

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

ROSS & CROMARTY EAST LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY

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

ISSUE 42: Tain – Housing general

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Highland Council (THC) has undertaken to hold a Public Local Inquiry to consider objections lodged by JF Jackson [CD30/100] in respect of policies contained in Chapter 33, policy 16 Viewfield Park and policy 20 North of Jubilee Drive of the Deposit Draft Plan which refer to Housing and Expansion areas west of the bypass in Tain and Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD30/173] in respect of policies contained within Chapter 33, policies 16 Viewfield Park and policy 20 North of Jubilee Drive of the Deposit Draft with reference to Housing sites and Expansion and policy 20, Knockbreck Farm and policy 22, Adjacent to tennis courts in relation to allocation for mixed uses, also objection lodged by Dr R C Golesworthy [CD30/129] and David M Cox [CD30/150] in respect of policies contained in Chapter 33, policy 16: Viewfield Park. All parties wish to appear at the Inquiry.
- 1.2 Objections received by Mrs M Bremner [CD30/80] in respect of policy contained in Chapter 33, policy 16 Viewfield Park of the Deposit Draft Plan with reference to housing development, Mrs S G H Stone [CD30/70] in relation to housing at policy 16 Viewfield Park and policy BI 17 Blarliath in respect of allocation as a housing site and Tain Community Council [CD30/219] in respect of link road through site adjacent to tennis courts to Kirksheaf/Fendom are understood to be the subject of further written submissions.
- 1.3 Objections lodged by Royal Fine Arts Commission [CD30/306], Peter Whiteley [CD30/92], E & C Valentine [CD30/128], G & J Ross [CD30/173], R & J Chisholm [CD30/304], I Rae [CD30/79], J Cuthbert [CD30/157], J Tait [CD30/134], Mr Leo Daly [CD30/219], Ryden Property Consultants for Morangie Estates [CD30/112] and D Denoon & Son [CD30/63] in respect of Chapter 33 are either sustained on the basis of written submissions lodged in respect of the Deposit Draft Local Plan or not withdrawn.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].
- 1.4 Objections to the Deposit Draft with modifications were lodged by Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD31/461] in respect of policies contained in Chapter 33 in relation to provision for a health centre and also policies in relation to H18 Kirksheaf Road and H19 Morangie Road West and landscaped area adjacent to A9 and Mr Leo Daly [CD31/418] in relation to H18 Kirksheaf Road, H19 Morangie

Road West and E25 North of Jubilee Drive are the subject of written submissions.

- 1.5 THC will call Councillor Alasdair Rhind as planning witness in respect of H17 Viewfield Park and Brian MacKenzie, Planning and Development Service as planning witness for other issues.
- 1.6 THC wishes to submit the following productions: -
[CD1] The Highland Structure Plan: Approved Plan: THC: March 2001
[CD4] Easter Ross Adopted Local Plan: THC: July 1992
[CD8] Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan: Consultative Draft: THC May 2002
[CD9] Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan: Deposit Draft: The Highland Council: 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
[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
[CD32] East Ross Settlement Landscape Capacity Study: A Technical Report prepared on behalf of the Highland Council and Scottish Natural Heritage by the Turnbull Jeffrey Partnership and Michael Wood: April 2001 (unpublished)
[THC42/1] Letter of correspondence from Mrs SGH Stone, 14 October 2002
[THC42/2] Map depicting planning history at Viewfield Park
[THC42/3] NPPG8 Town Centres and Retailing extract
[THC42/4] Statement by Councillor Alasdair Rhind in regard to housing land at Viewfield Park, Tain.

2. Background

National Planning Guidance/Advice

- 2.1 Scottish Planning Policy 3: Planning for Housing [CD15] sets out the Scottish Executive's planning policies on housing. The following paragraphs are relevant: -

60, 63 & 64 indicate that development plans should take an informed long-term view on the requirement for new housing and that the local plan should convert this into effective site-specific allocations for at least 5 years from the date of adoption. Medium to long-term planning is needed to allow all parties to consider carefully

- how to accommodate future demand for growth where infill and brownfield opportunities cannot provide all the land necessary for new housing. Local plans should also identify further sites to meet requirements in the medium term and to monitor their effectiveness and programming through the annual housing land audit, to maintain sufficient effective land for at least the following 5 years at all times.
- 2.2 Scottish Planning Policy 2: Economic Development [CD14] sets out the Scottish Executives planning policies on economic development. The following paragraphs are relevant: -
- 11** states that planning can contribute to economic development by “*providing a range of development opportunities – to ensure that there is range and choice of sites for new employment opportunities throughout Scotland*”
- 28** states that “*In rural areas development plans should recognise and encourage the potential of small towns to provide employment for the wider local community..... they should provide for small scale manufacturing and tourist related developments*”
- 2.3 SPP15 Planning for Rural Development [CD17] para **18** states: “*This SPP advances policy in respect of small scale rural housing developments including clusters and groups in close proximity to settlements, replacement housing, plots on which to build individually designed houses and holiday homes. 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.....*”

Highland Structure Plan

- 2.4 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);*
 - *impact on individual and community residential amenity;.....*
 - *impact on the following resources, including pollution and discharges, particularly within designated areas: habitats, freshwater systems,landscape, cultural heritage, scenery.....;*”

Planning History – Viewfield Park

- 2.5 Previous planning decisions in respect of Viewfield Park, are detailed below, use in conjunction with base map[THC42/2]

RC/1991/766: Approval of two house plots in outline to Mr R D Fraser, Feb 1992
 RC/1991/875: Two house plots Approved to Red Livestock, February 1992
 RC/1993/610: Erection of House (Detail) on site of 2 plots –
 Approved under RC/1991/766
 RC/1993/881: Erection of House and Garage by Mr R D Fraser –
 REFUSED November 1993 – Planning Appeal against decision
 dismissed by Scottish Office.
 RC/1994/363: Erection of House and Garage (Outline) for Mr R D Fraser (same site
 as 1993/881 except larger in size) – REFUSED June 1994.
 RC/1994/1124: Erection of 2 houses (Renewal) – outline planning permission in
 March 1995.
 RC/1996/163 & RC/1996/841: Erection of 2 Houses (Detail) – APPROVED.
 RC/1997/433 & RC/1997/434: Erection of Two Houses (Outline) – REFUSED
 RC/1997/389: Two House Sites (Outline) - REFUSED
 Reasons for refusal related to the developments being contrary to the adopted local
 plan in respect of safeguarding of agricultural land and were contrary to The
 Councils Housing in the Countryside policy. Development on unallocated land
 would lead to unprogrammed Council expenditure and not being in the interests of
 road safety. Also the development would set a precedent in respect of Housing in
 the Countryside.

Adopted Local Plan

- 2.6 The Easter Ross Local Plan [CD4] was adopted in July 1992. Chapter 6: Tain refers
 to Tain. The following provisions are relevant to the objections now under
 consideration: - para RS6.4 & 6.4(a) allocated 7ha south of the bypass for longer
 term housing and 4ha at Mansefield (Jubilee Dr/Scotsburn Rd) for housing
 development.
*para CO 6.23(b), page 53 allocated 1.7 ha of land for offices or non-food retail at
 Morangie Road (Blarliath)*
*para CV 6.41 maintained agricultural safeguards at Knockbreck, Kirksheaf and
 Morangie.*
*para 6.16(a) allocated 2ha of land at Mansefield(adjacent Viewfield Park) for a
 caravan/camping site*

Consultative Draft Plan

- 2.7 The Consultative Draft [CD8] of the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan, was
 published in May 2002. The following provisions are relevant: -

“B/I: Business/Industry

The following sites are allocated for business and industrial uses: -

<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Area (Ha)</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Requirements</i>
17.	10.0	Blarliath	business use

E: Expansion

There are no significant constraints on the expansion of the burgh. The most appropriate locations are at Knockbreck and to the north of Jubilee Drive to the west of the bypass. The views of the public are sought on the following options:-

The areas indicated in the table below are reserved to meet housing requirements over the next ten years and beyond: -

Ref.	Area (ha.)	Location	Capacity	Requirements
20.	11.0	Knockbreck Farm	100	buffer from A9, planting
21.	6.3	North of Jubilee Drive	80	access, landscaping
22.	6.2	Adjacent to tennis courts	60	housing or business use

Built form, circulation, green space and landscaping require to be integrated with each other as part of an overall concept. Where appropriate, developers will be responsible for completing the public road, water distribution and sewerage systems to the limits of their respective boundaries in the interests of the proper servicing of the area. Play space / open space should meet the standards set out in the Development Plan Policy Guideline. The Council will encourage substantial early structural tree planting to help integrate developments into the landscape.”

2.8 The representations made are summarised as follows: -

Development Factors

SEPA[CD26/157] wished added statement to state that no further development be allowed that would exceed the capacity of the pumping station.

Town Centre

Tain Tourist Association[CD26/170] and Albyn Housing Assoc.[CD26/170] wished to see development of upper floors of High St.

Housing

THC Director of Housing [CD26/155] sought higher density of housing at Tain Parks. Tain Tourist Assoc.[CD26/170] and Royal Fine Arts Commission[CD26/246] stated that land within the bypass should be developed first Tain Public meeting [CD26/246], Royal Fine Arts Commission[CD26/246] and Iain Boyd[CD26/246] views aired that Kirksheaf should be opened up for development, that development at Jubilee Drive was housing in the countryside and inappropriate. H MacKenzie[CD26/187] & Balnagown Castle Properties [CD26/6] & Tain CC [CD26/68] sought housing land outwith bypass to be allocated. Ryden for Morangie Estates [CD26/225] sought inclusion of land at Morangie Road for housing

Business Industry

Susannah Stone [CD26/68] sought housing at Blarliath, RACE [CD26/274] & Tain Heritage Trust [CD26/284] agreed with the business allocation. SNH[CD26/59] stated the siting was contrary to the Landscape Assessment. Tain Tourist Assoc.[CD26/170], Iain Boyd[CD26/246] & Tain Public meeting[CD26/413] thought Kirksheaf should be developed for business.

Special Uses

Railtrack [CD26/413] the rail yard should be safeguarded and car parking safeguarded for transport. Tain CC [CD26/68], Tain Public meeting [CD26/246], I Boyd [CD26/68], J Boyd [CD26/57] felt that indoor sports facilities should be

centred around the school.

Expansion

SNH[CD26/59] & Tain Heritage Trust [CD26/284] that screening planting was required for the site adjacent the tennis courts. Aldie Developments [CD26/54] supported development at Knockbreck. Ishbel MacMillan [CD26/123], Iain Boyd[CD26/246], Tain CC [CD26/68] & J Boyd [CD26/57] objected to access from Hartfield Gardens to serve Knockbreck. Tain CC [CD26/68] sought safeguarding of a link road route through the site adjacent the tennis courts to serve Fendom Industrial site, Tain Heritage Trust [CD26/284] stated that this was never likely to be required. Tain Tourist Assoc.[CD26/170], & the Tain Public meeting [CD26/246] thought that the business allocation was best concentrated at the site existing at Blarliath. Aldie Developments [CD26/54] stated that land at Knockbreck and adjacent the tennis courts provided the best areas for expansion of Tain but capacities should be flexible, also the access points should not be precluded through areas for amenity. Iain Boyd[CD26/246] & the Tain Public meeting [CD26/246] sought expansion areas to be annotated housing to restrict development to residential.

Amenity

Tain Tourist Association[CD26/170] & Tain Heritage Trust [CD26/284] sought enhancement of amenity areas and shading of lighting at the tennis courts and the Coop store. J Reid [CD26/284] sought retention of listed buildings on Hill Street. I Boyd [CD26/68], J Boyd [CD26/57], Tain CC [CD26/68] & J Reid [CD26/284] voiced concern of pedestrian priority for the High Street. Tain Heritage Trust [CD26/284] that the car park proposal at Stafford St should retain the trees and Tain Heritage Trust [CD26/284] that the beach road should be upgraded. SNH[CD26/59] stated plans were in place to convert the boating lake to a wildlife pond.

- 2.9 The representations made and the changes made by THC in response are detailed in [CD10].

Deposit Draft Local Plan

- 2.10 The Deposit Draft [CD9] of the Local Plan was published in October 2003. The following were submitted in respect of Chapter 33: Tain: -
- GL Hearn[CD30/69]
- *we object to the proposed allocation of the existing Co-op store on Morangie Road under Policy B 'Business*
 - *representation gives specific consideration to the site-specific allocations which effect our client*
 - *also wish to offer comment on the extant outline planning consent for a retail supermarket and car parking (LPA Ref: 01/00661/OUTRC) at Shore Road, ...we consider that it would be more appropriate for this site to be allocated in the Local Plan for residential use*
- JF Jackson [CD30/100]
- *wishes to see development take place first of all within the bypass*
 - *Jubilee Drive/Scotsburn Road-outwith bypass this would be the most promising area to consider*

- *Viewfield Park - To develop this area further would in my opinion be a serious mistake*
- *North of Jubilee Drive - This area is in my opinion is totally unsuited for expansion*
- *support the Highland Council's intention to consider traffic management schemes, particularly pedestrian priority measures, for the High Street and Town centre generally*

Tain CC [CD30/223]

- *the centre of Tain requires quite considerable extra parking spaces*

Royal Fine Arts Commission [CD30/306]

- *concerned that its recommendation to resist further development outwith the A9 bypass at Tain, whilst more appropriate sites are still available, has been rejected*

Morag Bremner [CD30/80]

- *concern about proximity of the phone mast on adjacent land*
- *objection to the allocation of land at Viewfield Park for 6 -10 houses*

SGH Stone [CD30/65 & 70]

- *objection to the allocation of land at Viewfield Park for 6 -10 houses*
- *object to the zoning for Commercial purposes of the land adjacent to the filling station at Morangie Road*

Peter Whiteley [CD30/92], E & C Valentine [CD30/128] & R C Golesworthy [CD30/129] & D Cox [CD30/150]

- *objection to the allocation of land at Viewfield Park for 6 -10 houses*

Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD30/173]

- *objection to the allocation of land at Viewfield Park for 6 -10 houses*
- *objection to continued designation of the two areas of land (E20 and E22) as expansion areas*
- *objection to area of amenity space at the southern end of the settlement*
- *object to requirement for a future access road linking the Kirksheaf area to Knockbreck Road*
- *object to the eastern access point on Knockbreck Road*

Mr Leo Daly [CD30/219]

- *objection to the allocation of land at Viewfield Park for 6 -10 houses*

Ryden Property Consultants [CD30/112]

- *seeking to have land at Morangie Road, Tain identified for housing and objections to various housing allocations*

D Denoon & Son [CD30/63]

- *seeking to have land at Kirksheaf Tain identified for housing*

T Anderson and others [CD30/121]

- *object to northern access to Knockbreck Road*

Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD30/173], G & J Ross [CD30/173], R & J Chisholm [CD30/304], I Rae [CD30/79], J Cuthbert [CD30/157] & J Tait [CD30/134]

- *object to potential access through site adjacent tennis courts to serve Kirksheaf*

2.11 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. Modifications were made to policy wording of housing and expansion sites at H17 Viewfield Park and E25 North of Jubilee Drive in respect of requirements for development. New housing allocations were introduced to the Plan in respect of objections to the Deposit Draft plan at H18 Kirksheaf Road, D Denoon [CD30/63] and H19 Morangie Road West, Ryden Property Consultants [CD30/112]. Representation made by Tain & District Medical practice [CD30/160] brought an addition to the background section in relation to the practices need to relocate to a suitable site within a central location. Introduction of policy in relation to siting of retail development was introduced in regard to representation from GL Hearn [CD30/69] who also objected in relation to the business allocation of the existing Coop supermarket.

Those made largely in response to objections and comments indicated below:-

Page 98, Background

- At the end of the third paragraph ADD "*The Health Centre requires expansion and a suitable site will require to accommodate the medical practice and associated uses. This should be sited in a central location to enable access to all the community and the Council will support development at a suitable location.*"

Page 99, Town Centre

- INSERT new paragraph 3 "*Proposals for retail development should satisfy the sequential approach. That is, in the absence of town centre sites, consideration should be given to edge of centre sites, and, in the absence of either town centre or edge of centre sites consideration should be given to out of centres sites which are easily accessible to choice of means of transport and located within the defined settlement boundary. [R1,2, 4 - 7, G2 & 3]*".

Page 99, Housing, paragraph 16

- MODIFY the policy text and inset map to reflect the need for developers to address the access and the linkages to the town centre. ADD to requirements, "*Improvements required to both vehicular and pedestrian access, provision of Safer Routes to School plan*".

Page 99, Housing

- ADD new Policy, "*18., Kirksheaf Road, 1.2ha, 12 houses, subject to suitable access and road improvements.*"
- ADD new Policy, "*19., Morangie Road, 4.3ha, lower density development, 15-20 houses, subject to suitable access and road improvements, significant structural planting to A9 and enhancement of town entrance.*" MODIFY Tain inset to reflect new allocation boundary to include the extent of the site.

Page 100, Special Uses

- ADD POLICY "*Special Uses, 20. The Council will seek to maintain the existing retail use at Morangie Road.*"

Page 100, Expansion, paragraph 21

- MODIFY requirements of Policy 21 to read "*longer term housing, pedestrian access to town, provision of Safer routes to school plan, landscaping and planting to A9*"

- 2.13 Further objections were received from Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD31/461] in relation to potential restrictions of siting of proposed health centre and new housing allocations at H18 Kirksheaf Road and H19 Morangie Road West and Mr Leo Daly [CD31/418] in relation to new housing allocations at H18 Kirksheaf Road and H19 Morangie Road West and also to modifications at E25 North of Jubilee Drive.

3. The Council's Observations

The Objections

3.1 JF Jackson [CD30/100]

Housing General- *I would firstly wish to make a general observation regarding the (non)availability of building land for houses in the Burgh.*

We would have liked to live within walking distance of the town but built at our present location outwith the A9 bypass which is some distance uphill from the centre of the Burgh

There are, as you are aware, large areas of land within the bypass already scheduled for housing. I would assert that much more emphasis needs to be placed in the Draft Plan (p98 - Development Factors) on the need to make this land actually available for housing in practical terms before the whole compact nature of this Ancient Burgh is lost by scheduling new areas for housing outwith the natural existing boundaries of the town. Reference is made (p98, para 4 of Background) to the "limited developments over the last decade". I would suggest that the past, present and future development of the Burgh is actually being held back by the difficulties referred to above.

I am keen to see this Ancient Royal Burgh develop appropriately over the next ten years and I trust my comments will be viewed as a positive contribution to the current debate.

Viewfield Park - *To develop this area further would in my opinion be a serious mistake, lying so far outwith the natural boundaries of the Burgh. I would therefore urge you to reconsider including this as an area at all for future housing. In addition to my general comments I would point out that the Quarry Hill road access is narrow (poor single track) and forms part of the general amenity of Tain and is used by a large number of people for recreational walking/jogging/dog walking etc and by the Academy as part of a cross country course for pupils.*

North of Jubilee Drive - *This area is in my opinion is totally unsuited for expansion as further housing for the reasons previously given in my general comments. In addition there is a further serious safety problem with this area and that is the relationship to Craighill Primary School and the lack of a safe pedestrian access. The pedestrian underpass in area 11 is in reality a very long way away in the wrong direction. Even at present there are both adults and children who attempt to cross the busy A9 from Quarry Road and the Jubilee development to Craighill Terrace where the primary school is situated! Area 21 is even further from the underpass. The A9 is a busy 60 mph road and it is difficult to exit onto it even as a driver. It is at this point 5 lanes wide (2 carriageways, 2 slip roads, a centre turning lane and no central reservation). To permit development in such a location would, in my opinion, be the height of folly.*

3.2 Dr R C Golesworthy [CD30/129]

Viewfield Park - *I wish to place on record my objection to a modification of the Local Plan inserted between the Consultative and Deposit Drafts. It has been sponsored in the name of the Royal Borough of Tain Community Council. It would enable housing developments that have been repeatedly and comprehensively rejected since 1993. I refer to page 5 -65 of the Report on Representations to the Consultative Draft where the response is to modify the Plan:*
"ADD new allocation of housing sites, "16., 3.5ha., Viewfield Park,
The existing three houses in this area were approved by the Planning Committee in 1991, contrary to the recommended rejection by the Planning Department. In 1997 two applications for permissions were rejected. One was assessed: "It is a 100% expansion of an unplanned development on unallocated land in the countryside". Both applications were seen as setting an undesirable precedent. The rejection was upheld on appeal to the Scottish Office.

All of the objections on record against further development in this area still apply. All of the planning appraisals relating to this area still apply. Indeed, it was stated there that the approval of such ad hoc group development in the countryside would prejudice this review of the Local Plan, because it would undermine the Council's Housing in the Countryside Policy and Local Plan Policy. This is still the case. Furthermore, the rate of housing growth in Tain is expected to slow (loc. Cit. page 5-66, para. 6(c).) The Planning Department declares there that: "Retaining the current allocation will mean that the requirement is amply met... .".

It is perverse of the Royal Borough of Tain Community Council (Chairman: Mr. R. Robertson, owner of the land in question) to submit this proposal. For the reasons I have given and others in the record, I would suggest that your department should not allow this change of designation and allocation, or any subsequent variant of it, to enter the Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan

3.3 David M Cox [CD30/150]

Viewfield Park - *I wish to make representation re the above with particular regard to the area of land to the East of Viewfield which has now been zoned for Housing and Amenity land immediately to the west of the land previously zoned for Business*

as shown on the Consultative Draft dated 2002.

I am greatly disturbed by this change and am concerned to fathom how this area of land, especially the area zoned for Housing has suddenly now been put forward for that purpose. I have particularly noted that a planning application in that area was recently turned down on the basis it was out with the Tain envelope and therefore against Planning Policy.

I am astonished at such a policy reversal without some serious discussion and public justification. In view of your own policy commitment to The National Code of Local Government Conduct as it relates to Planning Issues I would be obliged to know and be reassured that there were no possible cause for public disquiet on this strange outcome.

As a keen subscriber to the internet and a disciple of the transparency that this medium affords to Joe Public I am aware of a large number of Applications which have been submitted and turned down recently because they were outside the Tain envelope. I am sure that many if not all these applicants would be as puzzled as I am that land at Viewfield suddenly enjoys the planning favour that has eluded them. I sincerely trust that an audit trail from the proponents of this scheme to the beneficiary will pass public scrutiny but I have no doubt you will be able to reassure me on that specific point.

My reassurance is necessary as I understand the re-zoning of this area was done behind closed doors by the Planning Committee in Dingwall largely at the single minded behest of one Councillor. I believe there are other stronger contenders in the form of land sites and individual plots which should be rated more highly than Viewfield to be zoned for housing.

The road leading to the sites is inadequate and the development would be detrimental to the amenity of the rural landscape.

I contend that the area numbered 22E on both the Consultative Draft and the Deposit Draft Plan together with the other Housing areas, both within the A9 envelope and the original Plan are more than adequate for the future planned expansion of Tain. The late addition of this re-zoning is unnecessary and will only invite public scepticism in the Planning Department's ability to be even-handed in this sensitive sphere of Local Democracy.

This re-zoning is surplus to requirements, ill advised and detrimental to amenity. I urge you to delete the zoning for housing from area of land labelled H 16 to the east of Viewfield from the Plan.

3.4 **Mrs M Bremner [CD30/80]**

Viewfield Park-*I am concerned to find this area now zoned for housing. It was previously designated as hinterland and apparently because of the very determined insistence of our councillor it is now to be included within the boundaries of Tain and houses built on it. This proposal was not mentioned in any detail in the*

previous statement and there has been no opportunity for any in-depth discussions on the subject. I am troubled by this occurrence given the circumstances I describe in paragraph 4 (HJ Mackenzie).

This farm field is accessed from a single-track road, which is already used heavily to access the Tain Hill Walk. It is about 1.8km from Tain High Street and some 0.5 km from Jubilee Drive. A housing scheme here allows Tain to sprawl into the country-side when in fact there are already identified sites within Tain which would allow for the better development of our town and sit better with the Council's own development policies. I suspect Mr Rhind would draw your attention to the problems associated with these areas but is it not the duty of our community leaders to address the problems and assist in resolving these issues? It would certainly be to Tain's long-term benefit.

I would like to draw your attention to chapter 5-67 No7 HI Mackenzie (187). I notice this application for a proposed housing development on land almost identical to Mr Robertson's was dismissed because "There is currently an adequate land supply for housing development identified in Tain." Exactly the same argument applies to Mr Robertson's site. Why would an exception be made for this site?

2) The encroachment of suburban Tain into this particular part of the countryside is going to have a very direct result on the local flora and fauna. Each year two pairs of Skylarks use this site to nest. It also houses several hares. You will be well aware of the continuing and increasing loss to our environment of these precious creatures. This proposed change will do nothing to stop it.

3) I am reliably informed that Tain's new football field lights can be seen from Nairn. A housing scheme at this elevation with the attendant street lighting, modern or otherwise, will only add to society's increasing problem with light pollution. It puts Tain on the map but not in a positive way.

The continuing development of my town is a subject, which I take very seriously. It is my opinion that this proposed development is not in the interests of the people of Tain and most definitely not in the interests of our environment.

3.5 Mrs S G H Stone [CD30/70 & 65]

Viewfield Park - *It was only at the end of November 2003, at the monthly meeting of Tain's Community Council, that we were first presented with the Highland Council's map altering a part of the Boundary of Tain and incorporating Viewfield Farm, Ref. E17. No discussions took place at the meeting, but it appeared that we had not, as a council been allowed more than 6 weeks to consider and respond to this idea. Time has still not been found to meet and discuss the plan, but what worries me is that such a major change to the Highland Council's Policy on development in the hinter land around Tain could, for either good or ill, suddenly be introduced to the citizens of the Borough, without prior knowledge, at the end of the long consultation period in which so many of our local population have already taken part.*

The rights and wrongs of "housing up the Hill" are not my business. It is for those employed by the Highland Council to assess housing needs in the best interests of this ancient Royal Borough. However, as a Member of Tain's Community Council, it is one of my responsibilities to help Tain's inhabitants to understand and have a fair say in their town's affairs.

Thus I feel that the "HOWS and WHYS" of this Border shift must be shown to the large majority of our local population who, it seems/have heard nothing of this change in Tain's outline, so that they can have a free chance to comment.

Last minute notes displayed in the Locality Office, are never looked at, and it is therefore essential that the Development Department of the Highland Council give out detailed information, with time for everyone's considered response.

BI17, Blarliath - *I wish to formally object to the zoning for Commercial purposes of the land adjacent to the filling station at Morangie Road, Tain, Ref B 17, with specific reference to its possible use for hotel, offices or similar commercial usage. The land in question has been zoned for such purposes for some years now with little or no interest whatsoever therein.*

I believe this site is in the wrong location for tourist related development, which would include a tourist office or similar facility. (Further on the west side of the A9, there is room for this within your plan, is there not?) I have checked with RACE and they indicated they have no interest whatsoever in the site for commercial development such as offices, and HOST do not have any funds to provide a tourist related facility.

As you are probably aware, Tain is already well served with three main hotels, the Mansefield, Royal and Morangie House, in addition to which there are numerous smaller establishments such as guest houses and B & B's. Provision of a further hotel would simply result in displacement, a situation I trust Highland Council could not support.

I would therefore very much like to see the land at the filling station re-zoned for housing, as there is a dire need for additional housing land in Tain. I appreciate that I already have some acres of land at Morangie Road zoned for housing and I am currently speaking to a well-known developer regarding development of this land, which I hope to see commencing during this year.

My current wish is to see the smaller site adjacent to the filling station developed for housing for the elderly, with nearness to the type of shopping old people need, and coupled with the finest 3-way views in the whole of Tain. This beautiful area (drains, sewers etc already at hand), in full view of approaching visitors from the north, of whom Tain so desperately need, would be wasted on inevitably uninviting commercial buildings, which would be more suitably situated in the large spare acreage below the brae.

Thus I would insist on a very high quality of design for both these prominent sites of

my land.

I regret I cannot therefore concede to the proposed current zoning of the land in question for commercial purposes, and enclose my Objection

3.6 Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD30/173]

E20, Knockbreck Farm & E22, Adjacent to tennis courts

1) These representations support the continued designation of the two areas of land (E20 and E22) as expansion areas. We are slightly concerned that the site references (20 -Knockbreck Farm) and (22 -Adjacent to tennis courts) seem to be suggesting that these expansion areas will be limited to housing use only.

We would suggest that the inset map should be altered so that both areas are shown as a mixed (H/E) Housing/Expansion area. Although we are aware of the previous feedback from certain parts of the community on the consultative draft plan, we do not believe that sites 20 and 22 should be restricted to residential use only. We consider that other small scale facilities which are entirely compatible with residential use are capable of being accommodated on these sites. Such uses would include those contained within the list of uses under the Expansion heading in Appendix 1 on page 107 of the plan. We therefore request that changes are made to the text on page 100 of the plan to ensure that there is a cross reference to the list of other acceptable land uses that could be compatible with the residential allocations.

This suggested change would ensure that greater flexibility could be achieved and also prevent certain small scale compatible facilities from being excluded in these areas.

2) In terms of the access proposals for site 20 we agree with the proposed access position indicated from Hartfield Gardens. However we do not consider that there is the need for an additional access point from the north at Seaforth Road given that this western end of the site is-likely to be developed for low density individual plots as was proposed in the previous planning application that was recommended for approval by planning officials.

3) We have no objections to the identification of the amenity areas at the entrance to Tain in conjunction with sites 20 and 22.

H16, Viewfield Park- *Elsewhere we are surprised to see the identification of site H16 within the settlement boundary. Site H16 is isolated from the rest of the built up area and completely segregated by the amenity/landscape areas to the east towards the Carnegie Lodge Hotel. The Development factors paragraph states that 'Tain has developed from its original core along a series of radial routes. The resulting development pattern of a semi-circle is emphasised by the residential infill up to the A9. A substantial area of land remains within the semi-circle, although limited development has taken place outwith the bypass, generally on land owned by the council.'*

As there is recognition within this statement that there are substantial areas that

remain to be developed within the boundaries of the A9, a key issue which is raised in the plan is whether further development should be allowed to the west of the bypass.

Although consent has previously been granted for housing on site H16 its inclusion within the settlement boundary was not shown in the draft plan and was not promoted by the planning officials in the preparation of the finalised plan. It was only included in the plan following a request by the local councillor at the council meeting on 15 September 2003. The inclusion of this site is inconsistent with the arguments against the non inclusion of site H16 and others in the vicinity (e.g St Vincent) and the departments previous response to the representations (33 PGH 7-9) on the draft plan (pages 5-67) where 'no changes' were proposed and have subsequently been agreed by the councillors.

B2, Business Use

We are also concerned about identification of the site identified as an area of amenity space at the southern end of the settlement boundary as shown on the proposals map. This area is currently used for business purposes and has been for some considerable time. The plan notes that business and industrial land is becoming scarcer in Tain and therefore we object to the rezoning of this site as an area of amenity space. The sites current use should therefore be recognised and the inset map altered to take account of this use.

X22, Adjacent to tennis courts

On site 22 it is implied within the planning officials responses to the consultative draft local plan that there may be a longer term requirement for a future access road linking the Kirksheaf area to Knockbreck Road. The only reference to this in the finalised plan is the statement which says 'there are difficulties in accessing land below the ridge off Kirksheaf Road,' There is therefore no clear reference to this proposal in the text of the finalised plan or on the proposals map to even suggest that this may be required. My clients would therefore strongly object to any access road which is constructed as part of a housing development on this site being used to link these two areas or any other land being reserved for a separate access route”.

Tain Map in relation to E20, Knockbreck Farm

We would also request that the eastern access point on Knockbreck Road is relocated to a more southern point so that it is moved from outwith the Bannerman Company Ltd landholdings and into my clients landholdings. This will provide certainty that the site can be accessed properly and developed in accordance with an approved masterplan.

Further Written Submissions

3.7 Mrs S G H Stone [CD30/70]

BI 17 Blarliath

I wish to comment on my Objection to the zoning of my land adjacent to the Morangie Road filling station.

In the Highland Council Response to my Objection they state that my land just short of 4 acres and now zoned for Business/Tourism uses "provides opportunit business/tourism development to serve Tain and the surrounding area. Outwith this allocation the only alternative business area lies within the town centre RUBBISH! The Highland Council have zoned a very large area adjoining my land, for the same business/tourism purpose.

In view of the above, I feel strongly on the following points;

1) If I am correct there is, in this area, a great need for housing for the elderly and disabled, which should include the appropriate and latest modern aids.

2) My Highland Fine Houses Site (B17) with its slight slope down towards the Sewage Disposal Plant at the lower level, has all the necessary advantages. Apart from being fully serviced it has a unique three-way view across the Dornoch Firth and distant hills - an important feature for Senior Citizens and the disabled.

Two developers have shown an interest in this kind of approach, on a small part of the Site. But I am told the Highland Council would never allow this.

3) On the question of this land for Business Use, I had an application for a Supermarket, for 1.25 acres, some 4 years or so ago. After around 2 years planning, discussion and agreement, a date was fixed for the Planning Application to be heard. But at the Planning Meeting, a "No Food" Restriction on the land was found, and the Application was refused. a) Why has this No Food clause not been officially removed? Despite frequent requests?

b) This farce has caused me fees for lawyers, surveyors etc of around twelve thousand pounds, still largely unpaid. Thanks to the good will and good natures of my professional advisors involved, these costs have been put on one side until I AM ABLE TO SELL SOMETHING!

c) Has the land adjacent to mine, with the same Designation got a similar "Restriction"?

I now face the fact that I have land that 1) I am unable to develop; 2) no one wants and 3) has Planning Blight. For me, a very costly mess.

H17 Viewfield Park

I wish to Comment on my Objection listed under "Boundary of Tain Vewfield Park".

1) On the new Easter Ross Plan — after the consultation period is complete and final date agreed, new alterations to the plan appear from nowhere. Why?

2) It is democratically wrong if the citizens of Tain are not given information and time to think, look and consult on matters pertaining to this much respected ancient Burgh, which is unique in the Highlands and depends entirely on its image for the income from visitors.

3) Tain land, in and around, appears to be zoned for various purposes without in most cases the knowledge of the owners, (as in my case at Knockbreck) or the input of valuable consideration by the people of Tain.

4) In short it seems an expensive waste of money to squander Official's time and effort on a Local Plan that can be and is, frequently altered. Why bother at all?

3.8 Tain Community Council [CD30/219]

The Community Council is of the opinion that provision should be made for a future link between the A9 and the Fendom Road.

3.9 Mrs M Bremner [CD30/80]

Thank you for this opportunity to expand upon my objections to the changes to the local plan with regard to Viewfield Park in Tain.

As I understand it this local plan is about planning for Tain's future. The ideal being to provide as much housing as possible within the A9 boundary to allow for ease of access to all our facilities; schools, healthcare, library etc. I notice also that the council would like to broaden the choice of sites and locations (P80. 1.)

*It is my contention that the council has already identified a large enough acreage with broad choice within the A9 boundary (Hartfield, Morangie-low **density**, Kirksheaf and Morrison's land behind Craighill) without need to change Tain's boundary and land use at Viewfield Park. A study of past planning matters in Tain will allow you to come to the conclusion that with any degree of purpose and goodwill, this land could have been released for housing.*

I have been told by a council official that the Council is releasing land at Jubilee (south) for low-cost housing and self-builds. New housing here is not going to exacerbate the problem of people crossing the A9 junction at Craighill. The natural path will be to take the underpass.

This will not be the case with housing at Viewfield Park. The natural inclination for pedestrians from Viewfield and the north side of Jubilee is to cross the A9 at the Craighill junction. Jubilee residents already have a safe path to the underpass and choose not to use it so why would a path from Viewfield help this situation. The real and immediate problem is the actual crossing of the 4/5 lanes.

I postulate that an underpass or a bridge will be required to solve the problem but am also aware of budgetary constraints that the Council is labouring under. It would be disingenuous to allow this housing development to go ahead with the proviso that a safe route to school should be provided whilst knowing the Council could not realistically carry out its obligation. A safe crossing must be in place before houses are built should the council continue with its current intentions.

At face value Viewfield is about providing 6 - 10 low density houses but once the boundary change has been implemented and the problem of "housing in the countryside" has been disposed of it is entirely feasible that up to 40 houses could be built on this site. This is urban sprawl in a big way.

I enclose two photographs which I took last summer (June 2004). This was after a bad but not unusual fall of rain. With more properties at Viewfield I have to ask what provision for the incredible amount of water that comes off the hill will be made. It can't go into the sewerage system and these houses will make that much more of the land unavailable to soak up the rainwater. It makes this site unsuitable for more housing.

Yet another reason is the wildlife. I was distressed to read that my point had been dismissed with the comment"... does not provide a significant habitat for wildlife." This is a ridiculous statement which you will see for yourself on your site visit. There are skylarks in that

field; a species identified by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group as a national priority species. I know there are many other birds, insects and wildlife that use the habitat provided by that field. Urban sprawl and destruction of our wildlife's habitat is a continuing and real problem for our society and a problem Tain need not face given my argument in paragraph 3.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my points as to why the boundary and land use change at Viewfield should be rescinded.

Deposit Draft with Modifications (Proposed Changes)

The objections in this respect indicates

3.10 Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD31/461]

Background - Reference to Health Centre

In response to representation received from the Tain and District Medical Group (TDMG), the Council has proposed the following modification to the Local Plan - "The Health Centre requires expansion and a suitable site will require to accommodate the medical practice and associated uses. This should be sited in a central location to enable access to all the community and the Council will support development at a suitable location."

While we acknowledge the need for suitable current and future provision for a Health Centre in Tain, it would be prohibitive of the Council to exclude any site at this stage given the recognition that the centre of Tain suffers from numerous constraints and barriers to development.

The term "associated use" could be applied to the development of sites for leisure use, and the TDMG indicated in their representations to this Local Plan Inquiry that they themselves had identified possible suitable sites that were to be found outwith the centre of Tain.

It is for this reason that we submit that the plan must include a comment which recognises that while not town centre, sites E24 or E26 would be equally suitable for the development of a health centre and associated use

HI5 Kirksheaf Road

Following representations received to the Draft Local Plan, the Council has added a new policy which identifies the site at Kirksheaf Road as suitable for development of 12 houses, subject to suitable access and road improvements.

Elsewhere in the Local Plan text it is acknowledged that there is "difficulty accessing the land below Kirksheaf ridge" and that the area suffers from inadequacies in the road infrastructure in particular, and we see no reason to include this site while there are sites available that do not have the same constraints.

We object to the late inclusion of this site for the very reasons that the Council acknowledge exist. The Kirksheaf area has poor access from Tain and to the east, and would require significant investment to adequately free up suitable housing land.

We believe, as the Council has stated in the Report which was presented to the Planning Committee in January, that the current housing allocation is adequate, with the most suitable sites having already been identified, and that no further allocation is required.

In support of the view that the current housing allocation is adequate, the Council stated, prior to the proposed modifications, that Scottish Water has indicated that current allocation will take their systems up to full capacity, and that any development beyond this would be objected to.

The proposed site at Kirksheaf Road also at the moment provides a defensible barrier against further encroachment into the green belt, and in the future may provide an option for extending the existing cemetery should it be required.

The site does not meet the sustainable development principle of reducing car journeys, as this site has not been promoted at the expense of another, therefore it will in fact contribute to an increase in car journeys regardless of its proximity to the centre of Tain.

It is for these reasons that we submit that the Council remove all reference to this site as proposed housing allocation.

H19 Morangie Road West

Following representation received by the Council, the site at Morangie Road West has been re-zoned as Housing, from its previous designation of Amenity.

We object to this late inclusion as this site occupies an important area of land in terms of visual amenity and prominence on the approaches to the town of Tain. This area has been protected through policy in successive Local Plans and this in our opinion should continue.

We echo the Council's comments within the report that was presented to Planning Committee in January, adequate land supply has been identified within the Plan and there are no further allocations required, particularly as the most suitable sites have been identified.

This site does not meet the sustainable development criteria of reducing car journeys, as this site has not been promoted at the expense of another, therefore it will in fact contributed to an increase in car journeys, regardless of its location.

Scottish Water has indicated that infrastructure with current allocation is near capacity, and any new development would be objected to.

We do not feel that there is a need to include this site in the housing allocation, when it is subject to "suitable access and road improvements, significant structural planting to A9 and enhancement of town entrance". As stated above, the most suitable sites have already been identified by the Council, and have significantly less constraints than this site.

It is for these reasons that we submit that the Council remove all reference to this site as proposed housing allocation.

Landscaped area adjacent to A9

We previously made comment regarding this site and our desire to have the land allocated as its current use of business. The Council agreed with our comments and proposed that the Plan should reflect the current business use of the site, and proposed to modify the insert map accordingly. However on publication of Insert Map 33:Tain, the site had not been re-zoned as business.

It is for this reason that we submit that the insert map for Tain be modified to show this site as zoned for business use.

Conclusions - Summary of Objections

In summary, we object to the late inclusion of two clearly unsuitable sites for housing, and maintain that were these sites suitable, they would have been included in the original allocation. Their inclusion now merely places an added pressure on infrastructure, and negatively impacts upon the housing market on Tain, which currently sees a very low build rate.

We object to "narrowing" of possible sites for a health centre in the town, and believe that at this stage that no site should be excluded.

We object to the continuing zoning of the landscaped area at the A9 as amenity, despite the Council accepting that the Plan should reflect the current business use on the site.

3.11 Mr Leo Daly [CD31/418]

H18 Kirksheaf Road

There has been no public consultation. Not even the 90% unelected Tain Community Council was given the chance to discuss this site. To resolve – Delete or insert under expansion.

H19 Morangie Road West

Location was considered in the original Draft 2002 and Deposit Draft 2003 to be unsuitable by both Planning Dept and Local Councillors. There has been no public consultation. Not even the 90% unelected Tain Community Council was given the chance to discuss this site. To resolve – Delete or insert under expansion.

E25 North of Jubilee Drive

There has been no public consultation. Not even the 90% unelected Tain Community Council was given the chance to discuss this site. To resolve – Delete or insert under expansion.

The Council's Response

- 3.12 The Councils response to Viewfield Park addressing issues of JF Jackson [CD30/100], Dr R C Golesworthy [CD30/129], David M Cox [CD30/150] , Mrs S G H Stone [CD30/70], Mrs M Bremner [CD30/80] and Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD30/173]

Viewfield Park – The inclusion of this site was made by Committee on January 25th 2005 – Councillor Alistair Rhind will be policy witness on The Councils behalf.

1) The inclusion of this allocation into the Deposit Draft Plan was not recommended to the Committee in response to representations on the Consultative Draft of the Plan. The relevant planning history of refusals to development applications and their relation to current planning policy in relation to housing in the countryside had led to the omission of the site from earlier drafts. The decision was taken at Committee that the site should be included to broaden the choice of sites and locations for housing. The inclusion of the site within the settlement boundary will

- remove the application of Policy H3 "Housing in the countryside".
- 3.13 The access is adequate to service current housing established on the site, further development will be subject to provide any improvements as required to adequately service the site to fulfil its development potential. There is a need to modify the policy text and inset map to reflect the need for developers to address the access and the linkages to the town centre. Additions were made to the requirements in respect of access "Improvements required to both vehicular and pedestrian access, provision of Safer Routes to School plan."
- 3.14 The site offers potential for housing development that would previously been served by housing in the countryside and offers the option of a low density housing development to meet this demand. SPP15 Planning for Rural Development [CD17] states that there scope for clusters and groups of housing in close proximity to settlements offering potential to build individually designed homes and that these should be expressed in development plans (para 2.2 above). The existing group at Viewfield offers the opportunity to progress policy in this respect.
- 3.15 The development of sites allocated in the Adopted Local Plan has been slow and there is a need to identify sites that offer further limited potential for development. This site also offers choice in the market as stated before giving potential to satisfy differing sectors of the housing market.
- 3.16 Representations received in the previous round of consultation of the plan review seeking allocation outwith the bypass referred to significantly larger areas of land that was of a far greater order than required to augment the supply identified within the Consultative Draft.
- 3.17 2) The site as identified is already partly developed and forms part of a field parcel which does not provide a significant habitat for wildlife.
- 3.18 3) 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.

Responses to issues other than Viewfield Park

- 3.19 JF Jackson [CD30/100]
- 1) The take up of housing land within the bypass has been slow and has led to a build up in unfulfilled demand. Development within the bypass is the preferred option and the draft Plan has allocated further available land within the bypass to overcome lack of progress in this respect. Land in Council ownership outwith the

bypass does offer potential for development free from significant constraint.

- 3.20 **H: 11 Jubilee Drive/Scotsburn Road** is currently included in the adopted Local Plan and has been partially developed in the interim period. The Council's ownership of the site and presence of infrastructure makes the site effective and capable of immediate delivery. It has the benefit of a pedestrian underpass of the A9 to provides linkages with the town. Approval has been given to the formation of housing plots on the site, to be serviced from Scotsburn Road. The Councils intention is to provide further housing plots and low cost home ownership on the remainder of the site to meet identified local needs.
- 3.21 **North of Jubilee Drive** - The site north of Jubilee Drive offers potential for longer term housing and development within the bypass should be encouraged prior to development of this site. Notwithstanding this any development proposals would be required to prepare a plan for safe routes to school to address concerns regarding crossing of the A9 and any improvements required to ensure safety for pedestrians. The longer term nature of this site is stated within the Plan as is the need for provision of an adequate pedestrian linkage to the town. Modifications made to the plan requirements of Policy 21 read "longer term housing, pedestrian access to town, provision of Safer routes to school plan, landscaping and planting to A9". The land is in the ownership of the Council and has access to all services required for development. Given the history of slow release of land the site offers an effective land supply that is neither constrained by service restrictions or land ownership issues and can provide for the longer term development of the settlement. The East Ross Settlement Landscape Capacity Study [CD32], pages 125-127 + map, provides assessment of the site and where relevant, guidance is provided with respect to the types of planting which will be appropriate to soften the development and ensure that sites "marry in" with surrounding areas. The study did not find that the site was unacceptable for development in landscape terms. Advice related to the need for reinforcing and extending roadside vegetation to screen development from the A9, with the introduction of structural planting to north and east boundaries to define the edge of development.
- 3.22 **Mrs S G H Stone [CD30/70]**
The land B17 is zoned for business use within the Deposit Draft Local Plan and as such provides opportunity for business/tourism development to serve Tain and the surrounding area. Outwith this allocation the only alternative business area lies within the town centre core.
- 3.23 The site provides good location for potential business/tourism uses situated in an easily accessed location off the A9. The site is situated between existing business and industrial uses and offers the scope for further development of this nature. Removal of this business/tourism opportunity for housing may seriously affect potential longer term employment potential to serve the Tain area.
- 3.24 In terms of the requirement for the retention of the business allocation the Deposit Draft Plan with modifications identifies the need for between 320 and 370 houses in the period up to 2017. Given concern regarding the slow rate of release of land identified within the Adopted Local Plan the Deposit Draft with modifications

- sought to identify a variety of new sites in different ownerships to address the situation. With growth in households to the area expected to rise there is also a need to identify an adequate supply of employment land opportunities. The provision of tourist type facilities described within the Deposit Draft Plan would be provided by the private sector and relate to the development of Tain as a tourist destination.
- 3.25 The representation to the allocation is to the effect that part of the site BI17 Blarliath, would serve a better purpose if turned to residential use, this proposal was rejected on the basis that housing would be inappropriate in this location and that housing allocations already provided in the Plan adjacent existing housing met the need for the settlement.
- 3.26 Further correspondence from Mrs Stone[THC42/1] suggested that the business allocation be relaxed to include potential for a tourist related use with an element of associated retail. This was an appropriate use and in keeping In this respect a change was made to the Deposit Draft Plan identifying opportunity for this type of development.
- 3.27 The other land interest of the objector, allocation H16 of the Deposit Draft with modifications, has been allocated in part for housing development since 1992. A subsequent Development Brief for this land was prepared in 1997 by The Highland Council Planning Service increased the proportion of housing land on the site from that of the Adopted Plan The brief has not been implemented at this point in time. The Deposit Draft Plan identified the whole of this site for housing use.
- 3.28 THC does not accept that there is need for the identification of a housing allocation at this location with the site being better suited to business/tourism type uses and is complimentary to the existing industrial estate at Blarliath.
- 3.29 Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD30/173]
E20, Knockbreck Farm and E22 Adjacent to tennis courts
1) The allocation for possible business use was considered, in respect of E22 adjacent the tennis courts, at the previous stage of the Plan process. The options suggested were for a housing development site or alternatively for possible business development. Representations received expressed a view that the allocation should form a housing development site. The suggested business allocation could be more appropriately sited at Blarliath where existing business and industrial uses exist. The clustering of such uses, within a settlement the size of Tain, will produce a more cohesive approach to development of a business park use within the area. Opportunities for business development existing at both Blarliath and the town centre, provide these choices within the settlement.
- 3.30 In this respect there may be locus for a master plan to present additional uses considered ancillary to the main residential use; this would preclude, however, the development of larger scale uses on the site. Any proposals for retail development would be subject to para 3 of the Deposit Draft Plan with modifications in relation to satisfying the sequential test approach in relation to NPPG8 Town Centres and

Retailing[THC42/3].

- 3.31 2) Development proposals for the site will require to comply with Policy GSP 8: Affordable Housing, in terms of the provision of Affordable Housing. This seeks the provision of an element of affordable housing, preferably on site, to be included within development proposals of this size, this element may comprise social rented housing or low-cost home ownership. The mix of tenures on site will require consideration as part any development proposal and may require reassessment of layout as contained in a previous proposal. The accesses as shown are indicative of potential access points that may be given consideration, the preparation of an overall masterplan would provide the forum for the formal consideration of this issue.

- 3.32 3) The landscaping and planting of the amenity area located at the entrance to Tain, in relation to the area adjacent E20, Knockbreck Farm, will be carried out as part of any development proposal for the site.

- 3.33 **B2, Business Use** - It is accepted that the Plan should reflect the current business use of the site. The insert map requires to be modified to take account of this use. There is a need to modify the Tain inset map creating a boundary around the extent of existing business use, and annotating with "B" to indicate use.

In relation to this issue the mapping of the Deposit Draft with modifications failed to reflect the business use due to a cartographical oversight in mapping, this will be **amended** at the next stage of the Plan

- 3.34 **22, Adjacent to tennis courts** - Within the expansion site E: 22 Adjacent to tennis courts, a safeguard was considered for a possible future link to the west of Tain and Fendom Airfield. This would provide an adequate connection for traffic to serve possible future development of the major industrial site at Fendom.

- 3.35 It is felt, however, that any potential development at Fendom would best be served through the use of the road network outwith the Tain settlement thus avoiding the need for an increase in heavy vehicular traffic using the town road network. The reference to a link road through the Expansion area was omitted in error from the Deposit Draft Plan and in view of the objections and above considerations the suggestion should not be included in further drafts.

- 3.36 **Tain Map** in relation to E20, Knockbreck Farm - The access position is indicative and is shown at the point of change of ownership on the Knockbreck Road site. The indicative point was moved in response to objection lodged by Turleys at the Deposit Draft consultation. Advice from The Councils TEC (Roads) service was that a single access to Knockbreck Road would be best option for servicing the main part of the site with potential for a secondary access to the north of the site. In order to avoid a ransom strip situation the indicative point of access is jointly owned. Consideration of a masterplan proposal would, however give formal consideration of the access issue and as such is indicative.

The Council's Response to Further Written Submissions

3.37 **Mrs S G H Stone [CD30/70]**

BI 17(21) Blarliath

The response in relation to the business allocation refers to the site as a whole rather than to the element within your ownership and it is to all this area that the policy applies. The current policy contained in the Plan does address the issues you previously referred to in previous correspondence of 14 October 2002[**THC42/1**]. The allocation for business gives potential for development of high quality business and tourism uses in line with previous correspondence from yourself of where the concept of a tourist type facility with related retail was put to The Council. The land at Blarliath also has the benefit for business and tourism-related development in that access to the trunk road network is readily accessible.

3.38 In this respect the business allocation at Blarliath is consistent with Scottish Planning Policy 2: Economic Development [**CD14**] in relation to provision of sites for business and tourist related development.

3.39 A variety of sites for housing have been included within the Plan and those located closer to the town centre would be more suitable for the development of housing for the elderly where a range of services are closer to hand. The adjacent land at H15 Morangie Road, within your family ownership, already has the benefit of housing allocation and indeed a development brief for the site. This site has the added benefit that it relates directly to existing residential development and has the benefit of a level access point to Morangie Road.

3.40 The site of your ownership sits between a garden centre, a supermarket and is located near the existing industrial site, which does not make it the most suitable location for residential use and should remain as a business allocation.

3.41 The Adopted Local Plan had allocated the land at Blarliath as suitable for non-food retail and it was on this basis that an application for a supermarket was refused. In relation to the current potential for retail use the allocation located in the town centre area at para 5(6) Shore Road has an extant consent for a food retail use on the site. Paragraph 3 of the Deposit Draft with modifications gives provision for retail development subject to satisfying the sequential approach.

3.42 **H 16 Viewfield Park**

In relation to Viewfield Park, recommendations to the Committee in respect of objections are made for the consideration of the Councillors. The Committee gives arena for elected members to vary from these recommendations through a democratic vote of all members in attendance. The consultation of the Deposit Draft and with modifications gives a forum for the general public to raise objection to these decisions. Larger land allocations for specific purposes will usually involve consultation with landowners, existing allocations and uses or those depicting areas of amenity will depend on the consultation process for feedback.

Councillor Alistair Rhind will make a further statement in regard to Viewfield Park.

3.43 Tain Community Council [CD30/219]

Within the expansion site E: 22 Adjacent to tennis courts, a safeguard was considered for a possible future link to the west of Tain and Fendom Airfield. This would provide an adequate connection for traffic to serve possible future development of the major industrial site at Fendom.

- 3.44 It is felt, however, that any potential development at Fendom would best be served through the use of the road network outwith the Tain settlement thus avoiding the need for an increase in heavy vehicular traffic using the town road network. The reference to a link road through the Expansion area was omitted in error from the Deposit Draft Plan and in view of the objections and above considerations the safeguard should not be included in further drafts.

3.45 Mrs M Bremner [CD30/80]

Councillor Alistair Rhind will make a statement in regard to Viewfield Park

The Council's Response to objections to proposed changes

3.46 Turley Associates for Aldie Developments [CD31/461]

Background - Reference to Health Centre

The objection received from Tain and District Medical Centre indicated that there was potential for the development of a site within the centre of Tain at the time of receiving their objection. Further discussions have revealed that the initial land take estimate was significantly lower than now desired, with a requirement for a site of 1.5 acres (0.607 ha) was now needed in order to accommodate the variety of practice uses, adequate car parking and allowing for future expansion of services. In regard to this the Council accepts that there is a need to allow a greater search area for the location of a health centre in order to accommodate these needs.

- 3.47 In this respect the Council recommends **modification** to wording of the last sentence, third paragraph of the background section to read, *"The Health Centre requires expansion and a suitable site will be required to accommodate the medical practice and associated uses. In the absence of town centre sites able to accommodate the development, consideration should be given to edge of centre sites with consideration given to out of centre sites which are easily accessible to choice of means of transport and located within the defined settlement boundary."*

3.48 **HI5 Kirksheaf Road**

The inclusion of the site at Kirksheaf was in response to a properly made objection to the Local Plan. The Plan does acknowledge that there are difficulties in accessing the land below Kirksheaf Ridge. This comment is in the context of delivering a significant land allocation towards the housing land requirement, and has consequently led to the identification of sites outwith the bypass to meet an adequate deliverable supply of effective land, given the history of slow release of land within the bypass. Most of this land is in Council ownership and relatively

- constraint free. The Council owned site North of Jubilee Drive is regarded as suitable for serving the longer term supply for Tain potentially beyond the Plan period.
- 3.49 Advice from the Council's Transport service(TECS) indicated that there was capacity available for small scale development served by Kirksheaf Road. This allocation of this site does not overly increase the overall allocation for Tain, its location, within the bypass means the site does offer benefits in relation to the sustainable principles of reduction in car journeys and good access to local facilities. It is not the intention of the inclusion of this site to increase the projected demand for housing but to offer choice and variety to the housing market through a choice of sites of varying scales, types and ownerships.
- 3.50 In relation to the capacity of the wastewater treatment works and infrastructure, all development is subject to General Supporting Policy GSP2 – Wastewater Treatment *"...Developers may be required to assess existing public drainage systems to determine the potential for further development and to make contributions to create the necessary capacity or improve sewage treatment...."*
- 3.51 **H19 Morangie Road West**
As with the site at Kirksheaf the inclusion of Morangie Road West was in response to a properly made objection to the Local Plan. The site had previously been the subject of a representation to the Consultative Draft Local Plan, when the opinion of the local members was to withhold it from inclusion in the Plan. An objection to the Deposit Draft Plan led to a further assessment of the benefits of inclusion of the site.
- 3.52 The site lies to the north west approaches to Tain on a site where the enhancement of the approaches to the town would improve the attractiveness of the setting of the town. Currently the site is utilised for rough grazing and as such does not currently provide an attractive approach to the settlement. In many respects the characteristics of the site mirrors those of E24 Knockbreck Farm with both being characterised as requiring the same level of intervention prior to development in the East Ross Settlement Landscape Capacity Study [CD32], pages 125-127 + map. Allocation of the land offers the benefit of achieving landscaping and structural planting, as identified within the assessment as a development factor.
- 3.53 This allocation of this site does not overly increase the overall allocation for Tain, its location within the bypass means the site does offer benefits in relation to the sustainable principles of reduction in car journeys and good access to local facilities. It is not the intention of the inclusion of this site to increase the projected requirement for housing but to offer choice and variety to the housing market through availability of sites of varying scales, types and ownerships.
- 3.54 In relation to the capacity of the wastewater treatment works and infrastructure, all development is subject to General Supporting Policy GSP2 – Wastewater Treatment *"...Developers may be required to assess existing public drainage systems to determine the potential for further development and to make contributions to create the necessary capacity or improve sewage treatment...."*

3.55 Landscaped area adjacent to A9

In respect of the objection in respect of the business use to the southern end of the settlement. The report in respect of objections to the Ross and Cromarty East Deposit Draft Local Plan recommended that the change to reflect the existing use be reflected in the Plan:-

“It is accepted that the Plan should reflect the current business use of the site. The inset map requires to be modified to take account of this use. MODIFY Tain inset map creating boundary around the extent of existing business use, annotate with “B” to indicate use”

This change has not been carried through to the mapping of the Deposit Draft with modifications, and The Council will modify the next draft of the Plan to accord with the Committee approved recommendations.

3.56 Mr Leo Daly [CD31/418]

H15 Kirksheaf Road & H19 Morangie Road West

Response as above to Turley Associates

3.57 E25 North of Jubilee Drive

The site has been incorporated in the Plan throughout the entire Plan process from the Consultative Draft through to the Deposit Draft with modifications and has been subject to consultation at all stages. The site north of Jubilee Drive offers potential for longer term housing, and development within the bypass should be encouraged prior to development of this site. Notwithstanding this any development proposals would be require the preparation of a plan for safe routes to school to address concerns regarding crossing of the A9 and any improvements required to ensure safety for pedestrians. The longer term nature of this site is stated within the Plan as has the need for provision of an adequate pedestrian linkage to the town.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Viewfield Park - Councillor Alistair Rhind will respond in respect of conclusions to the Councils statement.

4.2 North of Jubilee Drive – The land lying outwith the bypass offers potential for the longer term housing development of the town. The land is within the Councils ownership and relatively free from constraint, development would however require the benefit of design to integrate to existing development and encourage safe access to the town. The visual impact of development from the A9 can be addressed through landscaping and structural planting.

4.3 Knockbreck Road and Adjacent tennis courts – The allocation of the land at these two sites is intended to serve the main housing requirements for Tain and surrounding area for several years. Introducing mixed uses to the allocation would dilute the potential for the delivery of the housing requirement for the Plan period. Additionally land at Blarliath is identified for business uses adjacent the existing industrial estate.

- 4.4 Morangie Road West – The allocation at land at this site offers both the potential for enhancement of the northern approach to the town and also the provision of choice and flexibility within market place.
- 4.5 Kirksheaf – The allocation of a small area of land at Kirksheaf offers further limited potential for a small scale housing development located close to services and facilities in the town centre and also presents opportunity for the early delivery of housing.
- 4.6 Blarliath – The current allocation of the site as Business Use requires to be retained for the economic growth of Tain and provision of employment opportunities for the town and surrounding area. Potential for housing can be addressed at more suitable sites identified within the Plan.
- 4.7 Link road – the potential for the development of a link road through the site adjacent the tennis courts to serve the major industrial allocation at Fendom would be best served by the road network outwith the Tain settlement. The development of the route for serving such a use would attract heavy vehicular traffic into Tain whereas alternative existing routes outwith the settlement could be utilised.
- 4.8 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, excepting the amendments highlighted in paragraphs 3.33 and 3.47 above.**