with General Policy 7) will require to drain to land to safeguard water bodies and the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA and Ramsar site, the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC and the Moray Firth SAC;
- Where appropriate, new development proposals on sites allocated for development in Dornoch shall be accompanied by a recreational management plan which examines any likely increased pressures from recreational access of the sand dunes or disturbance to wintering or breeding birds, arising from the development due to European protection. Appropriate assessment will require to be undertaken if Natura site interests are likely to be significantly affected. Where necessary, avoidance or mitigation measures should be provided. The Council will liaise with SNH and key local interests to co-ordinate submitted management plans and assess cumulative effects. The procedure will be subject to monitoring under the Action Programme;
- Insofar as otters are a qualifying feature of the adjacent SAC, a survey indicating whether or not otters are present should accompany any planning application, other than for the modest extension or alteration of an existing building, within 250m of a watercourse, coast, loch or pond.

Site Allocations

Site Ref.	Site Area	Location	Housing Capacity	Developer Requirements
H 1	3.6 ha	Bishopsfield	50 units	Delivery of primarily affordable housing, footpath network links to town centre, mix of housing types. Preparation of a masterplan indicating form and location of houses, traffic management arrangements and provision of amenity land and landscaping. Connection to public sewer required.
H 2	1.8 ha	Earl's Cross	9 Units	Plotted development, utilising existing access, footpath network links to town centre. Need for sensitive siting and design; incorporation of landscaping and planting to enhance landscape setting. Connection to public sewer required.
H 3	1.8 ha	Sutherland Road	33 units	Road widening and access improvements, provision of footpaths at road and through site to Evelix Road, landscaping and planting to all boundaries particularly on approaches to Dornoch. Address scheme of archaeological work. Requirement to retain and integrate watercourses as natural features within the development. Flood risk assessment will be required; built development to avoid flood risk area. Connection to public sewer required.
H 4	4.2 ha	Meadows Park Road	102 units	Access improvements and footpath provision to Sutherland Road. Phased approach to development, equipped play area, landscaping and planting, appropriate disposal of surface water drainage. Requirement to retain and integrate watercourses as natural features within the development. Archaeological investigations. Flood risk assessment will be required; built development to avoid flood risk area. Connection to public sewer required.
MU 1 (H/B/C)	19.5 ha	Dornoch North	250 units	Site allocated for primarily housing use with associated business and commercial uses. Delivery of housing through plan period and beyond. Community consultation on progression of proposals for the site through the development of a masterplan. Proposals to be accompanied by information on issues such as access provision associated road and infrastructure improvements, footpath network links to town centre, landscaping and planting. Design should reflect the urban core of Dornoch with embedded design code. Archaeological investigation, flood risk assessment and green space. Flood risk assessment will be required, built development to avoid flood risk area. Requirement to retain and integrate watercourses as natural features within the development. Connection to public sewer required.

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

Site Allocations (continued)

Site Ref.	Site Area	Location	Housing Capacity	Developer Requirements
B 1	1.9 ha	Dornoch Business Park	-	Suitable for business and light industrial uses. Potential expansion to east subject to suitable access footpath links to town centre, etc. Need for sensitive siting and design. Connection to public sewer required.
C 1	4.2 ha	Meadows Park	-	Site maintained for community and associated uses. Potential for development of community centre subject to suitable access, landscaping, siting and design. Local consultation on these matters will be undertaken prior to the submission of a detailed planning application. Connection to public sewer required.

