

Appropriate Assessment of the Deposit Draft Sutherland Local Plan

Examination Draft (June 2009)



Foreword

This document has been prepared under the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and has applied the requirements set out by Scottish Government Policy.

It is the Highland Council's responsibility to consider whether the policies and proposals within the Local Plan are likely to have any significant effect on Special Protection Areas (including potential SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites, having regard to the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of those sites.

Where a likely significant effect has been identified, appropriate assessment has been undertaken on the site and mitigation measures provided to reduce the likely significant effect and avoid adversely affecting the integrity of the site. This has involved making changes to the Local Plan where necessary.

During the preparation of this document and the consideration of relevant representations on the Local Plan the Highland Council has had discussions with and input from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in particular which have helped identify and address any potential shortcomings. In addition, data provided by SNH have been referred to in order to identify the need for and inform the definition of mitigation measures. Mitigation measures and relevant changes have been developed in conjunction with SNH or SEPA where appropriate.

This document acknowledges the relevant changes that have previously been made to the emerging policies and proposals of the Plan, which have improved the safeguarding of protected habitats and species.

At present the Sutherland Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2008) went to the Councils Planning, Environment and Development Committee for consideration on 18th March 2009. Plan changes were commended to the reporter and depending on the outcome may result in a requirement for the Highland Council to re-visit the appropriate assessment process.

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Appropriate Assessment Deposit Draft Sutherland Local Plan

1. Introduction and Context

In October 2005 the European Court of Justice* ruled that all Development Plans in the United Kingdom likely to have a significant effect on European sites (Natura sites), either Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), can only be approved after an appropriate assessment of the policies and proposals has been undertaken, under the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 1992**. The Directive states that 'any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessments of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives'. The directive goes on to say that the plan shall only be agreed if there is no adverse impact after mitigation is considered.

Scottish Ministers have extended the requirement for assessment to Ramsar sites, listed under the International Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands of International Importance, and potential SPAs, before they are fully classified. Hereafter in this assessment, the term 'Natura site' should be taken as not only referring to SPAs and SACs but also to potential SPAs and Ramsar sites for the purposes of this assessment.

The purpose of this appropriate assessment is to consider the likely impacts of the policies and proposals within the Sutherland Local Plan against the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the Natura sites, and to ascertain whether the Plan would adversely impact on the integrity of these sites. Where it is not possible to ascertain that no adverse impacts will occur, further examination will be required to avoid detrimental impact on the site. Where it is decided that potential negative effects on the site are unavoidable, mitigation measures will be assessed and recommendations made.

The assessment concludes that with appropriate safeguarding and mitigation the Sutherland Local Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura site.

It must be advised that this appropriate assessment has been compiled using the best available information and any subsequent planning applications will require further assessment to ensure Natura sites will not be significantly impacted on.

* Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Case C. 6/04 in the second chamber of the European Court of Justice, judgment 20th October 2005

** Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora.

2. Aim and Objectives of the Sutherland Local Plan

The Highland Structure Plan constitutes the Council's strategic land use planning framework and incorporates the overall strategic objectives and policies applicable to the Sutherland area. This together with the Local Plan comprises the statutory development plan. The Local Plan provides detail and site specific proposals within the overall strategic framework provided by the Structure Plan.

The Local Plan comprises a written statement and a proposals map (with insets) which both need to be consulted when deciding development proposals.

This appropriate assessment is necessarily limited in its scope to the policies and proposals set out in the Local Plan. Where a planning application for development gives rise to potential effects on a Natura site beyond the scope of that considered in this appropriate assessment, an appropriate assessment will be required to be undertaken as set out in policy 4 of the Local Plan. This could include development proposals on sites allocated in the Local Plan (giving rise to potential effects that were not foreseen in this appropriate assessment) and development proposals on sites not allocated in the Local Plan (giving rise to potential effects beyond those considered for the policy framework in this appropriate assessment).

The over-arching aim of the Local Plan is for Sutherland to grow its population, compete in the global economy and sustain the highest standard of services while maintaining and enhancing the outstanding quality of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area. This aim includes amendments to the version that appeared in the earlier draft of the Local Plan to refer specifically to the heritage (including Natural heritage) of the area which has the effect of safeguarding the heritage interests, including Natura sites.

The strategic themes of the Structure Plan are:

- Conserving and promoting the Highland identity.
- Adopting a proactive approach to the wise use of the natural environment.
- Taking an integrated approach to improving accessibility to goods, services and markets.
- Consolidating the settlement hierarchy.
- Creating an improved business environment.
- Addressing the need for quality living environments.
- Working in partnership with the community and other agencies.

Within these strategic themes are nested the 24 objectives of the Local Plan, which have been subject of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as described within the Revised Environmental Report. The objectives as previously set out in the Pre-Deposit Draft have been strengthened in their reference to natural heritage assets.

3. List of Natura sites within or close to the Sutherland Local Plan Area

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Abhainn Clais an Eas and Alt a' Mhuilinn	Inverpolly
Altnaharra	Ledmore Wood
Amat Woods	Loch Laxford
Ardvar & Loch a' Mhuilinn Woodlands	Moray Firth
Beinn Dearg	Mound Alderwoods
Berriedale and Langwell Waters	Oldshoremore and Sandwood
Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands	River Borgie
Cape Wrath	River Evelix
Dornoch Firth and Morrich Moor	River Naver
Durness	River Oykel
Foinaven	Rhidorroch Woods
Inchnadamph	Strathy Point
Invernaver	

Ramsar Sites

Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Assynt Lochs	Inverpolly, Loch Urigill and nearby Lochs
Beinn Dearg	Lairg and Strathbrora Lochs
Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands	Morangie Forest
Cape Wrath	North Caithness Cliffs
Carnaig and Strath Fleet Lochs	North Sutherland Coastal Islands
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet	Strath
Handa Island	

Potential Special Protection Areas (pSPA)

(None)

4. Methodology for Assessment

After consulting the Interim Guidance - Assessing Development Plans in Terms of the Need for Appropriate Assessment¹ - provided by the Scottish Government the following methodology was established.

Highland Council will work closely with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to carry out this assessment, gaining background information regarding qualifying interests and conservation objectives of Natura sites required to conduct an effective appropriate assessment.

All Natura sites within or close to the Sutherland Local Plan area have been identified and mapped. The mapping is available within the Local Plan Map Booklet. All Local Plan policies have been screened both individually and cumulatively to determine the possible impacts that may arise due to their implementation. Policies which have been identified as having no impact or are unlikely to have a significant effect have been detailed and reasons for this have been given. Remaining policies likely to have a significant effect have been identified as requiring an appropriate assessment.

Likely significant effect is defined as any effect that may reasonably be predicted as a consequence of a plan or project that may affect the conservation objectives of the features for which the site was designated.

Proposals having no, or minimal, effects have been progressed without further assessment. Where it has been concluded that there is likely to be a significant effect then an appropriate assessment will be required to consider each proposal against the conservation objectives for the designated site and sensitivities of the relevant habitats/species.

¹ Link to Interim Guidance: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/02093425/17>

5. Proposed Policy Modifications

Policy modifications have been made to ensure policies within the Sutherland Local Plan can be effectively implemented without having a detrimental impact on the integrity of Natura sites in the area. Local Plan policies identified by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) have been changed as a direct result of SNHs concerns of potential adverse impact on Natura sites and have been detailed below in Table 1; the full Deposit Draft of the Sutherland Local Plan and all other responses in relation to the Local Plan can be found at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/sutherland-local-plan.htm>

Table 1. Policy Modifications

Policy	Reason for Change	Change to Plan (from Pre-Deposit Draft to Deposit Draft 2008)
<p>Policy - 4 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>To safeguard Natura sites and reflect the requirement for an appropriate assessment to be carried out where it is likely that proposed development will have a significant effect on the integrity of the site.</p>	<p>Replace existing policy with:</p> <p>Policy 4: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage</p> <p>When making decisions on development proposals we will take account of the level of importance, and the effect on natural, built and cultural heritage features. This will include where appropriate, not just the feature itself but the wider setting and impacts which must be taken into account. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Background Maps and the policy frameworks identified in Appendix 1.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For features of local/regional importance we will allow developments if we believe they will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity and heritage resource. 2. For features of national importance we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the amenity and heritage resource. 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. For features of international importance (Natura 2000 (SPA, SAC) and Ramsar sites), developments likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a site, will be subject to an appropriate assessment. Where we are unable to conclude that a proposal will not adversely effect the integrity of a site, we will allow development, but only where there was no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social, environmental or economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive) would be

		<p>affected, prior consultation with the European Commission (via Scottish Ministers) is required unless the proposal is necessary for public health or safety reasons or will have beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment.</p>
<p>Policy 7 - Waste Water Management</p>	<p>To require connection to the public sewer in most cases and where private systems are used then to state preference that they should discharge to land rather than water, thereby protecting the integrity of Natura sites and reducing the risk of water contamination.</p>	<p>Replace existing policy with:</p> <p>Policy 7: Waste Water Management</p> <p>Connection to the public sewer as defined in the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968 is required for all new development proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either in settlements identified in the plan with a population equivalent of more than 2000 (SEPA can advise on this); or • Wherever single developments of 25 or more units are proposed <p>In all other cases a connection to the public sewer will be required, unless the applicant can demonstrate that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development is unable to connect to public sewer 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 the capacity; <p>And that the proposal is not likely to result in or add to significant environmental or health problems.</p> <p>The Council's preference is that any private system should discharge to land rather than water.</p> <p>Within or adjacent to the public sewer, where connection to the public sewer is not permitted because there is no capacity but Scottish Water has confirmed that investment to address this constraint has been specifically allocated within its investment programme, a temporary private system would only be supported if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system would be designed and built to a standard which will allow adoption by Scottish Water. <p>The system is designed such that it can be easily connected to a public sewer in the future. Typically this will mean providing a drainage line up to a likely point of connection. The developer must provide Scottish Water with the funds which will allow Scottish Water to complete the connection once the sewerage system has been upgraded.</p>

<p>Policy - 11 Protected Species</p>	<p>To safeguard European Protected Species and, where appropriate, ensure a survey is carried out to determine whether there are any protected species present on site.</p>	<p>Replace existing policy with:</p> <p>Policy 11: Protected Species</p> <p>Where there is good reason to believe that a protected species is present on site or may be affected by a proposed development, we will require a survey to be carried out to establish any such presence before determining the application.</p> <p>Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on European Protected Species (see Glossary) will only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no satisfactory alternative; and • Development is required for public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, and • Development will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. <p>Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on protected bird species (see Glossary) will only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no other satisfactory solution; and • Development is required in the interests of public health or public safety. <p>Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on other protected animals and plants (see Glossary) will only be permitted where the development is required for preserving public health or public safety.</p>
<p>Policy 12 - Other Important Species</p>	<p>To safeguard other important species that are not in all cases protected by other legislation or by designated nature conservation sites.</p>	<p>Replace existing policy with:</p> <p>Policy 12: Other Important Species</p> <p>Development proposals should avoid adverse effects on the following species if not protected by other legislation or by nature conservation site designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species listed in Annexes II and V of the EC Habitats Directive. • Priority species listed in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans. • Species of principal importance included on the Scottish Biodiversity List. • Badgers under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. <p>We will use conditions and agreements to ensure that harm to these species is avoided.</p>

<p>Policy 13 - Important Habitats</p>	<p>To safeguard important habitats and take particular care to avoid damage to habitats protected under the European Directives.</p>	<p>Replace existing policy with:</p> <p>Policy 13: Important Habitats</p> <p>We will seek to safeguard the integrity of features of the landscape which are of major importance because of their linear and continuous structure or combination as habitat “stepping stones” for the movement of wild fauna and flora. (Article 10 features).</p> <p>We will consider the value of the following Other Important Habitats, where not protected by nature conservation site designations, in the assessment of any development proposal which may affect them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitats listed in Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive. • Habitats of protected bird species (see Glossary). • Priority habitats listed in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans. • Habitats of principal importance included on the Scottish Biodiversity List. <p>We will use conditions and agreements to ensure that significant harm to the ecological function and integrity of Article 10 Features and Other Habitats is avoided. Where we judge that the reasons in favour of a development clearly outweigh the desirability of retaining those important habitats, we will seek satisfactory mitigation measures including compensatory habitat creation or enhancement of retained habitat and which, in the case of Article 10 Features, allows for continued movement of wild fauna and flora. The Council will also support, where appropriate, opportunities to create new habitat areas through development.</p>
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6. Screening Process

Table 2 shows at a glance all of the Local Plan policies that could potentially have an adverse impact on Natura sites after consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage. Where it has been identified that Local Plan policies are likely to impact on Natura sites, appropriate assessment will be undertaken. Policies identified as unlikely to impact on Natura sites will not require an appropriate assessment to be carried out. Table 3 and Table 4 lists settlements and Natura sites in a similar way and details whether or not an appropriate assessment will be required for the proposals within them. When screening the Local Plan policies and individual settlements the Council has also assessed the cumulative impacts that policies may have and whether there is a likely or unlikely significant effect on the integrity of the Natura site.

Cumulative Impact

During the preparation of this document the Highland Council has been mindful of potential for cumulative impact of the Plan's proposals. In particular the Council, along with SNH, has looked at where proposals are located and whether or not they are upstream of a watercourse which may result in the cumulative effects of multiple proposals on a watercourse or watercourses feeding into a larger area and although not having an impact individually, combined may have a significant effect on Natura sites.

After attending meetings with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) regarding the cumulative effects that policies and proposals, implemented through the Local Plan, may have on the Natura sites it was agreed that although we can acknowledge any likely effect it is not practical to meaningfully assess and to give an accurate account of the future impact at plan-making stage. Potential pollution levels will be dependent on specifics of the proposed developments not known until planning application stage.

Additionally it may be observed that although there are some local concentrations of development proposals in the Plan, based around settlement locations, Sutherland's settlements are relatively small as is the scale of growth planned and they are to an extent dispersed across a large geographic area involving more than one river catchment. This means that the potential for likely significant effects, including cumulative effects, on Natura sites is generally less than would be the case if a number of larger scale developments were closely concentrated near, or upstream, of a particular Natura site.

Relevant policy modifications (Section 5 of the report) responding to the concerns of SNH and SEPA have been made to the existing policy which have the effect of further safeguarding Natura sites from individual and cumulative effects of development. These policy modifications have been agreed by SNH or SEPA as relevant and we have concluded that the policies and proposals within the Sutherland Local Plan will have no likely significant cumulative impacts on Natura sites.

Table 2. Policies (Sutherland Deposit Draft November 2008)

Policy	Policy Title	Appropriate Assessment Required
1.	Settlement Development Area	No
2.	Land Allocations – Development Factors and Developer Requirements	No
3.	Wider Countryside	Yes
4.	Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	No
5.	Affordable Housing	No
6.	Designing for Sustainability	No
7.	Waste Water Treatment	Yes
8.	Waste Management	Yes
9.	Flood Risk	Yes
10.	Other Development Considerations: Physical Constraints	No
11.	Protected Species	No
12.	Other Important Species	No
13.	Important Habitats	No
14.	Surface Water Drainage	No
15.	Developer Contributions	No
16.	Housing in the Countryside	Yes
17.	Commerce	No
18.	Design Quality and Place-Making	No
19.	Travel	Yes

Table 3. Settlements

Settlement	Appropriate Assessment of Designations Required	Natura Site
Dornoch	Yes	Moray Firth (SAC).
Embo	Yes	Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet (SPA), Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet (RAMSAR), Moray Firth (SAC).
Evelix	Yes	River Evelix (SAC).
Golspie	Yes	Moray Firth (SAC).
Brora	Yes	Moray Firth (SAC).
Helmsdale	Yes	Moray Firth (SAC).
Edderton	Yes	Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet (SPA), Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet (RAMSAR), Moray Firth (SAC).
Pittentrail	Yes	Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Lochs (SPA).
Ardgay	Yes	Dornoch Firth and Morrich More (SAC).
Bonar Bridge	Yes	Dornoch Firth and Morrich More (SAC).
South Bonar Industrial Estate	Yes	Dornoch Firth and Morrich More (SAC).
Culrain	Yes	River Oykel (SAC).
Rosehall	Yes	River Oykel (SAC).
Invershin	Yes	River Oykel (SAC).
Lairg	Yes	Inverpolly, Loch Urigill (SPA).
Lochinver	No	Not in close proximity to Natura site.
Point of Stoer	Yes	Abhainn Clais and Mhuilinn (SAC).
Scourie	No	Not in close proximity to Natura site.
Kinlochbervie	No	Not in close proximity to Natura site.
Durness	Yes	Durness (SAC).
Tongue	No	Not in close proximity to Natura site.
Melness	No	Not in close proximity to Natura site.
Bettyhill	Yes	Invernaver (SAC)
Strathy	No	Not in close proximity to Natura site.
Portskerra	No	Not in close proximity to Natura site.
Melvich	No	Not in close proximity to Natura site.

Table 4. Natura Sites

Natura Site	SAC	Ramsar	SPA	Appropriate Assessment Required?	Pg No:
Abhainn Clais an Eas & Alt a'Mhuilinn	*			No	-
Altnaharra	*			No	-
Amat Woods	*			No	-
Ardvar & Loch a' Mhuilinn Woodlands	*			No	-
Beinn Dearg	*			No	-
Berriedale & Langwell Waters	*			No	-
Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands	*			No	-
Cape Wrath	*			No	-
Dornoch Firth & Morrich More	*			Yes	35
Durness	*			No	-
Foinaven	*			No	-
Inchnadamph	*			No	-
Invernaver	*			No	-
Inverpolly	*			No	-
Ledmore Wood	*			No	-
Loch Laxford	*			No	-
Moray Firth	*			Yes	46
Mound Alderwoods	*			No	-
Oldshoremore and Sandwood	*			No	-
Rhidorroch Woods	*			No	-
River Borgie	*			No	-
River Evelix	*			Yes	56
River Naver	*			No	-
River Oykel	*			Yes	58
Strathy Point	*			No	-
Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands		*		No	-
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet		*		Yes	27
Assynt Lochs			*	No	-
Beinn Dearg			*	No	-
Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands			*	No	-
Cape Wrath			*	No	-
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet			*	Yes	31
Handa Island			*	No	-
Inverpolly, Loch Urigill and Nearby Lochs			*	No	-
Lairg and Strathbrora Lochs			*	No	-
Morangie Forest			*	No	-
North Caithness Cliffs			*	No	-
North Sutherland Coastal Islands			*	No	-
Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors			*	No	-

7. Assessment of Likely Significant Effect on Natura Sites

Tables 5, 6 and 7 summarise and highlight which policies are likely or unlikely to have a significant effect on Natura sites. Reasoning has been provided by the Council why these decisions have been made and have been recorded in table 8. Where a policy has been highlighted as likely to have a significant effect on a Natura site, further detail and examination will be required against the conservation objectives of the site and the sensitivities of the habitat/species. As part of the assessment of these sites we have used the Sutherland Local Plan Revised Environmental Report (November 2008) to allow a more coherent analysis of the potential adverse impacts.

Table 5. Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Unlikely Significant Impact	
Likely Significant Impact	
Site Specific (Discussed Later in Text)	-

SAC	Policy																	
	1 Settlement Development Area	Development Factors and Developer Requirements	3 Wider Countryside	4 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	5 Affordable Housing Sustainability	7 Waste Water Treatment	8 Waste Management	9 Flood Risk	10 Other Development Considerations: Physical Constraints	11 Protected Species	Species	13 Important Habitats	14 Surface Water Drainage	15 Developer Contributions	Countryside	17 Commerce	18 Design Quality and Place-Making	19 Travel
Oldshoremore & Sandwood	-	-														-	-	
Cape Wrath	-	-														-	-	
Durness	-	-														-	-	
Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands	-	-														-	-	
Invernaver	-	-														-	-	
Strathy Point	-	-														-	-	
River Borgie	-	-														-	-	
Loch Laxford	-	-														-	-	
Foinaven	-	-														-	-	
River Naver	-	-														-	-	
Ardvar & Loch a'Mhuilinn Woodlands	-	-														-	-	
Altnaharra	-	-														-	-	
Abhainn Clais an Eas & Alt a' Mhuilinn	-	-														-	-	
Berriedale & Langwell Waters	-	-														-	-	
Inverpolly	-	-														-	-	
Inchnadamph	-	-														-	-	
River Oykel	-	-														-	-	
Mound Alderwoods	-	-														-	-	
River Evelix	-	-														-	-	
Rhidorroch Woods	-	-														-	-	
Amat Woods	-	-														-	-	
Ledmore Woods	-	-														-	-	
Moray Firth	-	-														-	-	
Beinn Dearg	-	-														-	-	
Dornoch Firth & Morrich Moor	-	-														-	-	

Table 6. Ramsar Sites

Unlikely Significant Impact	
Likely Significant Impact	
Site Specific (Discussed Later in Text)	-

Ramsar	Policy																	
	1 Settlement Development Area	Development Factors and Developer Requirements	3 Wider Countryside	4 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	5 Affordable Housing Sustainability	7 Waste Water Treatment	8 Waste Management	9 Flood Risk	10 Other Development Considerations: Physical Constraints	11 Protected Species	Species	13 Important Habitats	14 Surface Water Drainage	15 Developer Contributions	Countryside	17 Commerce	18 Design Quality and Place-Making	19 Travel
Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands	-	-														-	-	
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet	-	-														-	-	

Table 7. Special Protection Area (SPA)

Unlikely Significant Impact	
Likely Significant Impact	
Site Specific (Discussed Later in Text)	-

SAC	Policy																		
	1 Settlement Development Area	Development Factors and Developer Requirements	3 Wider Countryside	4 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	5 Affordable Housing Sustainability	7 Waste Water Treatment	8 Waste Management	9 Flood Risk	10 Other Development Considerations: Physical Constraints	11 Protected Species	Species	13 Important Habitats	14 Surface Water Drainage	15 Developer Contributions	Countryside	17 Commerce	18 Design Quality and Place-Making	19 Travel	
Cape Wrath	-	-																	
North Sutherland Coastal Islands	-	-																	
Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands	-	-																	
North Caithness Cliffs	-	-																	
Handa Island	-	-																	
Assynt Lochs	-	-																	
Lairg and Strathbrora Lochs	-	-																	
Inverpolly, Loch Urigill and Nearby Lochs	-	-																	
Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors	-	-																	
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet	-	-																	
Morangie Forest	-	-																	
Beinn Dearg	-	-																	

Table 8. Matrices Explanations

Whilst tables 5, 6 and 7 specify individual Natura sites, for the purposes of this stage of the assessment the policies have been assessed in a manner which has not differentiated between their likely effects on different Natura sites

Policy	Reasoning
1. Settlement Development Areas	This policy has not been included within the matrices as it is picked up on a site specific basis later in the document.
2. Land Allocations	This policy has not been included within the matrices as it is picked up on a site specific basis later in the document.
3. Wider Countryside	All SDAs have been defined and, if identified as having a likely significant impact, have been revised to exclude Natura sites which are therefore in the wider countryside. This policy cannot be considered in isolation from the other general policies and Structure Plan policies which have a balancing and protective effect.
4. Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	Policy has been adapted to ensure there is more strength to ensure safeguarding of Natura sites; therefore it is unlikely there will be a significant impact.
5. Affordable Housing	This policy is primarily about allocated sites which are within SDAs and covers windfall sites. Any sites outwith the SDA would be judged against wider countryside and Housing in the Countryside Policy and therefore it is unlikely to have a significant impact.
6. Designing for Sustainability	This policy is closely linked to Structure Plan policy G2 via the DPPG which flags habitats and species; it is unlikely that this policy will have a significant impact.
7. Waste Water Treatment	This policy has been strengthened via amendments. Some Natura sites will not be affected by this as we anticipate no development near them, however to fully consider the effects of this policy we must look at each of the Natura sites individually.
8. Waste Management	This policy reduces the need for landfill sites and looks to put onto business or industrial land. Links to waste plans and strategies are listed in policy. Alterations have been made to policy to reduce risk of adverse impacts but it has been recorded that there is a possibility of likely having a significant impact.
9. Flood Risk	The impacts of flooding could be significant in terms of water contamination and has therefore, been recorded as likely to have a significant impact. However, policy positively manages flood risk by reducing excessive run-off. Link to SUDS policy to ensure policies are working together to safeguard.
10. Other Development Considerations: Physical Constraints	This policy doesn't specify Natura sites or how developer should deal with issue, however if issue is raised then it will be dealt with and using Policies 4, 11, 12 and 13. There may be a positive result from the policy as it deals with contamination via developments.
11. Protected Species	Policy outlines measures to protect and maintain natural interests.
12. Other Important Species.	Policy outlines measures to protect and maintain natural interests.
13. Important Habitats	Policy outlines measures to protect and maintain natural interests.
14. Surface Water Drainage	Policy manages change but relies heavily on SUDs Manual (CIRIA), PAN 69 and Sewers for Scotland. The policy can not be viewed in isolation from the other policies.
15. Developer Contributions	This policy is subsidiary and therefore does not have an impact on Natura sites.

16. Housing in the Countryside	See Policy 3, it is land outwith SDA and Natura sites lie within area. Referenced in Policy link to others e.g. Policy 4, G2. All proposals must accord with General Policies and avoid conflict with Natural and Cultural Heritage.
17. Commerce	Encouraging development within SDA centres. Similar to policies 1 and 2 and will be assessed later in the text.
18. Design Quality and Place-Making	This policy does not deal directly with location or type of development but with detail of its design primarily in aesthetic and functional terms. It does not deal with aspects of design impacting on Natura interests.
19. Travel	The intention of this policy is for a positive outcome for sustainability. It is not envisaged to have a significant effect on Natura sites but taking a precautionary approach we have considered potential effects.

8. Safeguarding Policies

Both the Highland Structure Plan and Sutherland Local Plan contain safeguarding policies that protect Natura sites. Detailed below is a summary of each of these policies and the protection they provide:

Structure Plan

Policy G2 – Design for Sustainability

Proposed developments will be assessed on the extent to which they impact on a number of issues, including impact on the following resources particularly within designated areas: habitats and species.

Policy G3 Impact Assessments

Where environmental and/or socio-economic impacts of a proposed development are likely to be significant by virtue of nature, size or location, The Council will require the preparation by developers of appropriate impact assessments.

Policy N1 - Nature Conservation

States that the Council will seek to protect all sites and species of:

- International Importance
- National Importance
- Local Importance.

Policy N4 – Local Biodiversity Action Plans

In respect of habitats and species, The Council will have regard to Local Biodiversity Action Plans, where available, in addition to Strategic Policy G6, in the consideration of development proposals.

Local Plan

Policy 4 – Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

The Council will take account of the level of importance of, and the effect on, the natural, built and cultural heritage in areas of:

- Local/regional importance
- National importance
- International importance (Natura 2000 (SPA, SAC) and Ramsar sites)

Policy 11 – Protected Species

Where there is good reason to believe that a protected species is present on site or may be affected by a proposed development, the Council will require a survey to be carried out to establish any such presence before determining the application.

Policy 12 – Other Important Species

Development proposals should avoid adverse effects on species that are not protected by other legislation or by nature conservation site designations, the Council will use conditions and agreements to ensure harm to these species is avoided.

Policy 13 – Important Habitats

The Council will seek to safeguard the integrity of the features of the landscape which are of major importance for the movement of wild fauna and flora. Consideration will be given to the value of Other Important Habitats which are not protected by nature conservation designations in the assessment of any development proposal. Conditions and agreements will be used to ensure that significant harm to the ecological function and integrity of Article 10 Features and Other Habitats is avoided, satisfactory mitigation measures will be used when development has been approved.

9. Conclusions

Impact assessments have been undertaken on all individual Natura sites to determine whether Local Plan allocations lying immediately adjacent to or within a water catchment area could potentially have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site. The following Natura sites do not require an impact assessment as they have no Local Plan designations immediately adjacent or are they within a water catchment area, the remaining sites have been assessed and action has been taken to ensure the protection and safeguarding of Natura sites.

Mitigation measures have been detailed to show the way in which the Local Plan policies will be used to safeguard the Natura sites.

Special Area of Conservation

Altnaharra	Invernaver
Amat Woods	Inverpolly
Ardvar & Loch a' Mhuilinn Woodlands	Ledmore Wood
Beinn Dearg	Loch Laxford
Berriedale & Langwell Waters	Mound Alderwoods
Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands	Oldshore & Sandwood
Cape Wrath	River Borgie
Durness	River Naver
Foinaven	Rhidorroch Woods
Inchnadamph	Strathy Point

Ramsar Sites

Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands
Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet

Special Protection Area

Assynt Lochs	Inverpolly, Loch Urigill and Nearby Lochs
Beinn Dearg	Lairg & Strathbrora Lochs
Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands	Morangie Forest
Cape Wrath	North Caithness Cliffs
Handa Island	North Sutherland Coastal Islands

Potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)

(None)

Natura sites identified as potentially having a likely significant impact have been assessed on the current condition of the qualifying species and the potential impacts Local Plan policies may have – detailed within an impact assessment.

Features are assessed as being in favourable or unfavourable condition, against a standard set in the Guidance for that feature type and applied to the situation on that site. Listed below are the categories used in the assessment process:

- **Favourable maintained** – The ongoing management is keeping the feature in good condition.
- **Favourable recovered** – Action has been taken to rectify the problem identified during the last round of monitoring and the feature is now back in line to standards set in the guidance.
- **Unfavourable recovering** – When a feature at present falls below the set standards but the appropriate management measures are in place to secure favourable condition given time.
- **Unfavourable no change** – When feature falls below the set standards and there are no signs of it improving or getting any worse.
- **Unfavourable declining** – When feature falls below the set standards and are continuing to decline.
- **Destroyed – partially destroyed** – When there is a significant loss of the feature and this cannot be rectified by changes in management.
- **Destroyed – completely destroyed** – There are none of the qualifying features left which had previously been protected and this cannot be rectified by changes in management.

SNH have agreed with the Scottish Government that their key target (bring 80% of the special features on Scotland's nationally important nature sites into favourable condition by March 2008) will include those features in unfavourable recovering condition.

The results have been detailed within the relevant tables below for each Natura site:

Mitigation Measures

During the preparation of this document mitigation measures have been implemented through Local Plan policy modifications (Section 5 of this document). Policies have been adapted to reflect the views and concerns of both Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to safeguard Natura sites.

As a result of the consultation responses received from both SEPA and SNH the following statements have been prepared to provide mitigation for potential impacts that Local Plan proposals may have on Natura sites:

- 8.1 It is stated within the Local Plan Policy 7 – Waste Water Treatment that it is “the Council’s preference that any private system should discharge to land rather than water” which helps manage discharge and minimise the potential adverse impact on the water environment. It was also identified during consultations with SEPA, the regulative body, that they would look at development proposals on a site specific basis as and when they are submitted for consents.
- 8.2 It is stated within the Local Plan Policy 7 – Waste Water Treatment that “Connection to the public sewer as defined in the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968 is required for all new development proposals” except under the circumstances stated within the Policy. Within the text 5.7 Waste Water Treatment it states that “it is necessary to allow other private sewage treatment options in certain circumstances, in particular, where settlements are smaller, more dispersed in pattern and often not served by adequate existing or programmed existing public sewage systems. Developers should refer to SEPA’s Policy on the Provision of Waste Water Drainage in Settlements, for information”. These Policy provisions help manage discharge and minimise the potential adverse impact on the water environment.
- 8.3 For certain sites it is the Council’s preference that any new development should drain to sea loch rather than freshwater catchment.
- 8.4 It is stated within the Local Plan Policy 9 – Flood Risk Assessment that “Development proposals within or bordering areas susceptible to flooding, being areas with a medium to high flood risk (1:200 or greater annual probability of flooding), will need to demonstrate that the probability of flooding and any required mitigation has been assessed; a flood risk assessment will need to be submitted with the planning application. Development proposals outwith the medium to high flood risk areas may be acceptable unless local circumstances dictate otherwise, and a Flood Risk Assessment may be required”. Further changes will be commended by the reporter with reference to Scottish Planning Policy 7 (SPP7) which will help clarify when a flood risk assessment is required.
- 8.5 General policies have been modified to alleviate the concerns that development proposals and policies may have an impact on Natura sites. Modifications to the policies provide greater protection to these sites.
- 8.6 Open Space areas are safeguarded within Settlement Development Area (SDA) through Policy 1 - Settlement Development Areas and outwith SDAs by Policy 3 – Wider Countryside. Policy 2 – Land Allocations relates to the allocation of Open Space and within the glossary states that the Local Plan “specifically allocates (green space) in order to safeguard them from development”.
- 8.7 As the “new Local Plan doesn’t promote vehicle access to sandbanks, coastal protection schemes can protect sediment issues” there is no change required to policies or proposals as they offer sufficient safeguarding.
- 8.8 Where appropriate, new development proposals may be required to carry out an otter survey and any other appropriate surveys to ensure no significant effect on qualifying features caused by disturbance, pollution or any other impact. Policy 11 – Protected Species – states “where there is good reason to believe that a protected species is present on site or may be affected by a proposed development, we will require a survey to be carried out to establish any such presence before determining the application”.

After carrying out the following assessments detailed below and after making the relevant policy modifications (Section 5 of the report) to ensure Natura sites are safeguarded by Local Plan and Structure Plan policies, it can be concluded that proposals within the Sutherland Local Plan will have no likely significant cumulative impacts.

Appropriate Assessment on Ramsar: Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet

ABOUT THE RAMSAR

Description of Natura Site and Location:

Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet Ramsar site is a large area covering the two northernmost estuaries in the Moray Basin ecosystem. The Dornoch Firth extends eastwards for 25 km from Newton Point to the point of Tarbat Ness. It is relatively unaffected by industrial development and supports large areas of sandflats and mudflats, heath and sand dunes, saltmarsh and a stretch of rocky shore. Loch Fleet is a narrow-mouthed estuary containing extensive sandflats which are bordered by dunes, pinewood and alderwood. The dunes at Dornoch Links and Morrich More are of international importance for their flora and geomorphology. The boundaries of the site follow those of Dornoch Firth SSSI, Morrich More SSSI, Tarbat Ness SSSI, Loch Fleet SSSI and Mound Alderwoods SSSI except for the exclusion of a thin corridor of land on Morrich More SSSI.

(Ref:http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/pls/portal/Sitelink.Show_Site_Document?p_pa_code=8420&p_Doc_Type_ID=20)

Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interest (Species/ Habitats):

Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet Ramsar site is a large area covering the two northernmost estuaries in the Moray Basin ecosystem. The Dornoch Firth extends eastwards for 25 km from Newton Point to the point of Tarbat Ness. It is relatively unaffected by industrial development and supports large areas of sandflats and mudflats, heath and sand dunes, saltmarsh and a stretch of rocky shore. Loch Fleet is a narrow-mouthed estuary containing extensive sandflats which are bordered by dunes, pinewood and alderwood. The dunes at Dornoch Links and Morrich More are of international importance for their flora and geomorphology. The boundaries of the site follow those of Dornoch Firth SSSI, Morrich More SSSI, Tarbat Ness SSSI, Loch Fleet SSSI and Mound Alderwoods SSSI except for the exclusion of a thin corridor of land on Morrich More SSSI.

The Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Ramsar site qualifies under Criterion 1 by virtue of supporting a variety of important wetland features. Mound Alderwoods at the head of Loch Fleet is the largest estuarine alderwood in Britain. The Dornoch Firth is a particularly good example of an east coast firth and, unlike other nearby firths, has been relatively unaffected by industrial developments. Morrich More is one of the most outstanding coastal sites in Britain. It is especially noteworthy for the development of an extensive low-level sandy plain on which a set of parabolic dunes are superimposed.

The Ramsar site qualifies under Criterion 2a by regularly supporting rare plants and animals. The site supports at least five Nationally Scarce wetland plants: Baltic rush, seaside centaury, dwarf eelgrass, narrow-leaved eelgrass and curved sedge. The invertebrate fauna includes at least two wetland Red Data Book species and the mammal fauna includes common seal and otter.

The Ramsar site qualifies under Criterion 3a by regularly supporting in winter over 20,000 waterfowl. In the five-year period 1989/90 to 1993/94 a winter peak mean of approximately 34,500 waterfowl was recorded, comprising 22,000 wildfowl and 12,500 waders.

The Ramsar site also qualifies under Criterion 3c by regularly supporting internationally important wintering populations (1989/90-93/94 winter peak means) of Icelandic greylag goose (1,146, 1% of total world population, all of which winters in Britain), wigeon (15,304, 5% of GB, 2% of NW Europe) and bar-tailed godwit (1,184, 2% of GB, 1% of Western Europe).

The diverse assemblage of wintering waterfowl includes nationally important wintering populations of teal, scaup, curlew and redshank. The site is also a nationally important feeding area for ospreys.

This citation is accompanied by the citation for the entire Moray Basin Firths and Bays Ramsar site which explains the overall international importance of the Moray Basin as a wetland.

Site Condition:

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) site condition:				
Visit Date	Feature Category	Feature Description	Condition	Likely significant impact (Sensitivity)
11/02/2001	<i>Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
11/02/2001	<i>Bar-tailed godwit (Limosa lapponica), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
11/02/2001	<i>Wigeon (Anas penelope), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
06/03/2001	<i>Saltmarsh</i>	<i>Littoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
28/08/2003	<i>Greylag goose (Anser anser), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
03/06/2004	<i>Wet woodland</i>	<i>Broad-leaved, mixed and yew woodland</i>	Favourable Maintained	Destruction and disturbance of habitats through construction methods.
18/06/2004	<i>Sand dune</i>	<i>Supralittoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Unfavourable Declining	Changes in dune dynamics due to construction methods and recreational activities

LOCAL PLAN PROPOSALS

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Edderton SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies adjacent to Ramsar site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Proposals will only be supported if developers can demonstrate no adverse effect on the integrity of the adjoining Natura site (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain SDA. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to amend SDA to remove flood risk area to the south of settlement. Reducing risk of potential flooding and contamination issues. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch H3 – Sutherland Road

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch H4 – Meadows Park Road.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Appropriate Assessment on Special Protection Area (SPA): Dornoch Firth & Loch Fleet

ABOUT THE SPA

Description of Natura Site and Location:

The Dornoch Firth is located in north-eastern Scotland and is one of the two northernmost estuaries in the Moray Basin ecosystem. The Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA is one of the best examples in northwest Europe of a large complex estuary which has been relatively unaffected by industrial development, whilst Loch Fleet itself is an example of a shallow, bar-built estuary. Extensive sand-flats and mud-flats are backed by saltmarsh and sand dunes with transitions to dune heath and Alder *Alnus glutinosa* woodland. The tidal flats support internationally important numbers of waterbirds on migration and in winter, and are the most northerly and substantial extent of intertidal habitat for wintering waterbirds in the UK, as well as Europe. The Firth is also of importance as a feeding area for locally breeding Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*.

Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA forms an integral ecological component of Moray Basin Firths and Bays of which it forms the most northerly component area.

(Ref: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=1877>)

Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interest (Species/ Habitats):

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- *Population of the species as a viable component of the site.*
- *Distribution of the species within site.*
- *Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species.*
- *Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species.*
- *No significant disturbance of the species.*

Qualifying Species:

- Bar-tailed godwit
- Curlew
- Dunlin
- Greylag goose
- Osprey*
- Oyster-catcher
- Teal
- Wigeon
- Waterfowl assemblage

** Indicates that qualifying feature is particularly vulnerable to disturbance from development and recreational activities.*

The site overlaps with Dornoch Firth and Morrich More Special Area of Conservation, Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation and Mound Alderwoods Special Area of Conservation

Site Condition:

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) site condition:				
Visit Date	Feature Category	Feature Description	Condition	Likely significant impact (Sensitivity)
11/02/2001	<i>Curlew (Numenius arquata), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
11/02/2001	<i>Dunlin (Calidris alpina alpina), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
11/02/2001	<i>Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
11/02/2001	<i>Teal (Anas crecca), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
11/02/2001	<i>Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
11/02/2001	<i>Bar-tailed godwit (Limosa lapponica), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
11/02/2001	<i>Wigeon (Anas penelope), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
31/07/2003	<i>Osprey (Pandion haliaetus), breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.
13/09/2003	<i>Greylag goose (Anser anser), non-breeding</i>	<i>Birds - aggregations of non-breeding birds</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, domestic pets.

LOCAL PLAN PROPOSALS

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Embo SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies adjacent to SPA site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Proposals will only be supported if developers can demonstrate no adverse effect on the integrity of the adjoining Natura site.

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section **5. Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to extend SDA boundary to include caravan park at Grannies Heilan Hame and football field. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

New Allocations (Deposit Draft November 2008)

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Embo OS – Football Field

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Open Space sites identified as maintaining and protecting the existing value of the land.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure Open Space areas are safeguarded through policy (8.6).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section **5. Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to introduce as new allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Embo B1 – Holiday Park

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section **5. Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to introduce as new allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Appropriate Assessment on Special Area of Conservation (SAC): Dornoch Firth & Morrich More

ABOUT THE SAC

Description of Natura Site and Location:

Dornoch Firth is the most northerly large, complex **estuary** in the UK. The estuary is fed by the Kyle of Sutherland and is virtually unaffected by industrial development. There is a complete transition from riverine to fully marine conditions and associated communities. Inland, and in sheltered bays, sediments are generally muddy. Gravelly patches occur in the central section of the Firth. Wide sandy beaches dominate the large bays at the mouth of the Firth, and areas of saltmarsh occur around the shores. Sublittoral sediments are predominantly medium sands with a low organic content. Several of the associated coastal habitats have been proposed as Annex I interests in their own right.

The Dornoch Firth is the most northerly complex **estuary** in the UK. Situated on the Scottish east coast, the estuary contains extensive areas of **mudflats and sandflats**. The flats extend in a wide belt along the northern and southern shores and are characteristic of a range of environmental conditions. There is a continuous gradient in the physical structure of the flats, from medium-sand beaches on the open coast to stable, fine-sediment mudflats and muddy sands further inland. This results in a high diversity of animal and plant communities supporting polychaetes, oligochaetes, amphipods, gastropods and bivalves. The sheltered bays provide a habitat for communities of algae, eelgrass *Zostera* spp. and the pioneer saltmarsh plant glasswort *Salicornia* spp.

Dornoch Firth and Morrich More has the most extensive area of pioneer glasswort *Salicornia* spp. saltmarsh in Scotland. It is the most northerly site selected for this Annex I type, and represents the habitat type in the northern part of its range in the UK. It forms part of a complete transition from pioneer to upper saltmeadow and important sand dune habitats.

Dornoch Firth and Morrich More is the most northerly site selected for **Atlantic salt meadows** and represents this habitat type in the northern part of its UK range. The site supports a wide variety of community types, with the characteristic zonation from pioneer to upper marsh vegetation. At Morrich More the saltmarshes lie adjacent to sand dunes and there are important transitions between these habitats.

There are well-marked lyme-grass *Leymus arenarius*-dominated areas of **Embryonic shifting dunes** fronting the prograding sections of this site. Dornoch Firth and Morrich More is one of three sites representing **Embryonic shifting dunes** on the east coast of Scotland and is the most northerly example of the habitat type in the SAC series. The process of continued progradation is central to the conservation of this habitat type at this site, which has the largest, most complete area of sand dune in the UK, in part owing to the exceptionally high rate of progradation.

This large dune system on the east coast of Scotland is physically diverse, with areas of active accretion, areas of marine erosion and areas of internal instability. There are well-formed parabolic dunes in one area. All of these formations provide opportunities for **Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria*** to develop. As a result this habitat type is relatively extensive within the site. The vegetation is representative of northern mobile dune vegetation, with lyme-grass *Leymus arenarius* prominent in some stands. The site is largely undisturbed, resulting in a natural habitat structure.

This extensive complex dune system lies in the inner Moray Firth in north-east Scotland. It consists of a low dune plain which is still developing in its outer part. The dune system consists of a series of ridges with heath and juniper scrub on the older ridges which grade into the fixed dune vegetation of maritime grassland in the mid and outer parts.

In this part of the Moray Firth, north-east Scotland, dune vegetation has developed on a coastline that has been generally rising relative to sea level in the 7,000 years since the last

glaciation. A combination of leaching, stabilisation and the decreased influence of salt water has produced a sequence of dry, stable dune ridges, interspersed with wet dune hollows. There is a large area of **Decalcified fixed dunes with *Empetrum nigrum*** vegetation on this site, occurring in a complicated mosaic of acidic fixed dune vegetation types, principally **2150 Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*)**. Within this complex of habitats there are examples of dune, saltmarsh and transitional communities that include large populations of several northern dune species, such as Baltic rush *Juncus balticus*. This is the most important acidic dune site in Scotland because of its size and the exceptional diversity of habitats within it. Despite some localised industrial development, structure and function are well-conserved at this site and accretion is continuing.

Dornoch Firth and Morrich More represents **Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*)** in north-east Scotland, with dune heath containing heather *Calluna vulgaris* and sand sedge *Carex arenaria*. At this site, dune vegetation has developed on a coastline that has been generally rising relative to sea level in the 7,000 years since the last glaciation. A combination of leaching, stabilisation and the decreased influence of saltwater has produced a sequence of dry, stable dune ridges, interspersed with wet dune hollows. The **Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes** vegetation covers a large area on this site and forms part of a complex mosaic of fixed dune vegetation types, principally **2140 Decalcified fixed dunes with *Empetrum nigrum***, together with saltmarsh and transitional communities that include large populations of several northern dune species, such as Baltic rush *Juncus balticus*. This is the most important acidic dune site in Scotland, owing to its size and the exceptional diversity of habitats within it. Despite some localised industrial development, structure and function are well-conserved at this site and accretion is continuing.

Morrich More in north-east Scotland is one of the largest acidic dune sites in the UK. The sequence of development has resulted in the formation of extensive humid slack communities of an acidic character which lie as parallel hollows between the dune ridges and form part of a complex mosaic of dune habitats, several of which have been proposed as Annex I habitat types in their own right. This is the most important acidic dune system in Scotland, owing to its size and the exceptional diversity of the habitats within it.

Morrich More is the most important site in the UK for juniper *Juniperus* spp. stands on dune. Stands of juniper cover approximately 10 ha, with scattered individuals over a larger area. The juniper is extremely well-developed on the dry ridges and transitions to dune slacks. The best stands occur in grasslands in the southern sector, but prostrate individuals also extend into wet heath and slack habitats within the site.

(Ref: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0019806>)

Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interest (Species/ Habitats):

To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and

To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:

- *Extent of the habitat on site.*
- *Distribution of the habitat within site.*
- *Structure and function of the habitat.*
- *Processes supporting the habitat.*
- *Distribution of typical species of the habitat.*
- *Viability of typical species as components of the habitat.*
- *No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat.*

Qualifying Habitats:

- *Atlantic salt meadows.*
- *Coastal dune heathland.*

- Dune grassland.
- Dunes with juniper thickets.
- Estuaries.*
- Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand.*
- Humid dune slacks.
- Intertidal mudflats and sandflats.*
- Lime-deficient dune heathland with crowberry.
- Reefs.*
- Shifting dunes.
- Shifting dunes with marram.
- Subtidal sandbanks.*

* Indicates that these features are particularly vulnerable to changes in water quality, however, Local Plan policies safeguard these from likely significant impacts.

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Population of the species as a viable component of the site.
- Distribution of the species within site.
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species.
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species.
- No significant disturbance of the species.

Qualifying Species:

- Common seal.
- Otter.

Regulation 33(2), of *The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)*, gives Scottish Natural Heritage a statutory responsibility to advise other relevant authorities as to the conservation objectives for marine SACs in Scotland, and any operations which may cause deterioration of natural habitats or the habitats of species, or disturbance of species for which the site has been designated.

Site Condition:

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) site condition:				
Visit Date	Feature Category	Feature Description	Condition	Likely significant impact (Sensitivity)
10/08/2001	<i>Shifting dunes</i>	<i>Supralittoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Favourable Maintained	Changes in dune dynamics due to construction methods.
10/08/2001	<i>Dune grassland</i>	<i>Supralittoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Unfavourable No change	Changes in dune dynamics due to construction methods and recreational activities
10/08/2001	<i>Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand</i>	<i>Littoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Favourable Maintained	Destruction and disturbance of habitat due to construction methods

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) site condition:				
Visit Date	Feature Category	Feature Description	Condition	Likely significant impact (Sensitivity)
10/08/2001	<i>Atlantic salt meadows</i>	<i>Littoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Favourable Maintained	Destruction and disturbance of habitat due to construction methods
10/08/2001	<i>Humid dune slacks</i>	<i>Supralittoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Favourable Maintained	Changes in dune dynamics due to construction methods and recreational activities
10/08/2001	<i>Coastal dune heathland</i>	<i>Supralittoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Unfavourable No change	Changes in dune dynamics due to construction methods and recreational activities
10/08/2001	<i>Lime-deficient dune heathland with crowberry</i>	<i>Supralittoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Unfavourable No change	Destruction and disturbance of habitat due to construction methods
10/08/2001	<i>Shifting dunes with marram</i>	<i>Supralittoral sediment (Coast)</i>	Favourable Maintained	Changes in dune dynamics due to construction methods and recreational activities
06/08/2004	<i>Otter (Lutra lutra)</i>	<i>Mammals</i>	Favourable Maintained	Loss of water, riparian and/or wetland habitats. Direct disturbance of habitats. Disturbance from construction.
13/08/2004	<i>Common seal (Phoca vitulina – Likely along shore and coastal areas)</i>	<i>Mammals (Marine)</i>	Unfavourable Recovering	Direct disturbance of habitats – Close to water-based recreation. Grosse pollution Disturbance from construction. Pollution and disturbance to food source – Water quality.

LOCAL PLAN PROPOSALS

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Rosehall SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent to River Oykel (SAC) which flows into Dornoch Firth & Morrich More (SAC) site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Proposals will only be supported if developers can demonstrate no adverse effect on the integrity of the adjoining Natura site (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to amend SDA at North East of village to exclude the area of land between the River and the A837. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Rosehall H2 – Opposite the post office.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies immediately adjacent to River Oykel (SAC) which flows into Dornoch Firth & Morrich More (SAC) site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to de-allocate due to a number of reasons including; the boundary of the site lying immediately adjacent the SAC site and the possible water contamination development may have caused. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Rosehall H1 – Rear of the post office.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Bonar Bridge SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies immediately adjacent to River Oykel (SAC) which flows into Dornoch Firth & Morrich More (SAC) site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to reduce SDA boundary to exclude land previously allocated for housing use. This reduces the risk of significant adverse impacts on the adjacent SAC site. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Bonar Bridge H1 - Swordale

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to River Oykel (SAC) which flows into Dornoch Firth & Morrich More (SAC) site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to de-allocate site, partly to reduce the impact on the adjacent SAC site. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Invershin SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent to River Oykel (SAC) which flows into Dornoch Firth & Morrich More (SAC) site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to enlarge SDA to North but retain allocation H1 within SDA. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Invershin H1 – Former Balblair Workings

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies immediately adjacent to River Oykel (SAC) which flows into Dornoch Firth & Morrich More (SAC) site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation H1 but enlarge allocation to South East with no additional units. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Ardgay SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to reduce SDA boundary to exclude land previously allocated H1 South of Oakwood Place. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Ardgay B1 - Ardgay railway station yard north.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation but reduce the boundary of the allocated site. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Ardgay B2 - Ardgay railway station yard south.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Edderton SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Pressure on sand dunes from recreational activities. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water (8.1). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain SDA. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8). New local plan does not propose vehicle access to sandbanks and coastal protection schemes can protect sediment issues (8.7).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to amend SDA to remove flood risk area to the south of settlement. Reducing risk of potential flooding and contamination issues. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch H3 – Sutherland Road

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8). New local plan does not propose vehicle access to sandbanks and coastal protection schemes can protect sediment issues (8.7).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch H4 – Meadows Park Road.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality. Disturbance to otters and their habitats.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2). Ensure any new developments carry out an otter survey (8.8). New local plan does not propose vehicle access to sandbanks and coastal protection schemes can protect sediment issues (8.7).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Appropriate Assessment on Special Area of Conservation (SAC): Moray Firth

ABOUT THE SAC

Description of Natura Site and Location:

The Moray Firth in north-east Scotland supports the only known resident population of **bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*** in the North Sea. The population is estimated to be around 130 individuals (Wilson *et al.* 1999). Dolphins are present all year round, and, while they range widely in the Moray Firth, they appear to favour particular areas.

(Ref: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCODE=UK0019808>)

Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interest (Species/ Habitats):

To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and

To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:

- *Extent of the habitat on site.*
- *Distribution of the habitat within site.*
- *Structure and function of the habitat.*
- *Processes supporting the habitat.*
- *Distribution of typical species of the habitat.*
- *Viability of typical species as components of the habitat.*
- *No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat.*

Qualifying Habitats:

- *Sub-tidal sandbanks.*

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- *Population of the species as a viable component of the site.*
- *Distribution of the species within site.*
- *Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species.*
- *Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species.*
- *No significant disturbance of the species.*

Qualifying Species:

- Bottlenose dolphin

The site overlaps with Cromarty Firth, and Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPAs.

Regulation 33(2), of *the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)*, gives Scottish Natural Heritage a statutory responsibility to advise other relevant authorities as to the conservation objectives for marine SACs in Scotland, and any operations which may cause deterioration of natural habitats or the habitats of species, or disturbance of species for which the site has been designated.

After consulting “*The Moray Firth candidate Special Area of Conservation Management Scheme*” file the following likely significant impacts were decided.

Site Condition:

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) site condition:				
Visit Date	Feature Category	Feature Description	Condition	Likely significant impact (Sensitivity)
12/08/2004	<i>Subtidal sandbanks</i>	<i>Inshore sublittoral sediment (Marine)</i>	Favourable Maintained	Disturbance to habitat through construction methods.
31/03/2005	<i>Bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus)</i>	<i>Mammals (Marine)</i>	Unfavourable Recovering	<p>Direct disturbance of habitats within SAC.</p> <p>Direct loss of open water, reparation and/or wetland habitats in the catchment.</p> <p>Disturbance to qualifying interests from construction, access and recreation, including water based, and domestic pets.</p> <p>Abstraction from river system resulting in lower flows.</p>

LOCAL PLAN PROPOSALS

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Brora SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent and part of SAC site lies within designation.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Residual Impact: Adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to reduce the SDA and omit Inverbrora SSSI and The Moray Firth SSSI and SAC site from SDA to reduce the risk of adverse impacts. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Helmsdale SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to extend SDA to allow extension of I1 allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Embo SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to extend SDA boundary to include caravan park at Grannies Heilan Hame and football field. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to amend SDA to remove flood risk area to the south of settlement. Reducing risk of potential flooding and contamination issues. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch MU1 – Dornoch North.

Location in relation to SAC site: Dornoch Burn runs North to South through the middle of this site and flows into the SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Residual Impact: Adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation and text amended to state “flood risk assessment will be required”. Assessment will reduce the risk of flooding and water contamination. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Dornoch B1 – Dornoch Business Park.

Location in relation to SAC site: Dornoch Burn runs to the East of this site and flows into the SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation but amend boundary to remove flood risk area and removal from SDA. Reducing risk of potential flooding and contamination issues. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Golspie SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to amend SDA to exclude MU3 allocation to west of settlement and include Open Space to south of settlement. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Brora MU1 – Former radio station

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Brora H4 – Rosslyn Street/former Mackay's yard

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to River Brora which flows into SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation but split site and allow for new Mixed Use site. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Helmsdale OS

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies immediately adjacent to River Helmsdale which flows into the SAC site.

Potential Impact: Open Space sites identified as maintaining and protecting the existing value of the land.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure Open Space areas are safeguarded through policy (8.6).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation this allocation and existing policy safeguards the existing value of the land. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Helmsdale MU1

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies immediately adjacent to River Helmsdale which flows into the SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation add to text requirement to assess flood risks to reduce the risk of water contamination. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Edderton SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain SDA and make slight extension. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

New Allocations (Deposit Draft November 2008)

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Golspie - 8 New OS designations

Location in relation to SAC site: Sites lie in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Open Space sites identified as maintaining and protecting the existing value of the land.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure Open Space areas are safeguarded through policy (8.6).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to introduce as new allocations. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Brora MU2 – Scotia House

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to introduce as a new allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Brora MU3 – Carrol House

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to introduce as new allocations. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Embo OS – Football Field

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Open Space sites identified as maintaining and protecting the existing value of the land.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure Open Space areas are safeguarded through policy (8.6).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section **5. Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to introduce as new allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Embo B1 – Holiday Park

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of habitats and/or species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section **5. Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to introduce as new allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Appropriate Assessment on Special Area of Conservation (SAC): River Evelix

ABOUT THE SAC

Description of Natura Site and Location:

The Evelix is the only remaining small East Coast River in Scotland that supports a surviving functional **freshwater pearl mussel** *Margaritifera margaritifera* population, particularly within the upper reaches of the river. Mussels have also occurred in the lower stretches of the river, but in lower numbers than upstream and with fewer juveniles were present. Pearl-fishing is thought to be the principal reason for the decreased numbers in the lower stretches, but the presence of juveniles in the upper sections indicates that despite losses, the population is successfully recruiting.

(Ref: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030254>)

Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interest (Species/ Habitats):

Conservation Objectives

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- *Population of the species as a viable component of the site.*
- *Distribution of the species within site.*
- *Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species.*
- *Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species.*
- *No significant disturbance of the species.*

Qualifying Species:

- Freshwater pearl mussel.

Site Condition:

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) site condition:				
Visit Date	Feature Category	Feature Description	Condition	Likely significant impact (Sensitivity)
27/03/2008	<i>Freshwater pearl mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera)</i>	<i>Other invertebrates</i>	Unfavourable No change	Direct disturbance of habitats. Disturbance from construction, access and recreation. Increased siltation of watercourses especially during construction. Discharges/changes in water quality. Abstraction from river system resulting in lower flows.

LOCAL PLAN PROPOSALS

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Evelix SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section **5. Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain SDA. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Appropriate Assessment on Special Area of Conservation (SAC): River Oykel

ABOUT THE SAC

Description of Natura Site and Location:

The Oykel is a long, meandering river in the northern Highlands of Scotland that flows into the Kyle of Sutherland on the east coast. The river supports an excellent, high-quality **freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*** population with high densities recorded at some locations, including a bed numbering several thousand individuals. Surveys have also recorded high percentages of juveniles within the population, indicating that there has been recent successful recruitment. There is also evidence of unsurveyed pearl mussel populations in deep water that may increase the conservation importance of the river.

(Ref: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030261>)

Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interest (Species/ Habitats):

Conservation Objectives

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- *Population of the species, including range of genetic types of salmon, as a viable component of the site.*
- *Distribution of the species within site.*
- *Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species.*
- *Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species.*
- *No significant disturbance of the species.*

Qualifying Species:

- Atlantic Salmon
- Freshwater pearl mussel.

The site overlaps with Inverpolly, Loch Urigill and nearby Lochs (SPA).

Site Condition:

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) site condition:				
Visit Date	Feature Category	Feature Description	Condition	Likely significant impact (Sensitivity)
20/07/2003	<i>Freshwater pearl mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera)</i>	<i>Other invertebrates</i>	Unfavourable Recovering	Direct disturbance of habitats.
14/08/2004	<i>Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar)</i>	<i>Fish</i>	Unfavourable Recovering	Loss of water, riparian and/or wetland habitats. Disturbance from construction. Increased siltation of watercourses especially during construction of developments. Discharges/Changes to water quality. Abstraction from river system resulting in lower flows.

LOCAL PLAN PROPOSALS

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Rosehall SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Residual Impact: Adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to amend SDA at North East of village to exclude the area of land between the River and the A837. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Rosehall H1 – Rear of the post office.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Rosehall H2 – Opposite the post office.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies immediately adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Residual Impact: Adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to de-allocate due to a number of reasons including; the boundary of the site lying immediately adjacent the SAC site and the possible water contamination development may have caused. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Invershin SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Residual Impact: Adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Mitigation: Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2). There is a developer requirement for a flood risk assessment to be submitted with any planning application and for housing to be set back from the river (8.4).

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to enlarge SDA to North but retain allocation H1 within SDA. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Invershin H1 – Former Balblair workings.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies immediately adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Residual Impact: Adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2). There is a developer requirement for a flood risk assessment to be submitted with any planning application and for housing to be set back from the river (8.4).

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to Retain allocation H1 but enlarge allocation to South East with no additional units. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Ardgay SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies immediately adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to amend SDA boundary to exclude land to South of Oakwood Place – previously allocated H1 – and extend boundary to include land to East of Manse Road. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Ardgay B1 – Ardgay Railway Station Yard North.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation but enlarge the boundary of the site and include land to the East of Oakwood Place. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Ardgay B2 – Ardgay Railway Station Yard South.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: South Bonar Industrial Estate 11

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Close to river where discharge could find way into SAC water system and there is potential for flooding.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Lairg SDA

Location in relation to SAC site: SDA lies in close proximity to SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development within the SDA may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to extend SDA and include a new housing allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Lairg MU1 – Former Hotel/Outbuildings.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to Loch Shin which runs into the SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Lairg H1 – South West of Main Street.

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to Loch Shin which runs into the SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.

Local Plan (Deposit Draft 2007) Proposal: Lairg H4 – Ord Place

Location in relation to SAC site: Site lies adjacent to Loch Shin which runs into the SAC site.

Potential Impact: Development may result in the loss of species due to the creation of additional noise, pollution and disturbance through construction and provision of any additional services and facilities required. Discharge from new developments could have a significant impact on water quality.

Mitigation (See Mitigation Measures, pg 25): Ensure drainage to land rather than water to prevent further proliferation of private outfalls. (8.1/8.2).

Residual Impact: No residual adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Action Taken: As previously mentioned in section 5. **Proposed Policy Modifications** of this report the Local Plan policies have been amended to safeguard Natura sites and the potential impact of development.

Decision was taken to retain allocation. No adverse effects on site integrity as a result of this decision.