

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

ROSS & CROMARTY EAST LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY

**STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS by the
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT**

ISSUE 8: Ardross – housing allocations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Highland Council (THC) has undertaken to hold a Public Local Inquiry to consider objections lodged by A Chamier [CD30/120] respect of policies contained in Chapter 6, para 7 in regard to housing capacity at Ardross and Appendix 1 Policy definitions also Ardross Community Council [CD30/13] respect of Ardross with regard to housing capacities at Cuillich and Dublin and Mr J Brown [CD30/12] in respect of land for housing. Objection by Sue Dymond [CD30/136] in respect of housing capacities and allocations at Ardross specifically in regard to Dublin and Ardross Mains are understood to be the subject of further written submissions.
- 1.2 Objections lodged by Susan Drever [CD30/81] in respect of Chapter 6 in relation to Ardross are either sustained on the basis of written submissions lodged in respect of the Deposit Draft Local Plan or not withdrawn. The Council's response in respect of these matters is contained in the report.[CD27]
- 1.3 THC will call Brian MacKenzie, Planning and Development Service as planning witness.
- 1.4 THC wishes to submit the following productions: -
[CD1] The Highland Structure Plan: Approved Plan: THC: March 2001
[CD6] Development Plan Policy Guidelines: The Highland Council: October 2003
[CD8] Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan: Consultative Draft: THC May 2002
[CD9] Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan: Deposit Draft: THCI: October 2003
[CD10] Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan: Statement of Publicity, Consultation and representations: THC October 2003
[CD11] Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan: Proposed Modifications to the Deposit Draft (Prior to Public Local Inquiry): THC February 2005
[CD15] SPP3: Planning for Housing: Scottish Executive: February 2003
[CD17] SPP15: Rural Development: Scottish Executive: February 2005
[CD23] PAN72: Housing in the Countryside: Scottish Executive: February 2005
[CD25] Ross & Cromarty Area Planning Committee Item: Representations on the Consultative Draft Local Plan: The Highland Council: 15 September 2003
[CD26] Planning Development Europe & Tourism Committee Item: Representations on the Consultative Draft Local Plan: The Highland Council: 1 October 2003

[CD27] Ross & Cromarty Area Planning Committee Item: Objections and Representations on the Deposit Draft Local Plan: The Highland Council: 25 January 2005

[CD30] Letters of objection and representation to the Deposit Draft Local Plan

[CD31] Objections to the Proposed Changes to the Deposit Draft Local Plan

[THC8/1] Ardross – map extract showing planning applications in relation to objection lodged by Mr J Brown[30/12], and relevant Ctte Report and Minute, 7th Feb 2005

2. Background

National Planning Guidance/Advice

- 2.1 Scottish Planning Policy 15: Planning for Rural Development [CD16], was published in February 2005 following an earlier consultation draft and supersedes NPPG15. The following paragraphs are relevant: -

18. This states that SPP 3 remains the first point of reference on the general policy for housing; and that “*This SPP advances policy in respect of small scale rural housing developments including clusters and groups in close proximity to settlements,..... The overall message is that there is considerable scope for allowing more housing developments of this nature and that this should be expressed in development plans, either as part of general settlement policy or as a separate sub-set on rural housing policy.*”

21 states that the amount and location of housing that can be developed in rural areas is determined by a number of factors, including proximity to services e.g. schools, shops (ideally within walking or cycling distance); ease of access; and drainage or sewerage capacity; and that fit in the landscape will be an important consideration.

22 states that planning authorities should set out criteria where houses on land not identified in development plans, outwith main settlements, will be acceptable, and that clusters and groups of dwellings could be feasible in helping to meet previously unsatisfied demand. Overall SPP15 urges planning authorities to adopt a much more positive approach to housing development in the countryside, even within areas of relatively high demand, provided there is no net detriment to the environment. This is consistent with the approach taken by successive planning authorities covering Highland.

PAN72: Housing in the Countryside [CD23], was published in February 2005. This indicates the main opportunities for development of housing in the countryside, page7. These relate to the conversion or rehabilitation of structurally sound buildings, small scale infill, new groups of houses with housing related to existing groupings being preferable to new isolated development, and single houses with these having to be planned with location carefully selected.

Highland Structure Plan

- 2.2 The Highland Structure Plan [CD1] was approved in March 2001. Paragraph 1.7.1 refers to the emergence from the sustainability objectives and the strategic themes the development of a number of general policies demonstrating the expectations of The Council with regard to any proposal for development. They cover a range of issues relating to sustainable development and are considered vital to the implementation of the Plan's strategic themes. More specifically, Policy G2 Design for sustainability indicates that “*Proposed developments will be assessed on the extent to which they:*
- *are compatible with service provision (water and sewerage, drainage, roads, schools, electricity);*”
- 2.3 Policy H3 Housing in the countryside states that “*Housing development will generally be within existing and planned new settlements. In the hinterland of towns, and subsequently defined in Local Plans, new housing and conversions of non-traditional buildings in the open countryside will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that it is required for the management of the land and related family purposes..*”

Development Plan Policy Guidelines

- 2.4 In October 2003, following previous consultation on a draft published in May 2002, THC published Supplementary Development Plan Policy Guidelines (DPPG) on Housing in the Countryside and Affordable Housing [CD6]. DPPG1 contains a more detailed interpretation of Structure Plan Policy H3 on Housing in the Countryside. This was drafted after discussions with Scottish Executive Planning officials and defines “existing settlements” as:
- those identified through the Structure Plan and local plan settlement hierarchies (based on the provision of services);
 - groups of houses which have one or more of the following facilities: mains drainage or a scheme in SW’s 3-year plan; a public septic tank; street lighting; a 30 mph speed limit; a school, a doctor’s surgery, a shop, a post office, a petrol filling station, a public hall, or a pub;
 - established groups which comprise cluster, linear, or other recognisable forms of building without such a facility, but which are contained within a clear visual envelope; or
 - dispersed grouping with a crofting settlement pattern.
- 2.5 DPPG1 makes clear that such settlements are only to be defined where there are opportunities to make use of spare capacity to accommodate new housing, and where this would be consistent with, or enhance, the cohesiveness and visual appearance of the group. Generally, this will be within the existing boundary of the group, although there may be opportunities for some limited extension where the development will help to enhance the appearance of the group as a whole.

Adopted Local Plan

- 2.6 The Easter Ross Local Plan [CD4] was adopted in July 1992. No specific housing allocations were made for this area. Development of single houses in the countryside was generally acceptable subject to certain conditions being met. Para 2.9 Page 4.

Consultative Draft Plan

- 2.7 The Consultative Draft [CD8] of the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan, was published in May 2002. A significant area of land was allocated adjacent the Ardross new hall for up to 25 dwellings, this allocation sought to provide potential for supporting the hall and school in a sustainable manner with the provision of a first time sewage treatment plant programmed post 2009 by Scottish Water.
- 2.8 The representations made and the changes made by THC in response are detailed in [CD10]. Almost 100 representations were made to the Consultative Draft Plan in respect of the scale of development proposed for a rural area. The requirement to address a housing need was not disputed, but the nature of a large allocation in a rural area was thought not to be appropriate. The representations called for a more dispersed pattern of development, with small clusters of housing considered more acceptable. The Council's response was to identify five separate areas throughout the Ardross area to serve the housing requirement for the area.

Deposit Draft Local Plan

- 2.9 The Deposit Draft [CD9] of the Local Plan was published in October 2003.
- 2.10 The representations from the Consultative Draft brought about a major revision to the approach to allocating land to meet the housing need. This was expressed in the new policy for the area below:-

“Lack of a public drainage system at the focal point for the community around the school and hall where a proliferation of septic tanks will create environmental problems. Presumption against further development seeking septic tank drainage and SEPA advise that mains drainage with waste water treatment works is essential. The provision and adoption of privately developed 'package' biological treatment plants or reed bed systems will depend upon local site conditions together with suitable arrangements for long-term plant maintenance and refurbishment to the satisfaction of the drainage authority. Larger housing groups must have proper waste-water treatment. Specific allocations are made as follows:-

- (a) 3-4 houses adjacent the hall and south of the Strath Rusdale Road. Single access point to serve all properties, leave access for possible future development. In the absence of investment by Scottish Water developers will require provision of wastewater treatment to the satisfaction of Scottish Water and SEPA.*
- (b) Land to the north of Strath Rusdale Road is allocated for up to 5 houses.*
- (c) At Cuillich (former Castle Inn), 6-8 houses, requirement to provide adequate wastewater treatment to the satisfaction of Scottish Water and SEPA.*

- (d) *At Dublin, 6 houses. The existing septic tank is approaching capacity and improvement is programmed within Scottish Water's Capital Programme for 2004/2005. Developers may be required to contribute to provision of additional capacity (GSP2).*
- (e) *Potential exists to convert and/or redevelop the former Ardross Mains Steading and farm workers houses along with some capacity for new build, subject to the provision of adequate services. All development is subject to the provisions of General Supporting Policy (GSP2) in respect of the provision of adequate wastewater treatment."*

2.11 Objections were received from A Chamier [CD30/120], Ardross Community Council [CD30/13], Sue Dymond [CD30/136], Janice Robertson [CD30/154], Susan Drever [CD30/136] and John Edmondson [CD30/45] in respect of the allocations at Ardross, Ardross Mains Steading, Dublin and Cuillich in terms of their overall capacity. Mr J Brown [CD30/12] submitted an objection relating to the inclusion of 9 individual plots of land at Dalnavie. THC's response and reasoning is set out in [CD27].

Deposit Draft with Modifications (Proposed Changes)

2.12 Proposed Changes to the Deposit Draft [CD11] were approved in January 2005. Modification was made in respect of the capacity figure for the allocation at Cuillich (former Castle Inn) this was reduced from the indicative 6-8 to 3-5 in light of objection made to the Deposit Draft.

The final capacity figures for all the allocations will depend on the type of development proposed, objections to the Deposit Draft indicated the desire to provide housing for both the young and old. Varying types of development proposal would lead to changes in the expected density of development.

In response to more general objections from SEPA on housing groups, THC agreed that Policy 35 (34) in Chapter 6 should be Modified to include reference to the detailed criteria used to define the small tightly-knit groups or clusters in the Hinterland area. It is now proposed that the policy reads as follows: -

"34. In the open countryside of the Hinterland area the Council will presume against housing development that creates new ad hoc clusters of housing or adds to existing small tightly-knit groups of housing comprising 3 or more dwellings sited less than 50 metres apart. In exceptional cases and subject to adequate drainage (GSP2), there may be opportunities to consolidate or round off certain existing groups with 1 or 2 suitably designed new houses. These groups are identified on the Proposals Map and listed in Appendix III. Development proposals should indicate the relationship of the new buildings to the group as a whole, arrangements for planting to screen or enhance the group's amenity and appearance, and measures to remedy infrastructure problems [H3]."

2.13 Further objections were received from Sue Dymond [CD30/136] and Ardross Community Council [CD30/13] in respect of capacity of housing allocations identified at Ardross Mains Steading and Dublin.

3. The Council's Observations

The Objections

3.1 A Chamier [CD30/120]

Settlements: Ardross Hall, Cuillich, Dubh Ardross Mains

Although the number of houses projected for the Ardross hall/school settlement has been helpfully reduced, the overall number of houses envisaged for all the proposed Ardross settlements now seems to be undefined and potentially to have increased in total from the Consultative draft. I feel a point has been reached where this total has gone beyond what is reasonable for the existing community to absorb in the time frame for the plan. The number could amount to about 35 (Ardross hall 4+5=9, Cuillich up to 8, Dublin 6 and Ardross Mains 12 (see below). I object to 35 as being more than can reasonably be absorbed in a small area and by a small population. An overall total of 25 would seem more acceptable.

Specifically I object to

A. The number of houses proposed for Cuillich. Six more than at present seems to me the maximum consistent with the defined area and with keeping the visual impact on a major tourist route to acceptable bounds.

B. The loose reference, without specifying a number of houses, to the former Ardross Mains steading and farm workers' cottages. This complex of buildings is of outstanding quality and forms an important landmark and part of the heritage of Ardross, complementing the Ardross Castle policies as part of the designed landscape the Council wishes to protect. Sensitive conversion/renovation of the cottages and steading, in way which maintains their character, seems perfectly reasonable. There is talk locally, however, of this producing as many as 12 houses. That seems at the limit of what can be done without creating a cluster of population which is out of character with the area and inconsistent with public services. Fewer would be better. In any case it seems completely wrong to permit "new build" which is bound to damage the appearance of the complex of old buildings which are stone built and cannot be replicated today. I do hope the next draft will tighten up the terms on which redevelopment might be permitted and reduce the area of Settlement ground defined on the map around the present buildings.

3.2 Ardross Community Council [CD30/13]

We should like to see one of these housing groups designated for sheltered housing.

7(c) Residents of Cuillich are eager to see this derelict site of the old Castle Inn and associated buildings redeveloped, indeed given priority as many consider it an eyesore in its present condition. However we should like to point out that there are already 3 occupied houses within the hatched area delineated on the inset map, one of which is a substantial new bungalow. In light of this fact, Cuillich residents feel that 6-8 additional houses is too many, and they would like to see the number proposed reduced.

(d) The great majority of Dublin and Cnoc Ruadh residents oppose the use of this broad tongue of green land for housing, and there is a general feeling that the other

potential sites taken together provide sufficient space. However, we should not want to jeopardise the upgrading of the existing Cnoc Ruadh septic tank, programmed for 2004-5, together with the incorporation of Dublin into that system.

Any sites where a group of houses is eventually intended should be planned with regard to landscape, screening, access, etc. before the first house is built. This is in order to achieve a sympathetic and appropriate overall design. The design of individual houses may differ but should be appropriate to a Highland village and to the nature of the site.

7(e) The community welcomes the proposal to renovate and convert the old stone buildings at Ardress Mains. They ask that it is done sympathetically, retaining the style of the existing buildings and as much as possible of the fine old masonry. We should not welcome any new build adjacent to this site. Because of the historic nature of the site, the development should not have street lighting as this would destroy its character both in daylight and at night. If feasible we should prefer the houses to be renovated one or two at a time rather than all at once.

3.3 **Mr J Brown [CD30/12]**

The statement refers to the possibility of housing need being met by 25 no. houses at various locations to the west of the B9176 Struie Road, subject to investment by Scottish Water in mains drainage with waste water treatment or by private treatment systems. The statement further acknowledges that the ‘proliferation’ of existing septic tanks around the school and community hall are creating environmental problems. Following previous public consultations the Ardress community were opposed to larger groupings of houses, instead preferring further development to be ad-hoc, individual sites or smaller groupings. In considering the location of future housing development, the Draft Local Plan has failed to identify the area to the east of the B9176 at Dalnavie as suitable, despite the presence of existing services and the prospect of land being made available to provide suitable waste water treatment.

The area zoned for potential house sites in the Local Plan should therefore be extended to include land at Dalnavie.

3.4 **Sue Dymond [CD30/136]**

1. No new houses at Dublin.

(a) These would obstruct the views of the cottages and have a negative impact on the value of these properties.

(b) Dublin is adjacent to Ardress Mains see below.

(c) Both the land at Dublin and Ardress Mains are owned by the same person who is not resident adjacent to either of these proposed sites and would benefit financially without feeling the impact of these proposed developments.

(d) Light pollution would be substantially increased and would be detrimental to the rural nature of Dublin Ardress Mains.

2. Whilst I support the renovation and development of the existing buildings at Ardress Mains to provide 12 dwellings any new build would be totally out of

keeping with the existing buildings.

(a) 12 new house holds in this area would essentially mean another 24 cars which would probably result in 48 trips per day on average. The Dublin / Strath Rusdale road as it exists is single track and in my view any further increases in traffic, beyond those associated with these 12 dwellings, would be detrimental.

(b) Renovation of Ardross Mains should minimize light pollution, Street lighting should not be used.

(c) Renovation of Ardross Mains should rule out new build at Dublin as this would lose its rural character and effectively become a suburban area that is actually miles from the nearest town and utterly out of keeping with the Ardross / Strath Rusdale area as a whole.

Further Written Submissions

3.5 Sue Dymond [CD30/136]

Chapter 06 : Landward Area L-H: 07 Ardross

The proposal to allocate land between Cnoc Rudh and Dublin should not be considered as it will

- 1. Effectively run the two groups of houses together creating a large group of houses which would be completely out of keeping with the surrounding area of Ardross and Strathrusdale.*
- 2. Place further risk of domestic drainage pollution on the Tollie Burn and the hence the River Avero into which it flows. The proposed site is close to the Tollie Burn and the physical geography would make it very hard to prevent domestic pollution from reaching the burn.*
- 3. The building of houses between Cnoc Rudh and Dublin will increase the density of houses considerably. There are 8 houses at Cnoc Rudh and 16 houses at Dublin a further 6 will create high density housing.*
- 4. Light pollution cannot be discounted as even the improved street lighting still diffuses light over a wide area and it only marginally reduces light escaping upwards. Having checked a recent light installation by the Highland Council the light halo effect was perfectly evident although the lights themselves could not be seen. Although there might be the prospect of legislation this can in no way be guaranteed. As such the Council should presume that such legislation will not be put in place rather than assume that it will.*
- 5. The development of new houses between Cnoc Rudh and Dublin will not finance the restoration of Ardross Mains. The fact that the proposal suggests that 6 houses are built here this is not enough to act as an incentive to restore Ardross Mains. If houses are built on the area between Cnoc Rudh and Dublin this will be instead of the restoration of Ardross Mains as higher profits can be made (the land is in private ownership) on new build than on restoration / renovation and 6 will not create a large enough margin to renovate a substantial stone built, Ballahulisch slate roofed farm houses, cottages and the barns.*

6. As Ardross, Strathrusdale, Lealty, Boath, Loanreoch and Strathy has changed from Rural Development Area to a Heritage / Natural classification further developments of groups of houses appears to be counter to the principles of this status.

3.6 Ardross Community Council [CD30/13]

We sustain all our comments listed in our letter of the 14th January 2004. We found the form very confusing so we have to had to write to you.

We welcome the dropping of the RDA for Ardross and the classification of the area as Natural Heritage Zone (NHZ).

We welcome the reduction of allocation at Cuillich. p34, item 34.

We still sustain our objection to development between Dublin and Cnoc Ruadh. The proposed development here is against the residents' views. We note also that despite wishing to promote housing both here and at Tollie the provision of an upgraded septic tank for the area has been dropped from the new draft, despite being promised in the Responses to objections. We seek clarification, It is important that the existing Scottish Water septic tank is upgraded and incorporates the Dublin foul drainage as promised for 2004/5, before any further development is allowed. p31 item 7 & 7d

On page 28 limits to new housing numbers are discussed, we welcome this but wonder how it applies and how it is ensured that it is kept to. Likewise development in the NHZ, the Council plans to monitor approved applications, how is this to be policed, and what is the mechanism?

The Council's Response

3.7 A Chamier [CD30/120]

The allocations given for the four development areas require to serve the needs of the surrounding countryside areas where there are no specific allocations. There is significant pressure for housing within rural areas for individual housing plots and the identification of clustered groups of housing where there is already established development, offers potential for housing in a rural location. This will remove some of the pressure for the continued applications for housing in inappropriate locations. The identification of allocations at the Ardross Steading building and the former Castle Inn also offers potential for development of brownfield sites in keeping with sustainable principles. The overall capacity for the identified sites would serve to meet demand for the development of isolated housing. The take up of the total allocation is expected to be over the period of the Plan and beyond, and intends to meet Structure Plan allocations for the period to 2017.

3.8 A) The figure proposed for Cuillich indicates the total number of houses for the allocated site. The previous development has three houses developed on the site. The policy should more clearly state that the residual figure lies between 3-5 houses. Modifications to the text capacity figure were made to delete in 7(c) "6-8 houses" and replace with "3-5 houses".

3.9 B) The development potential of the Ardross Mains Steading is not readily quantifiable as capacity figures will vary according to the type of redevelopment

proposed. The exact nature of any development proposal would need to be addressed through a planning application. Redevelopment of the steading is likely to be expensive and require the benefit of an element of new build within the allocated area to cross-subsidise renovation work, although the renovation and sale of the existing farmworkers cottages may provide necessary revenue. There may be locus within the renovation for uses other than housing to be accommodated within the steading building. Proposals for any new build would require to be in keeping with the existing buildings and reflect the nature of the farm workers accommodation that exists on the site. New build on the site should be restricted to the north of the steading building. The policy text was modified to reflect more clearly requirements for development on the site with new wording, "*The former Ardross Mains Steading offers potential for renovation to provide housing within the existing farmworkers cottages and the steading building. There is opportunity for development of business uses within the steading to provide local employment opportunities. Potential exists for limited new build to help cross-subsidise renovation of the steading building. This should be located to the north of the steading building and reflect the character, layout and design of the existing farm workers buildings. Development shall be subject to the provision of necessary infrastructure.*"

3.10 Ardross Community Council [CD30/13]

7(c) The figure proposed for Cuillich indicates the total number of houses for the allocated site. The previous development has three houses developed on the site. The policy should more clearly state that the residual figure lies between 3-5 houses. Modified text capacity figure was inserted, the figure in 7(c) "6-8 houses" was replaced with "3-5 houses".

3.11 7(d) The site at Dublin was introduced in response to the previous larger allocation adjacent the Ardross Hall. The allocation as proposed is for housing at a low density to provide for an element of demand for the area. Dublin is served by a septic tank which is due to be upgraded by Scottish Water by the end of 2005, any new development however, would be the subject of General Supporting Policy 2 (GSP2) and may be required to make contribution to create the necessary capacity or improve sewage treatment.

3.12 Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for sustainability that states proposed development should be compatible with service provision and that development served by an existing adopted septic tank would comply with this policy aim.

3.13 In relation to the development of the site, conditions of any planning permission can require that early structural planting and landscaping be carried out to minimise the impact of and help integrate development into the landscape. Guidance in relation to house design seeks sympathetic development to that existing but also encourages innovation in design as evidenced in the Ardross Hall.

3.14 7(e) The allocation at Ardross Steading reflects the dispersal of housing allocations as stated through a high level of representation at the Consultative Draft stage of the Plan. The proposal at Ardross Steading is for the renovation of the existing steading

building an associated farm workers cottage. The development of new build would also occur within the established boundary of the steading. This would not have any material effect on the rural nature of the area. The steading and surrounding buildings did historically provide a home for up to 100 residents, the scale of development proposed currently would not be anything like this figure.

3.15 Mr J Brown [CD30/12]

Additional housing must be consistent with, or enhance, the cohesiveness and visual appearance of the group. Generally this should be within the existing boundary of the group, but these may be opportunities for some limited extension beyond this where the development will contribute to enhancing the appearance of the group as a whole (through, for example, new edge planting) and where its rural character is not undermined. Proposals which will result in suburbanisation, ribbon and backland development, involve excessive infrastructure or loss of prime agricultural land or important areas of woodland, for example, will not be considered acceptable.

3.15 The sites proposed would extend to what would be a form of ribbon development extending eastwards along the Scotsburn Road. This would produce an almost continuous stretch of development eastwards from the Ardross crossroads for a distance of over 800 metres, not in keeping with the existing pattern of development. These proposals do not accord with the Council's approved policies with regard to housing in the countryside.

3.16 Recent applications were recently considered in respect of four of the nine sites identified within the objection [THC 8/1]. Two of these have been approved contrary to recommendation, with the other two being refused in line with the recommendation. The recommendation for refusal offered by planning official was based on non-compliance with current policy namely the proposals were not in keeping with Structure Plan Policy H3 and Development Plan Policy Guideline in relation to Housing in the Countryside.

3.17 The two approved sites lie to the east of the Ardross crossroads were approved by Committee on the basis that they were adjacent existing housing and were situated close to the facilities of the school and hall.

3.18 Current policy advice in the form of the Development Plan Policy Guidelines (DPPG) on Housing in the Countryside and Affordable Housing [CD6] indicates that there is scope in the countryside for development but should take place in established groups which comprise cluster, linear, or other recognisable forms of building without such a facility, but which are contained within a clear visual envelope. These have been identified within Appendix III of the Deposit Draft Local Plan. The DPPG states that these should be defined where housing pressures are such to justify their explicit definition (page 5)[CD6]. Exceptions to this policy would have to be able to satisfy the requirements in relation to justification on land management criteria.

3.19 On this basis it is not accepted that the further proposed three sites, to the south-east

- of the crossroads constitute part of an existing group east of the B9176 at Dalnavie and that these represent sporadic development along the Scotsburn Road. Further concentration of development at the crossroads of the B9176, for two plots, are not consistent with the planned development of the existing group at Ardross, as indicated in PAN 72, and set precedent for further sprawl of the community to the north and east of the crossroads.
- 3.20 Sue Dymond [CD30/136]
1) The site at Dublin was introduced in response to the previous larger allocation adjacent the Ardross Hall. The allocation as proposed is for housing at a low density to provide for an element of demand for the area. Dublin is served by a septic tank which is due to be upgraded by Scottish Water by the end of 2005. Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for sustainability that states proposed development should be compatible with service provision.
- 3.21 The question of views from private households is not a consideration for the planning authority, although the question of amenity is. The intended density and limited number of houses proposed will reduce the impact on surrounding properties. The issue of impact of street lighting will be addressed at the time of a development application. The Council has some discretion in respect for small housing developments. There are considerations such as providing a safe environment for pedestrians, including children travelling to school, also security issues. The Council has pursued a lighting policy for the past 16 years of only approving lighting that does not emit light upwards. Developments are dealt with by the Council on an individual basis and small developments (4 or less units) may not be required to provide street lighting however these may be required to provide cable and ducting to cater for any future expansion of this development. The question of privately installed security lights as a nuisance is currently being put through as a light trespass bill to make inappropriate use of such lighting a statutory nuisance. The bill will only be applicable in England and Wales but similar legislation is likely in Scotland.
- 3.22 2) See response Anthony Chamier [CD30/120] above. Also
(a) Advice from The Councils TEC service indicate that the road network is capable of accommodating an increase of traffic flows at the scale of allocations proposed. Any road improvements required to directly serve the development would have to be provided by the developer.
- 3.23 (b) See response to 1 above.
- 3.24 (c) The allocation at Ardross Steading reflects the dispersal of housing allocations as stated through a high level of representation at the Consultative Draft stage of the Plan. The proposal at Ardross Steading is for the renovation of the existing steading building an associated farmworkers cottage. The development of new build would also occur within the established boundary of the steading. This would not have any material effect on the rural nature of the area. The steading and surrounding buildings did historically provide a home for up to 100 workers the scale of development proposed currently would not be anything like this figure.

Response to Further Written Submissions

3.25 **Sue Dymond [CD30/136]**

The existing groups of houses at Dublin/Cnoc Ruadh are sited almost immediately adjacent and give the appearance of being a single cluster with a defined envelope to the existing development. In this respect the allocation presents the opportunity for development of the infill site. The level of development proposed is for low density, although indications from the Community Council to see the development of sheltered housing within the area could be accommodated on the site in a form of development closer reflecting that already existing.

3.26 Scottish Water programme provides the replacement of the septic tank drainage serving the development at Dublin/Cnoc Ruadh for completion by the end of 2005. This, however, will only provide adequate capacity for the existing housing and any additional development in respect of the allocation will require to make contributions to create the necessary capacity.

3.27 In regard to lighting I refer to previous response in this respect contained in para 3.10 above.

3.28 The development at Dublin/Cnoc Ruadh is not intended to provide any financial contribution towards the renovation at Ardross Mains where the policy statement for that site indicates there may be potential for new build within the overall extent of the site.

3.29 The heritage/natural zone does not preclude the development of housing but places greater emphasis on the environment and natural heritage considerations. The proposals at Dublin and Ardross Mains Steading are consistent with national and Structure Plan guidance.

3.30 **Ardross Community Council [CD30/13]**

The existing groups of houses at Dublin/Cnoc Ruadh are sited adjacent and function as a single cluster with a clearly defined envelope to the existing development. In this respect the allocation presents the opportunity for development of the infill site. The level of development proposed is for low density, although indications from the Community Council to see the development of sheltered housing within the area could be accommodated on the site in a form of development closer reflecting that already existing.

3.31 Scottish Water programme provides the replacement of the septic tank drainage serving the development at Dublin/Cnoc Ruadh for completion by the end of 2005. This, however, will only provide adequate capacity for the existing housing and any additional development in respect of the allocation will be required to make contributions to create the necessary capacity.

3.32 In respect of General Supporting Policy GSP7 Settlement Expansion the 25% guidance figure refers to the main settlements contained in Chapters 7-34. In

relation to small rural settlements, allocations contained within these are seeking to provide for a large rural catchment and in general have little in the way of facilities. The allocation adjacent the crossroads obviously represents more than 25% of the existing within the boundary, but in this situation is aimed at supporting the existing facilities of the hall and school meeting sustainability criteria.

- 3.33 There is a need to monitor the level of development throughout the Council Area through the production of a Housing Land Audit in addition to this it is the intention to produce an annual Local Plan monitoring report to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of policy. In this respect the provision of detailed information allied to use of The Councils GIS system will provide further background to inform the consideration of planning applications.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The allocation at Dublin/Cnoc Ruadh offers the opportunity for a low level of development to meet some of the housing requirement for the area within a recognisable settlement envelope.
- 4.2 Ardross Mains Steading provides an opportunity for the renovation of the existing buildings which are of some architectural note. In order to achieve this, an element of new build to subsidise the renovation may be required.
- 4.3 The overall allocation for the Ardross area may exceed the indicated figure of 25 houses which reflects the projected requirement for the area. The allocation at Ardross Mains Steading is not defined in terms of housing allocations. The existing farmworkers cottages at the Steading provide 7 houses already within the extent of the site and may provide the necessary revenue for renovation of the steading. The steading may then offer potential for either business or residential units, although new build may be required to subsidise the renovation of the steading building and prevent it falling further into dereliction.
- 4.4 The development of single house sites to the east of Ardross crossroads are not consistent with guidance and would create ad-hoc, intermittent and dispersed form of development and as such do not accord with national or Structure Plan guidance.
- 4.5 Accordingly, The Council would ask that the Reporter recommends no change to the content of the Deposit Draft with Modifications, in respect of these matters.**