

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CIA/25/20

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 19 November 2020

Report Title: Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 - Main Issues Report

Report By: Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure and Environment

1. PURPOSE/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the Main Issues Report for the second Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan to be published for public consultation. The Main Issues Report enclosed at **Appendix 1** has been shaped by a series of appraisals, engagements and discussions outlined in Section 4 of this report. Approval of this consultation document by Committee will allow the Council to seek views on the options for addressing the main issues affecting the future of the area, and also where to direct future development, in the Inner Moray Firth area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. approve the Main Issues Report (as applicable to this committee area) to be published for public consultation, accepting that a number of minor presentational and typographical changes will be made prior to publication;
 - ii. agree the approach to consultation outlined in paragraph 6.1 of this report; and
 - iii. note the important role that the plan will play in addressing the Climate & Ecological Emergency, economic recovery, and in taking forward the Council's agreed Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy recently submitted to Scottish Government.

3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Resource: Resources to complete the statutory processes are allowed for within the Service budget.
- 3.2 Legal and Risk: the Plan can be challenged in the courts but only on matters of process not planning judgement emphasising the need for the Council to continue to adhere to

all statutory procedures throughout the Plan's progress so that the Council will have a defensible position in the event of any challenge.

- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening report has been undertaken and placed on the Council's website and found that a full EqIA is not required. A large part of the Plan area is rural and the Plan supports proportionate and sustainable development within these areas. It also promotes economic and other regeneration proposals within areas of poverty.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever: the development plan has been and will be subject to several rounds of environmental assessment including all aspects of climate change, Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA's Draft Environmental Report is being formulated in close cooperation with the Consultation Authorities and is subject to change prior to publication of the MIR.
- 3.5 Gaelic: prior to publication, headings and a Member Foreword will be added in Gaelic.

4. CONTEXT

- 4.1 The second Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (LDP) (in the rest of this report simply referred to as the "Plan") will become the principal, local, land use policy document in determining planning applications and other development investment decisions in the Inner Moray Firth area. The Plan area comprises the eastern part of Ross and Cromarty, Inverness-shire, Nairnshire plus a small, mainly unpopulated, part of Badenoch and Strathspey. It stretches from Garve in the west to Tain in the north and from Auldearn in the east to Tomatin and Fort Augustus in the south. At the end of the review process the Plan will replace the existing Inner Moray Firth LDP and will sit alongside the Highland-wide LDP and other planning guidance in providing a comprehensive suite of planning policy for the Plan area.
- 4.2 The Main Issues Report (MIR) is a consultation document which seeks views on the main issues affecting the area and the options for addressing them. It sets out a suggested vision and spatial strategy, and the options for addressing the main issues that would deliver this vision, as well as options for where land should be allocated for future development. It presents the Council's initial preferences for addressing each of these issues.
- 4.3 The plan is being prepared at a time when a number of significant issues are likely to affect how we plan the future of this area – not least Brexit and the recovery from the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic – while we also seek to deliver against the national and local declaration of a climate and ecological emergency. These issues have been carefully considered in the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy recently approved by the Economy & Infrastructure Committee and submitted to Scottish Government as part of their preparation of the new National Planning Framework 4. The Plan will play an important role in addressing these major issues and in driving forward the Council agreed vision and strategy for the future. The enclosed Main Issues Report will allow us to seek people's views on the next steps for delivering against the vision and priorities agreed.
- 4.4 The MIR is a culmination of considerable work to date which has included:
 - a widely advertised "Call for Sites & Ideas" which yielded close to 300 suggestions which have been assessed for inclusion within the Plan;

- community council and other community group briefing sessions;
- discussions with and comments from statutory key agencies, Members via informal Ward briefings, other consultees and stakeholders;
- an analysis of key data and trends and monitoring of the success or otherwise of previous and existing Council policies and decision making; and,
- specific assessment of environmental, flood risk, transport, infrastructure capacity and viability issues.

5. MAIN ISSUES REPORT CONTENT

5.1 The sections of the MIR can be summarised as follows

Vision and Outcomes

5.2 The MIR has taken account of the Council's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy for the future by tailoring this to the Inner Moray Firth area through four headline outcome statements covering *Growing Communities*, *Employment*, *Connectivity* and *Environment*. These outcome statements represent the suggested vision for the future of the Inner Moray Firth area.

5.3 Our analysis of recent and future trends across these four *Outcome* topics has established a case for change. This sets out the major issues where a change is required to help make the Inner Moray Firth a better place. In particular, this *Case for Change* has two cross-cutting issues to address – *Post Covid-19 Economic Recovery* and *The Climate Change and Ecological Emergency*.

5.4 We are also using the MIR to seek views on how some of the measures outlined in the new Planning Act should be introduced in how we plan for the area. This includes:

- a strategy for managing and better auditing open space;
- options to address housing provision for an ageing population and to create opportunities for self build;
- making best use of existing infrastructure and planning for future needs by aligning with Capital Programmes through the LDP Delivery Programme; and
- finding better ways to incorporate renewable sources of energy as standard, particularly in larger developments.

The Main Issues

5.5 Taking account of all of the above Section 1.2 of the MIR identifies 9 Main Issues which represent the top priorities for the future the area. The MIR seeks people's views on a series of options for addressing these main issues, including a Council preferred option. The 9 main issues, and the suggested Council preferred options for each, can be summarised as follows:

- i. **Addressing *The Climate and Ecological Emergency***
 - By reinforcing a strategy which is underpinned by the climate and ecological emergency and drives its delivery;
 - By seeking options to secure more sustainable sources of energy;
- ii. **Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy**

- By prioritising how we respond and recover to the immediate pressures, whilst progressing and transitioning to a green circular economy;
 - By reinforcing and strengthening the role of our City and Town Centres as the focus for business, retail, leisure, social and cultural activity;
 - By capitalising on our unique natural assets to allow new and existing businesses to thrive;
- iii. Growing the most sustainable places**
- By focussing a higher proportion of development in our existing settlements whilst supporting sustainable rural development;
 - By better supporting the delivery of self build within settlements;
 - By making best use of land through appropriate densities and the location of services;
- iv. Delivering affordable housing**
- improving how we meet the need for affordable housing, including earlier phasing of affordable homes within larger development areas;
- v. Matching development with infrastructure capacity**
- By making best use of the capacity of existing infrastructure such as schools, healthcare and the transport network;
 - Digital infrastructure being prioritised as much as physical infrastructure;
- vi. Creating a more healthy, sustainable transport network**
- By proposing a transformation in how we manage existing and new infrastructure to prioritise sustainable travel;
 - By proposing more rigorous measures for assessing the suitability of development sites for sustainable transport and accessibility;
 - By identifying a new transport strategy, policy and delivery mechanisms;
- vii. Identifying and safeguarding valued, local green space**
- By better auditing, protecting and enhancing areas and corridors of green, blue and open space;
- viii. Placemaking**
- By introducing a new *Placemaking Audit* to raise design standards and create better neighbourhoods;
- ix. Meeting the needs of an ageing population**
- By exploring new ways to improve the delivery of housing for our ageing population.

5.6 Spatial Strategy

The *Spatial Strategy* map in Section 2 of the MIR at **Appendix 1** is a visual expression of the broad spatial priorities, settlement hierarchy and infrastructure projects for the plan area. The settlement hierarchy, which is explained further in Section 1.2 of the MIR, proposes the reclassification of several settlements so that we plan for a level of growth more proportionate and appropriate to that place. This is based upon evidence that the place has no proven demand for, or supply of, significant housing and other development land and/or the settlements lack any sustainable travel connections or local facilities and employment opportunities. Cawdor, Contin, and Inchmore and existing identified smaller settlements at Advie, Ardrross, Bunchrew, Croachy,

Cullicudden, Daviot, Dochgarroch, Easter Kinkell, Ferness, Invermoriston, Kilcoy, Kildary, Kilmorack, Mulbuie, Pitcalnie, Resolis, and Struy are suggested for reclassification.

- 5.7 The Council's approach to Housing in the Countryside seeks to encourage small scale rural development whilst also balancing the Council's commitment to *The Climate Change and Ecological Emergency*. The more detailed policies for Housing in the Countryside are currently subject to review through the associated Supplementary Guidance being published for consultation through October and November. The MIR also sets out options that relate to the support for sustainable rural development. It is proposed that Growing Settlements continue to be identified as an important part of the settlement hierarchy where proportionate development is supported through a general policy but where no specific allocations are identified. The area of the Plan covered by Hinterland, within which more rigorous criteria for housing in the countryside apply, is also subject to review through the MIR. The suggested Council preferred approach to the *Hinterland* boundary is to introduce a small change at Belivat, Nairnshire to guard against sporadic development. A suggestion put forward for a significant contraction to the Hinterland in Easter Ross is included within the MIR as an option to explore people's views.
- 5.8 The level of growth that the Plan will need to seek to accommodate, particularly for future housing, has been informed by the Housing Need and Demand Assessment process, with the most recent HNDA being published in 2015. The site options identified in the MIR are considered to be more than sufficient to accommodate the level of development identified in the 2015 HNDA, albeit that the MIR highlights a significant challenge for the delivery of affordable housing to keep pace with rising needs. An updated HNDA is being prepared which will inform the next stage of the plan process. The MIR's preferred approach is to use that new HNDA, along with feedback from the consultation and more detailed consideration of local circumstances, to help finalise the amount of land that needs to be allocated in the Plan.

Settlement Priorities and Site Preferences

- 5.9 The suggested *Vision, Outcomes* and our suggested approaches to the Main Issues have influenced our *Placemaking Priorities* and development site preferences for all of the settlements identified within the Plan.
- 5.10 The detailed settlement and site-specific content relevant to this committee area is set out at **Appendix 1** and is summarised in the following paragraphs. The outcome of analysis of any existing area guidance linked to the adopted Plan – such as Development Briefs and Town Centre Action Plans – and how it might be carried forward, is set out in the relevant area section of the MIR and summarised as appropriate below.
- 5.11 Ardersier is identified within Tier 2 of the settlement hierarchy due to the range of facilities within the village or in relatively close proximity and reasonable public transport links. We propose to reallocate the site south of Nairn Road for strategic housing growth given its consent for 117 new homes. No other sites were put forward for consideration during the Call for Sites and we have concerns that the land currently allocated for industrial land is not effective. The only other site preferred for allocation is brownfield land west of Station Road.
- 5.12 Beauly is an environmentally sustainable and economically viable location for future growth. However, there are service capacity and environmental constraints such as

flood risk that should be respected. The Village Square and the central road network were not designed for a high level of vehicle traffic. Similarly the primary school accommodation is outdated. Taking account of these we have supported the continued expansion of Beaulieu but in a compact form and hand in hand with improvement to local facilities notably extension of the "Priory Way" loop road that will relieve pressure on the narrowest central road network and new accommodation at or close to the primary school. Business development is directed as close as possible to the town centre to bolster footfall and to the rail station where certain uses may gain a competitive advantage from that connected location. As an initial view, we have favoured land in north Beaulieu ahead of that in south Beaulieu because it appears more viable in terms of ownership and developer interest.

- 5.13 At Croy, land to the south west of the school is being supported for strategic housing expansion because it is currently being built out by the developer. However, we are not preferring other site options for housing development as Croy is considered to be fairly poor from a sustainability perspective - the primary school is forecast to experience significant capacity issues, there are limited facilities in the village and it is disconnected from main urban and employment centres.
- 5.14 The lack of facilities and relatively poor transport links means that Dores is not considered a desirable place for significant levels of development. Land is preferred for reallocation south of the parish church as efforts are underway to take it forward for a mix of affordable housing and an expansion of the cemetery. Other sites are shown as options as further information is required to determine whether they are suitable or not.
- 5.15 Only moderate growth is suggested at Drumnadrochit via the completion of already allocated or committed development sites. This is because of: fluvial flood risk; a reliance on car based travel to most employment opportunities; other physical and environmental constraints; and, service network constraints such as the spine A82 trunk road and the lack of plentiful water and sewerage capacity. However, several lower impact community use proposals are supported.
- 5.16 Fort Augustus is in an optimum mid Great Glen location to support higher order facilities than its size would normally allow, and capture tourism led growth passing along its trunk road, canal and long distance trail corridors. School, water and sewerage capacities are all adequate but the patchwork of crofting tenancies and ownership within the village continues to thwart attempts to assemble larger development sites and therefore only consolidation is suggested at the village centre car park and close to the Old Convent.
- 5.17 Inchmore is suggested for re-classification to a Growing Settlement because it is not an economically viable and environmentally sustainable location for significant growth. It has relatively poor public transport accessibility, its primary school has closed, its spine road is no longer trunked, local employment opportunities are limited, high voltage lines pass overhead, and previously allocated development land has not been released to developers.
- 5.18 Kiltarlity is also not a sustainable location for significant growth. Kiltarlity parish's main settlement at Allarburn has a dormitory function. Local employment opportunities, commercial facilities, public transport connectivity and water and sewerage capacity are all very limited. Accordingly, site preferences only favour completing sites that already benefit from allocation in the existing development plan and/or have planning permission. The Old Mill is a brownfield redevelopment opportunity that could provide

local opportunities. Otherwise, the larger suggested sites would breach servicing and landscape capacities, and increase car based travel, and are therefore not supported.

- 5.19 Kirkhill has similar issues. It too has a largely dormitory function with local employment opportunities, commercial facilities, primary school capacity and public transport connectivity all very limited. As such it is not a sustainable location for significant further growth. As such, it is suggested that future development should be limited to completing sites that already benefit from allocation in the existing development plan and/or have planning permission. Land at Groam Farm is close to the local primary school. The builder's yard is central to the community, has been underutilised for several years and would therefore benefit from redevelopment. Other sites have not been supported because they are more distant from the settlement's facilities and would therefore not encourage active travel.
- 5.20 The proposed level of growth within Tomatin is aimed to complement the employment opportunities and facilities currently available rather than the large, strategic developments which were envisaged in the adopted plan. Land is preferred for a mix of uses including housing development west of the Church of Scotland and employment related development at the former railway station, former Little Chef and west of the distillery.
- 5.21 The planned new town at Tornagrain forms a key part of the future of the Inner Moray Firth area and has been shown to be a popular location since development commenced on site. We intend to allocate the whole of the new town but indicate within the Proposed Plan the land which is likely to be delivered within the Plan period.

City of Inverness

- 5.22 Due to the size of the city it has been divided into four districts, which follow the same boundaries as the current adopted plan. An overarching strategy, vision and list of placemaking priorities are proposed for the city. These are to ensure a coherent development strategy that will deliver the needs of the whole city in a coordinated way. They include: recognising the demand for affordable housing and industrial land; the pressures on infrastructure capacity, including schools and transport; and, ensuring that detailed planning guidance (development briefs) remains in place to manage future development.
- 5.23 Inverness West has seen a focus both on new development and regeneration. The MIR supports the completion of city expansion at Westercraigs, whilst also encouraging regeneration at Muirtown and South Kessock. To meet the city's pressing housing needs, several smaller sites are identified for infill development in sustainable locations, where services and facilities are walkable. The MIR also supports the realisation of the vision set out in the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief to redevelop the former Torvean Golf Course into park, recreation and greenspace, complemented by a new canal-side mixed-use city destination, Torvean Gateway.
- 5.24 The MIR recognises the dominance in recent decades of suburban housing expansion of the Inverness South district and the consequent dependence on cars for a lot of day to day trips. However, it also recognises the potential of long-established plans for city expansion at Ness-side and Ness Castle through the continued allocation of housing land. The Council continues to work with NHS Highland on a range of projects, including the phased redevelopment of Raigmore Hospital which is preferred in the MIR. Development on currently allocated greenspace at Fairway's Golf Course is not supported by the Main Issues Report.

- 5.25 Inverness Central including the city centre continues to be a focus for regeneration and diversification of uses, which the MIR supports. This includes delivering the long-established strategy to redefine the city centre as a place to live, as well as to work and visit. It also proposes a potential new direction for mixed-use, residential-led city expansion, through the delivery of a new urban quarter at Shore Street. Whilst the MIR offers in-principle support to Inverness Harbour's proposed expansion because of the strategic potential of such a project for the Highland region, it is also caveated due to the potential of exacerbating flood risk.
- 5.26 Similar to other parts of the city, active city expansion sites define the spatial strategy proposed for Inverness East. Pressures on infrastructure capacities, including transport and education, are recognised in MIR, as is the 2018 strategy set out in the Inverness East Development Brief, which proposes a way to address these pressures. Major employment land is located at Inverness Campus which, coupled with the Highland City Region Deal East Link transport project, offer potential to diversify the mix of uses for work, living and leisure in the district.
- 5.27 On the fringe of Inverness City, several new sites were proposed by landowners and developers through the Call for Sites exercise that are outwith the existing Settlement Development Area boundary of Inverness. These are not supported in the Main Issues Report as they would not deliver development that is as sustainable as those preferred in the Main Issues Report, where services, facilities and transport opportunities are closer, where major infrastructure delivery is committed, and where a lot of preferred sites have already commenced with construction.

6. PROPOSED CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 The 1st July 2020 Economy and Infrastructure Committee agreed the Council's intended public consultation methods given the current and likely future restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is suggested for Members' consideration that the MIR be subject to a minimum 8 week consultation period starting as soon as practicable following the fifth area/local committee meeting. Face-to-face events, subject to the Scottish Government COVID-19 advice applicable at that time, will be considered. Given the likely continuing restrictions on public face-to-face meetings it is proposed that innovative, enhanced online digital methods be used to better engage the public and ensure adequate participation and responses. We will monitor the evolution of advice from Scottish Government as well as the number of responses and consider further consultation methods or a longer period if required. We will also send out neighbour notification letters for all larger, proposed development sites which is beyond the statutory consultation requirement and seek press article coverage via printed press and social media briefings.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Next year, representations received from this consultation will be reported back to the 5 relevant area/local committees for comment, and thereafter to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, for decision on what the Plan should contain in its Proposed Plan form. This next stage of the Plan represents the settled view of the Council which is then re-issued for public consultation.
- 7.2 Any party whose comments do not align with the Council's Proposed Plan then has an opportunity to have its views heard by an independent Scottish Government appointed

Reporter, who then makes binding recommendations back to the Council on the final plan to be adopted by the Council.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure and Environment

Date: 5 November 2020

Authors: Scott Dalgarno (Development Plans Manager), Tim Stott, (Principal Planner), Julie-Ann Bain, Douglas Chisholm, Craig Baxter (Planners)

Background Papers:

1. Call for Sites and Ideas Responses: Various: 2019
2. Inner Moray Firth LDP: Strategic Environmental Assessment: draft Environmental Report: October 2020
3. Inner Moray Firth LDP: Draft Monitoring Report: October 2020
4. Inner Moray Firth LDP: Equalities Impact Assessment Screening: August 2020

The above documents are available at: www.highland.gov.uk/imfldp

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Linne Mhoireibh A-Staigh

Main Issues Report

2020

www.highland.gov.uk

How to comment

This document asks for your views on the Main Issues that will affect the future development of the Inner Moray Firth area. We will use these views later to help us prepare the new Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan. This Main Issues Report includes a suggested Vision (described as Outcomes) and Spatial Strategy for the Plan area and lists the Council's initial preferences on development site options and priorities for settlements.

Throughout the document you will find consultation points which set out questions on the Main Issues for you to consider. We have drawn up options for tackling each Main Issue, and have highlighted which option the Council prefers. We ask you to read and think about these options and tell us your views, including which option(s) you support and why. When assessing the options for development sites, you may wish to suggest that an alternative site is more suitable than the preferred site(s) we have identified. You may wish to suggest an alternative boundary for a site or settlement, or a more appropriate use for a site.

The easiest way to read and comment on this Main Issues Report is through our Consultation portal. Copies of the Main Issues Report in .pdf format are also available here, however to comment, you must access the portal. If you do not have access to a computer then please contact the Development Plans Team and we will provide a form for you to submit your comments.

All comments must be made by

How to find out more

Our [website](#)⁽¹⁾ details events that will be held during the consultation period. If you would like to speak to a member of the Development Plans Team please contact us by email at imfldp@highland.gov.uk or by calling 01349 886608.

What is the status of this document?

This is a consultation document and does not represent the approved planning policy of the Highland Council. Its contents, as yet, are not used in the determination of planning applications. Instead, it sets out the Council's initial ideas and preferences for the future planning of the Inner Moray Firth area in a way that is intended to prompt debate and comment.

1 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan

About this Main Issues Report

The formally approved, statutory development plan for this area comprises the existing [Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan adopted in July 2015](#)⁽²⁾ (aIMFLDP), the [Highland-wide Local Development Plan adopted in April 2012](#)⁽³⁾ (HwLDP) and [detailed planning guidance](#)⁽⁴⁾ connected to these two plans. For a very limited number of sites and developments the aIMFLDP and HwLDP say different things about the Council's attitude to development. In the event of any incompatibility between a provision of these two plans then the more up to date plan (i.e. the aIMFLDP) will prevail as the Council's policy for that site/issue.

How to use this document

This document is made up of maps and text. If you are interested in finding out what it means for your particular area or proposal then you need to read both. Also, to get a complete picture this Report should be read in conjunction with other relevant documents. The most important of these are illustrated in Figure 2.1. Please note that the boxes are aligned next to the section of the Main Issues Report to which they most closely relate but many also influence other parts of the Report.

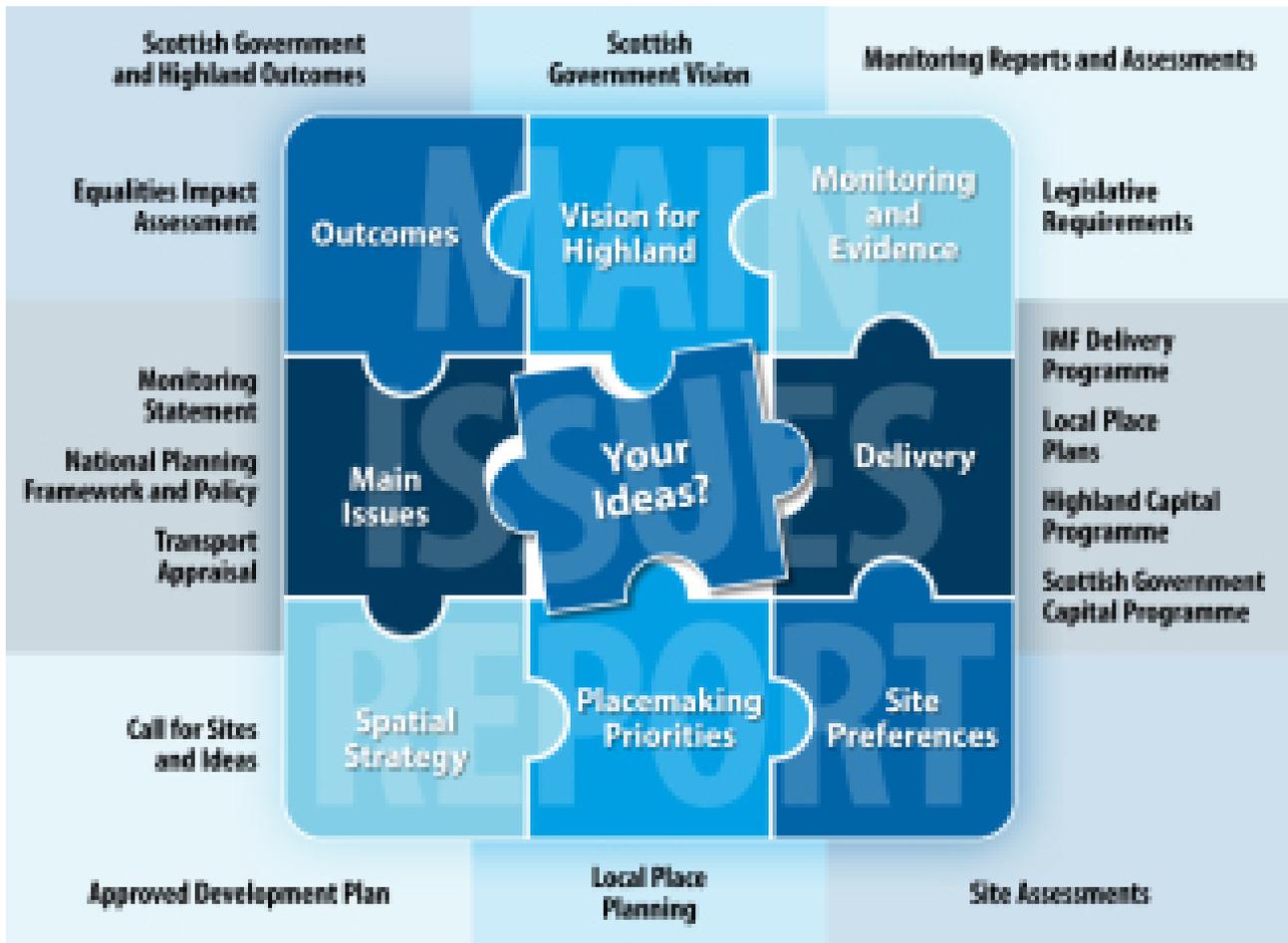
2 https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15008/adopted_inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan

3 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan

4 https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/52/development_guidance

About this Main Issues Report

Figure 2.1 Other documents affecting the Main Issues Report



In the future, plans prepared by individual communities will play an increasingly important role, influencing the Council's Plan, which in turn will shape the local context. More formal arrangements for the preparation of these so-called "Local Place Plans" will be confirmed by the Scottish Government in the next 1-2 years.

At a more strategic level, there are wide range of plans, policies, strategies and other documents that underpin or otherwise influence this Report and can affect a planning decision. Of particular note is the Monitoring Statement which is cross referred throughout this Report and provides the evidence and rationale for the Main Issues and the options set out.

What are the steps in making the Plan?

This is the first of several versions of the Plan. Each successive version becomes more detailed and more definitive as the Council's view on development within the Inner Moray Firth area. We have already asked people for ideas through a "[Call for Sites](#)"⁽⁵⁾ and these views have been useful in

5 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

About this Main Issues Report

preparing this document. Many of the Call for Sites development site suggestions are included in this Report with an initial indication of what we think of them. However, some suggestions have not been included because we think they are of too small a scale to be significant to the future of a main settlement or they are proposals or in locations that are clearly, in our view, environmentally unsustainable. This Main Issues Report's primary purpose is to prompt public debate and written comment on how the Council and others should shape future development of the area.

We will collate and analyse all comments, seek further input and then publish a Proposed Plan version of the document in around a year's time. This will then be the Council's "settled position" on many details of how and where development should happen including for example what developers will be required to do to receive planning permission on any given site. This too will be consulted upon but with an emphasis on testing the Council's position. Those disagreeing with the Council's view have a right of objection which, if unresolved, is referred to a Scottish Government appointed person called a Reporter for their decision. Thereafter the Council publishes a final version of the Plan incorporating changes recommended by the Reporter.

1.1 Vision and Outcomes

The proposed Vision for the Inner Moray Firth area is set out in Table 1 as four inter-related headline outcomes. This provides an ambitious and appropriate framework for the future which takes account of national priorities and investment. It also takes account of the Council's vision and strategy for Highland recently submitted to Scottish Government for consideration as part of the new National Planning Framework 4. This has been tailored to the Inner Moray Firth area and has therefore shaped this Report's Outcomes, Spatial Strategy and Placemaking Priorities which the Plan and other place plans will be expected to deliver.

Table 1 Topics and Outcomes

Growing Communities	Our communities will be sustainable, well-designed places with homes which meet people's needs. More people will want to live in Inverness and the larger towns and villages as they are attractive, safe, socially inclusive and healthy, with thriving centres and better access to services and facilities. Inner Moray Firth communities will function as networks of locally resilient and self-supporting places with equality of access to local resources.
Employment	The Inner Moray Firth economy will be growing, greener, circular and diverse. Local enterprises will be national leaders in the life sciences, sustainable tourism and renewable energy sectors. More traditional sectors such as construction, food and drink and smaller scale general industry will have continued to thrive and provide jobs close to where people live reducing the need to travel.
Connectivity	It will be easy to move around and between settlements in the Inner Moray Firth area. Walking and cycling will be the logical choice for most day to day trips, with longer journeys made using an efficient, reliable public transport system and, in rural areas, shared transport and electric vehicles. Sustainable regional, national and global connections will be available from modern bus and rail stations, harbours and Inverness Airport. Improved digital connectivity throughout the Plan area will enable home working for most people, helping to reduce the need to travel.
Environment	The Inner Moray Firth's built, cultural and natural assets will be safeguarded and appropriately managed. Water, waste, heat, land and buildings will be used, re-used, located and designed in a carbon clever way. The environmental quality of all places will be safeguarded and where possible enhanced.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

We have analysed past and likely future trends within each of these topic areas as set out in our Monitoring Statement and this evidence has influenced both the Outcomes and in particular the nine Main Issues, which we have identified together with our suggested approach to each of them. A summary of our evidence-led approach is explained in the following paragraphs and is set out in more detail in the accompanying Monitoring Statement.

Growing communities

Past and current trends suggest that the Inner Moray Firth is likely to have a future population that is stable but ageing. Our communities will continue to grow but often in locations that are environmentally unsustainable and where public infrastructure networks will struggle to cope. In terms of housing provision, waiting lists are not being cleared by the number of houses presently being built and there is shortfall in accommodation fully adapted to the needs of the ageing population. More positively, the Inner Moray Firth area has a level of development interest, land availability and development costs that makes growth more viable than in other parts of Highland.

Employment

Similarly, the Inner Moray Firth's likely future economy will be buoyant and diverse relative to other parts of Highland and Scotland because of its natural assets, good connectivity and centrality to the north of Scotland. However, some employment sectors have weaknesses such as tourism which is seasonal and some like energy and construction which are cyclical. As digital connectivity improves and face to face business becomes less vital then the Inner Moray Firth will offer a much better working and living environment than its more urban counterparts. Challenges remain most notably in tourism where without new investment in tourism infrastructure this trend may damage the visitor's experience of the Inner Moray Firth. Similarly, the current supply of employment land and buildings is not matched to current and likely future user requirements. There is an over supply of outdated office and larger industrial unit accommodation whereas there is an under supply of smaller general industrial units and of new, high quality commercial/community hubs in fully accessible locations. The private property market is unlikely to resolve these issues without public policy and financial intervention.

Connectivity

Analysis of recent travel patterns shows that more people are driving, congestion and climate change effects are increasing, fewer people are using buses and the location and design of newer urban developments is making these problems worse. The Inner Moray Firth is the most urban part of Highland and therefore gives us the best chance to move away from car-based living to more sustainable, healthier ways of getting around. Attitudes are changing, more people wish to

switch to more sustainable forms of travel and the technological innovations to allow such a switch are happening. Without a new approach to change travel opportunities and behaviours, many journeys will still be expensive, unreliable and of limited modal choice.

Environment

The Inner Moray Firth has fewer environmental constraints compared to the rest of Highland and many of these constraints are marine or confined to the mountainous periphery of the Plan area and therefore remote from local settlement and thus less at risk of direct impact from development. However, increased adverse climate change effects are being seen locally as evidenced by an increased frequency and magnitude of flood events. The private sector and individual households are unlikely to mitigate for and adapt to climate change without some form of public policy intervention. More positively, continuing natural processes such as the regeneration of woodland offer an opportunity, with simple safeguarding and minor physical measures, to enhance biodiversity and address climate change effects.

Our Main Issues

In addition, there are two pre-eminent Main Issues that have shaped this Report and influenced its Vision and Outcomes. These are the Climate and Ecological Emergency, as declared by Highland Council and Scottish Government, and economic recovery from the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to their fundamental and cross cutting impact, these two issues have been considered throughout this document. This Report poses options for addressing these issues and the feedback received will inform the next stage of the Plan, by which time it is hoped that a clearer picture will have emerged.

We have taken these Outcomes and the wider Vision and assessed what needs to be done to achieve them. We believe that there are nine Main Issues that need to be discussed and then a collective way forward decided upon and delivered.

1. Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency.
2. Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy.
3. Growing the most sustainable places.
4. Delivering affordable housing.
5. Matching development with infrastructure capacity.
6. Creating a more healthy, sustainable transport network.
7. Identifying and safeguarding valued, local green space.
8. Placemaking.
9. Meeting the needs of an ageing population.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

1.2 Main Issues

1.2.1 Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency

Tackling the climate and ecological emergency is at the heart of this plan review and embedded within each section of this Main Issues Report. Supporting a transition to green circular economy underpins the aims of this plan to tackle both the climate and ecological emergency and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The draft Environmental Report, which has been prepared alongside the Main Issues Report, assesses the possible effects which the Plan may have on the environment and has helped integrate these considerations in shaping the proposed Spatial Strategy, initial policy approaches and development site preferences. This approach is also directly aligned with the Council's [Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#)⁽⁶⁾, which is a response to the current National Planning Framework consultation.

In May 2019 the Highland Council declared a [climate and ecological emergency](#)⁽⁷⁾ and committed to work towards a Carbon Neutral Highlands by 2025. This is an ambitious commitment and this Plan will contribute to its delivery, which would mean Highland becoming the Council region with the lowest carbon footprint in Scotland⁽⁸⁾. The ecological element of the Council's declared Emergency is less well developed and it is noted that the Scottish Government has highlighted securing positive effects for biodiversity as one of the key requirements of the new planning system.

Efficient Use of Heat

The ways in which we generate and consume energy needs to play a major role in how we respond to the Climate and Ecological Emergency. The Council wants to help deliver national targets to transform the places we live through greater energy efficiency, more local energy systems and less reliance on carbon-based fuels. Future developments provide opportunities to deliver on these ambitions and help achieve low or zero carbon status. The Development Plan for Highland already sets out requirements for developments in terms of their sustainability and energy efficient design and we want to build on this by setting out what communities, developers and other stakeholders should do.

Decarbonising the gas network, which many parts of the Inner Moray Firth area is reliant on, will be critical to meet Net Zero targets, with heating being one of the most challenging issues to face. This is the main conclusion of the [Pathways to Net Zero](#) report which outlines a strategy for

6 <https://consult.highland.gov.uk/portal/dp/npf4/npf4?pointId=5619115#document-5619115>

7 https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4119/highland_council/attachment/75435

8 This target is to have the lowest net carbon output per capita of any Scottish local authority.

decarbonised gas in 2050. We need to ensure that development is located in the right places and designed to the right standards to ensure we can best accommodate this change. A key element is increasing district heating networks, which can also help address concerns about energy security and supply, and fuel poverty. The Council has begun work on this, including an initial assessment of places with greatest potential for heat networks. The most viable places typically have high heat users or producers, few physical obstacles to cross and future development sites. Within these places we will expect that development delivers or enables connection to a heat network. Where networks are not viable, we will expect that micro-generation and heat recovery technologies associated with individual properties be delivered.

A range of other measures have been considered to ensure the plan maximises its potential to mitigate and adapt to the climate and ecological emergency. The approaches proposed by the other main issues discussed in this document fit into the three key themes described in our preferred approach shown in Issue.

Issue

Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency

Preferred approach

Efficient Use of Heat

We believe that the introduction of a new policy to support the delivery of more sustainable forms of heat is needed. The policy would require all planning applications to consider the feasibility of meeting the development's heat demand through a district heating network or other low-carbon alternatives. This could be based on a hierarchy, whereby new development located next to significant heat sources will need to be designed so that it can connect to an existing heat network or a wider planned network at a future date. Any land required to deliver the heat network will be protected and incorporated into the design and layout of the proposed development. Where a heat network is not viable, the use of micro-generation and other heat recovery technologies will be encouraged.

Over the coming months we will be taking a closer look at the places which are most viable and will provide greater detail and guidance at Proposed Plan stage on the opportunities and what will be required from stakeholders to deliver them. In the meantime, we have prepared a more general guidance note ([insert link](#)) which sets out the direction and expected approach to energy provision, systems and energy efficiency of developments.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

Getting the right development in the right place:

Each theme below provides an explanation of how the Plan proposes to tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergency, and provides sign posts to the relevant Main Issues elsewhere in this document.

1. By considering the functions that different villages, towns and the city serve, we have developed a spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy. This enables us to target development to the most sustainable locations, ensuring it has the lowest impact on the climate as possible, and can help us adapt to where climate change may present future challenges. You can read more about this in 1.2.3.
2. In working out where the best places are to direct new growth, we've looked at the infrastructure that is needed to support new communities and have targeted growth primarily to where there is existing capacity, and set out how we expect developers to tackle capacity issues to enable new communities to live in well-served climate smart (sustainable) places. You can read more about this in 1.2.5.
3. We've looked at how the places we create influence the quality of environment that people live, work and play in. Aspects such as design and placemaking can have a significant impact on how successful a place is, such as providing everyday needs sustainably. We've also considered the needs of our changing, ageing population which will impact on the climate as a greater number of older people rely on more social and health care services. You can read more about these topics in 1.2.8 and 1.2.9.
4. We've also taken a detailed look at all of the sites proposed through the Call for Sites process and those in the aIMFLDP to ensure we support the sites that have the least impacts in terms of climate change, and that we don't support sites where predicted climate change would present a future risk that could be avoided, such as flooding. You can read the assessments for all the sites in the Main Issues Report online at (insert link).

Ensuring our transport network is fit for purpose

Ensuring new development is easily accessible by healthy, sustainable travel options was one of the underpinning elements of the previous theme, but we also took a detailed look at how transport decisions made through the planning system can impact our lives and determine the travel choices we can make. Being one of the biggest contributors to the climate and ecological emergency, both through direct emissions, and by making it harder or easier to choose sustainable travel options, the future of transport is being carefully considered through the Plan. You can read more about this in 1.2.6. You can also read more detail in the Transport Appraisal supporting this Main Issues Report (insert link).

Managing biodiversity and ecology

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires that securing positive effects for biodiversity will be one of the six key outcomes of the emerging National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). This is recognised in the Council's indicative Regional Spatial Strategy submitted to Scottish Government for consideration as part of NPF4. The biodiversity and ecology of the Inner Moray Firth area is one of its greatest assets. There is urgent need to address this requirement by developing a mechanism that not only secures no net loss to biodiversity, but can deliver biodiversity improvements over the short, medium and long term.

- **Maximising the potential of our green and blue infrastructure**

How we develop our settlements influences how much green and blue (water) space we use or safeguard, with such spaces often important for storing carbon and therefore mitigating climate change. They are also places where we can reduce our carbon footprint by creating attractive local destinations for leisure and recreation, and can increase resilience of communities and reduce carbon footprints through local food production and other activities. We've considered how the current policies safeguard green and blue infrastructure and what we think is a good way to bring this approach up to date. You can read more about this in 1.2.7. You can also see how we've considered green and blue infrastructure through the site assessments online ([insert link](#)).

- **Biodiversity Enhancement**

It is recognised that all development can have implications for biodiversity and there are particular challenges to meet the emerging requirements to secure positive effects for biodiversity. There are already mechanisms in place that help to mitigate the on-site implications of development for biodiversity but gaining net enhancement to biodiversity assets is more difficult. Currently much development in Highland delivers an overall net loss to biodiversity by, for example, removing and fragmenting habitat and sealing soil surfaces. Delivering improvements to biodiversity on site is extremely challenging especially in small and medium scale development sites. In order to achieve this emerging requirement for positive effects for biodiversity, we are considering the principle of applying a developer contribution towards addressing biodiversity improvements. This could potentially involve quantifying the total area of sealed soil surface on greenfield development sites and applying a fixed sum contribution per hectare of sealed land.

- How else might the Council fulfill the requirement from the Scottish Government for securing positive effects for biodiversity?

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

Alternative approach

Some alternative approaches to addressing our Climate and Ecological Emergency have been considered and are described in the other Main Issues referred to above. The approach to a lot of the topics, such as flood risk, are required to be considered by law and therefore there is no reasonable alternative approach.

1.2.2 Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy

The regional economy is facing challenges from several directions: the immediate impacts of the COVID 19 crisis, the potential major changes resulting from Brexit, and the need to respond to the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Whilst the longer-term effects of these are very difficult to predict, the timely review of this Plan offers an ideal opportunity to set out a collective medium to long term vision.

Respond, recover, progress and transition

This Plan proposes a number of measures for growing the longer term economy of the Inner Moray Firth area. It incorporates measures which help respond and recover from the immediate pressures of the COVID 19 pandemic and pave the way for the area to progress and ultimately transition to a green circular economy - low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

The Council has set up a Recovery Board to agree prompt actions for addressing the impacts of the pandemic. This is starting with the identification of short-term measures and projects to address the most pressing issues.

Outlined below are some of the main ways in which we will support the economy to grow. We've sign posted the relevant Main Issue where more information can be found:

- The role of town centres will continue to form a fundamental part of the sustainability of our communities and this is only reinforced by the COVID 19 crisis. As set out in Issue we must provide flexibility to allow town centres to adapt to various pressures but also protect and enhance their role to ensure they are at the forefront of social, economic and cultural activity.
- The tourism and leisure industry is pivotal to the Highland economy, contributing almost 1 billion pounds annually, but major sections of it are vulnerable to the current restrictions. The need for coordinated investment is highlighted in Issue and sets out a number of ways in which the Plan can help support the industry to grow over the long term.
- Supporting a strong and dynamic construction industry is important not only for the jobs it supports but for the creation of new homes to ensure social equality and wellbeing. As set

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

out in 1.2.3 and 1.2.4 sections, we are proposing a number of changes which promote development, overcome barriers and ensure sites are viable.

- With crisis brings opportunity and we want to grab hold of the positive social and environmental impacts brought about by recent changes to the way we work, travel, interact with each other and use key facilities. As set out in 1.2.6, we want to take full advantage of the shift towards active travel, connecting our towns and villages and making them easier to get about.
- 1.2.5 highlights importance of digital connectivity and this has been brought to the fore with the need for people to work from home, online education and more people dependent on online shopping and accessing services.
- Employment land sets out our analysis of the commercial property markets and the steps we are proposing to provide the range of opportunities needed to support the recovery and deliver our vision for the economy.

Beyond the immediate crisis, the Highlands will remain one of the best places in the UK to grow and thrive. As set out in the Highland Council's [indicative Regional Spatial Strategy \(iRSS\)](#)⁽⁹⁾ submission to Scottish Government for the National Planning Framework (NPF) we aim to further diversify and transition to a green economy. We will achieve this by capitalising on our unique natural assets to create high value jobs and capture opportunities such as the ability to become a global centre of excellence in the renewable energy and reinforcing Highland's reputation as one of the world's most attractive tourist destinations. As we plan for the recovery and transition of our economy, we must recognise the shift in business models and embrace the digital and climate change opportunities that have arisen to transform our economy to be robust and able to thrive.

Employment land

The Plan needs to identify an adequate supply and location of employment land to meet the needs of existing and new businesses in all sectors. The Monitoring Report set out in more detail the supply and demand pressures within the commercial property market. Within the industrial property market, there is a relatively old stock of premises but demand remains high. Without investment, this may pose a major risk to the area's future competitiveness and could restrict economic growth. Work is currently underway to redevelop the former Longman landfill site for business and industrial uses, however, this alone will not meet all future needs.

9 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/927/national_planning_framework

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Pressure for new distribution and warehousing centres has been on the increase across the UK. Whilst previously these would typically have been located in the Central Belt, there is growing pressure for these facilities within the Inner Moray Firth area. We think that strategic employment sites which have good transport links, such as Inverness Airport Business Park and the former Longman landfill, provide some of the best locations for these uses.

There also appears to be strong demand for, and significant under investment in, small scale industrial units which serve local businesses and communities. These units form an important part of the commercial property market providing incubator and start up opportunities. Opportunities to acquire land and investment in opening them up for industrial uses in or around Inverness will be needed to reverse recent trends and address the demand.

Demand for office property, however, even before the COVID crisis, was comparatively weak. The stock of office premises is comparatively modern and plentiful in key locations but there is a distinct variation in land values across the Plan area. Reports suggest that a lasting impact of the current crisis could be that more people will work from home and demand for suitable home working environments will increase. For these reasons, we do not think there is a need to allocate significantly more land for office development.

The aIMFLDP allocated strategic business sites at Inverness Campus and Inverness Airport Business Park and large industrial sites along the Cromarty and Moray Firths mainly for the energy sector or other single user enterprises. Whilst sites at Nigg, Invergordon Harbour and the Campus have seen considerable growth since the plan was adopted, many of the other sites have not come forward at the rate expected.

The retail property market in the Inner Moray Firth area continues to be relatively subdued due mainly to changing consumer shopping behaviour. Where proposals do come forward, the Town Centre First Policy ([insert link](#)) will help to direct developments towards our established town centres.

To capture the unique economic and regeneration opportunities arising from a multi-billion pound, 50 year pipeline of renewable energy projects in the Moray Firth, an ambitious and collaborative partnership of private and public sector organisations known as [Opportunity Cromarty Firth](#)⁽¹⁰⁾ has been set up. The consortium is currently preparing a bid for Freeport status, which forms part of UK Government's post-Brexit economic growth strategy. This would stimulate significant economic activity and employment, and attract inward investment in Highland communities,

10 <https://opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk/>

thereby driving economic recovery. At present we believe that, on the whole, the large amount of employment land currently allocated around the Cromarty Firth is sufficient. However, a degree of flexibility will be required to maximise the opportunities which may arise in the future.

Issue

Strategic and Other Employment Sites

Preferred approach

We will continue to support and allocate larger, strategic employment development sites such as Cromarty Firth Port, Former Longman Landfill site and Inverness Campus. Sites which are not located within a Main Settlement, including Inverness Airport Business Park, Nigg and Whiteness, will be identified as Economic Development Areas (EDAs) in the Plan.

We also wish to allocate a wide range of other business and industrial land within the Plan's Main Settlements. Typically, these will support the expansion or development of vacant plots within existing business and industrial parks.

We want to provide greater support for smaller scale multi-purpose industrial/business uses. Due to the lack of sites being suggested for these uses, to achieve this we think there is merit in introducing a new policy that requires a proportion of land to be made available for such uses in larger development sites. This policy would only be applied in areas which have been identified as having sufficient levels of demand for employment accommodation. If land is made available then there is greater scope for new models of developing and managing these properties, such as a community trust. Small scale commercial buy-to-let is also increasingly attractive to investors as they can offer a good rate of return, particularly as residential buy-to-let has seen many regulatory and tax changes recently.

To help provide certainty and reduce the risk for developers and businesses, we think that the Plan should introduce a framework for Masterplan Consent Areas (MCAs) to be identified. These would essentially grant up-front consents for planned development. MCAs would be a useful, proactive tool to promote and incentivise investment in development by providing consent in advance for specified types of development, in carefully defined circumstances, in a particular area. It can also set out up-front costs and help coordinate the delivery of necessary infrastructure.

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Non-preferred approach

The allocation of business and industrial land is a fundamental requirement of preparing a local development plan and we don't think there is a reasonable alternative. However, we could choose not to introduce a new policy which would require developers to set land aside for employment uses. Instead, we could rely on developers to incorporate these opportunities at the planning application stage. We don't think this is suitable as there is unlikely to be a financial incentive to developers to do so.

In responding to the current crisis and in preparation for BREXIT, other options are set out below. However, with the economic and social changes resulting from the COVID crisis still emerging we are currently presenting these as alternative suggestions. We will be considering the options further as more information becomes available. In the meantime we would welcome your comments on them and any further suggestions you may have:

- We could introduce a more flexible change-of-use policy to better respond to changes experienced in certain working environments. For example, we could give greater support for the conversion of business or retail parks to other uses, such as residential or industrial space.
- The Council could also introduce a more supportive policy for larger scale inward investment developments which generate significant employment wherever they are proposed unless they cause significant adverse effects in terms of infrastructure provision or environmental impacts. This would go further than HwLDP Policy 43 Business and Industrial Land which already provides a level of flexibility for emerging industries in where they can be located.

Growing Sustainable Tourism

Alongside the continued growth of other sectors, the tourism industry has fast become an important factor in sustaining employment and economic activity in both urban and rural communities. Whilst the COVID 19 outbreak has presented major challenges to the industry we are hopeful that the Highland tourist experience becomes more sought after than ever before and it bounces back. We therefore want to set a positive framework for development which increases the length of peoples stay and visitor spending and promote a wider spread of sustainable tourist attractions.

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In March this year, the [new national tourism strategy](#)⁽¹¹⁾ was published which aims to create "responsible tourism for a sustainable future". We support this vision and want to support the sector to grow. To achieve this we need to make the most of our existing assets and ensure that they deliver high quality, sustainable and authentic visitor experiences.

Within the Inner Moray Firth area, there are a number of well known tourist destinations but no more so than Loch Ness. A report in 2018 found that Loch Ness generates nearly £41 million each year towards the Scottish economy. Despite this, it is widely acknowledged that it is underdeveloped compared to similar internationally renowned destinations and has greater potential for the local economy and the communities surrounding the loch.

Issue

Growing Sustainable Tourism

Preferred Approach

We think the Plan should designate Loch Ness and its surrounding area as an 'Area of Outstanding Tourist Potential' to provide greater support for tourism development, lever funding for the infrastructure that supports tourism, and to help strengthen local communities. This designation would be particularly supportive of proposals which diversify the geographic spread and type of destinations, facilities and attractions on offer. By encouraging visitors to explore further it will help lengthen their stay in the area and avoid the adverse effects of certain destinations reaching saturation point.

The designation of the area reflects work currently being undertaken by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, with support from The Highland Council, Scottish Canals and Visit Scotland, to produce a strategy for Loch Ness to coordinate public-sector support and resources and stimulate private-sector investment in the area. A draft of this strategy and consultation on it is expected during 2020.

There are a number of other places within the Plan area which have an underdeveloped tourism sector and we think there is great scope for the expansion and creation of sustainable tourist facilities. For example, whilst Easter Ross is on the North Coast 500 route, it is generally considered underdeveloped from a tourism point of view. Land at North Sutor which has been put forward for a mixture of leisure facilities and tourist accommodation based around the prominent landscape setting and rich heritage could provide a major boost to the area. Opportunities for tourism developments continue to exist along the A96 corridor with existing

11 <https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-download>

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consent at Castle Stuart and Delnies. Fort George also presents an opportunity for conversion to tourism and leisure uses if and when the Ministry of Defence ceases its military operations on the site.

Alternative approach

We could do nothing to manage the adverse environmental and other effects of increasing visitor numbers. However, we believe that better management and some diversion of these pressures coupled with investment in infrastructure facilities to support them, would be a preferable option.

1.2.3 Growing the most sustainable places

Population change and housing needs

The latest forecasts for the Inner Moray Firth's future population indicate stability rather than rapid growth. This is due in main to a fall in birth rates, but the forecast level of net migration and the decline in average household size are other key factors affecting the number of future households and future housing needs. We recognise that very recent and impending issues at the national level – namely the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit – and early evidence indicates that the pandemic may be leading to increased levels of net migration in Highland as people look to relocate to more rural areas.

Evidence indicates that affordability of housing is a really important issue for the Highlands. At the national level access to private market housing is not possible for a higher proportion of the population than previously considered (link to Monitoring Report – Shelter report). In Scotland 62% of new households are unable to afford open market housing. As such, the need for affordable housing is increasing. The next section explores in more detail the steps that could be taken to address the ongoing affordable housing needs.

The issues outlined above are critical in identifying the amount of land that needs to be allocated for all types of housing in the Inner Moray Firth area. The Monitoring Report ([insert hyperlink](#)) gives more detail on this topic.

The most recent Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) published in 2015 showed that 11,829 new homes were considered to be required over the next 20 years including affordable housing. It should be noted that these totals are averages over 20 years and that the 2015 HNDA on which they area based assumed that the backlog of existing affordable need (defined as 1,555 units in 2015) would be cleared over the first 10 years.

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As set out in more detail within 1.2.4, the HNDA shows that, despite increases in the supply of new affordable homes, it has not cleared the backlog of people on the Highland Housing Register and the need for affordable housing has actually risen.

Table 2 20 Year Inner Moray Firth Plan Area Housing Requirements Based on 2015 HNDA

	Inverness HMA	Easter Ross HMA	Mid Ross HMA	Nairn HMA	Wester Ross HMA	Plan Area Totals
Affordable Sector	2,919	509	589	341	57	4,415
Open Market Sector	5,164	702	910	538	100	7,414
Total	8,083	1,211	1,499	879	157	11,829

The figures shown in Table 2 have influenced the number and housing capacity of preferred sites in this Main Issues Report. In the next few months, significantly more up to date information will become available, including the 2018 based population and household forecasts, and will be incorporated into the new HNDA. Once confirmed, this evidence will help produce the 2020 HNDA which, along with feedback from the MIR consultation and further consideration of local circumstances and needs, will be used to inform the finalised totals and site selection within the next stage of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

Issue

Housing Requirements

Preferred approach

We believe that the Plan should identify enough land to accommodate the number of dwellings which will be estimated using the process set out in the above paragraphs and detailed in the accompanying Monitoring Report (insert link). We believe that using the 2020 HNDA along with feedback from the MIR consultation and further consideration of local circumstances is the optimum way to plan future housing requirements.

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Alternative approach

We could increase or decrease the future housing requirements by varying the assumptions we make in our forecasts. However, we would need to be informed of better data or evidence to support an alternative approach.

Settlement hierarchy

Taking account of the housing requirements explained above, the other main issue of tackling climate change, and the importance of protecting the viability and vitality of our town and city centres, we believe that the Plan should direct a higher proportion of future development to more sustainable locations. In practice, this means classifying the places within the Inner Moray Firth into a hierarchy according to their sustainable travel mode, access to existing and planned future, employment, education, public transport and other services and infrastructure capacity. This is shown in Table 3. In simple terms, the Plan intends to direct most future growth to the settlements with the best existing or committed future access to all these facilities, services and opportunities. Unsurprisingly, Tier 1 settlements include Inverness City, existing towns with good active travel and public transport links such as Beaulieu and Tain, and the committed new town at Tornagrain. In contrast, Tier 4 settlements offer very limited employment, transport options and services. As these settlements will be almost exclusively dependent on car based transport, we don't think that they are appropriate locations for any significant development. Because of these considerations Cawdor, Contin, and Inchmore are suggested for reclassification from main settlements to growing settlements. However, within all these settlements, we will still support the principle of infill development, refurbishment of existing properties and redevelopment of brownfield (previously developed) sites. This hierarchy has influenced the number and size (likely housing capacity) of preferred sites in this Main Issues Report.

Table 3 Settlement Hierarchy

Scale of Growth	Sustainability	Hierarchy	Tier	Settlements/Locations
Strategic	Most sustainable	Main Settlements	1	Alness, Beaulieu, Dingwall, Invergordon, Inverness City, Muir of Ord, Nairn, Tain, Tornagrain.
Modest	Sustainable		2	Ardersier, Conon Bridge, Drumnadrochit, Evanton, Fort Augustus, North Kessock.

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Local	Partially sustainable		3	Auldearn, Avoch, Croy, Fortrose and Rosemarkie, Kiltarlity, Maryburgh, Seaboard Villages, Strathpeffer, Tomatin.
Limited	Least sustainable		4	Cawdor ⁽¹⁾ , Contin ⁽¹⁾ , Cromarty, Culbokie, Dores, Inchmore ⁽¹⁾ , Kirkhill, Munloch, Tore.
"Infill" only	Growing Settlements	Growing Settlements	5	Abriachan, Balnain, Barbaraville, Cannich, Farr/Inverarnie, Foyers, Garve, Gorthleck, Hill of Fearn, Inver, Milton of Kildary, Marybank, Portmahomack, Rhicullen, Tomich, Whitebridge.
Typically single unit development	Countryside	Countryside	6	All housing groups not otherwise classified as part of a settlement. Wider open countryside (no general restriction). "Hinterland" open countryside (general restriction on housing).

1. Settlement suggested for reclassification from main settlements to growing settlements.

Issue

Settlement Hierarchy

Preferred approach

We believe that the Plan should direct most future development to environmentally sustainable and economically viable locations. The hierarchy of settlements and other locations in Table 3 and the varying level of future growth envisaged for each place should help achieve this. The settlements listed in the hierarchy which have an asterisk in front of them are proposed to be reclassified from Main Settlements to Growing Settlements.

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Alternative approach

Each listed place could be moved to a different tier of the hierarchy. However, we believe that we have assigned each place to the correct tier on the basis of its relative accessibility (by environmentally sustainable travel modes) to existing or committed future facilities, services and opportunities.

Growing settlements

The aIMFLDP contains an "Other Settlements" policy which, within a defined list of places, supports a lesser scale of development than within the "Main Settlements" but a more positive approach than within the countryside. Settlements currently included are places which have/had at least one community facility (e.g. a school or public hall). We intend to bring our policy approach to these smallest settlements in line with our other local development plans for Highland. We wish to call them "Growing Settlements" and not use the existence of a facility as the sole reason for including or excluding places from the list. Instead, we will only include places that have an established, sizeable cluster of development, have some development pressure, few environmental constraints to development, and facility/service networks that can accommodate additional housebuilding. Because of these new criteria we do not think that Advie, Ardrross, Bunchrew, Croachy, Cullicudden, Daviot, Dochgarroch, Easter Kinkell, Ferness, Invermoriston, Kilcoy, Kildary, Kilmorack, Mulbuie, Pitcalnie, Resolis and Struy should be identified as Growing Settlements. Development proposals in places which are not take forward as Growing Settlements will be considered against the [Housing in the Countryside](#)⁽¹²⁾ planning policy. Dochgarroch has economic rather than housing development potential and therefore we propose (in the economy main issue section) that it be referenced as a growth area for sustainable tourism rather than as a Growing Settlement.

These are listed as Tier 5 settlements in Table 3. For each potential "Growing Settlement" this Main Issues Report sets out draft key issues and placemaking priorities for comment. Images are included for each settlement but please note that this is for illustrative purposes only and that the geographic extent of these images is of no policy significance. Once finalised, these will be applied in determining planning applications in these places.

12 https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/683410/housing_in_the_countryside

Issue

Growing Settlements Policy

Preferred approach

We wish to support the principle of limited "infill" development within the Plan area's smallest settlements listed in Tier 5 of Table 3. The following draft policy would apply to planning proposals within these settlements.

Development proposals that are contained within, round off or consolidate the listed Growing Settlements will be assessed against the extent to which they:

- take account of the issues and placemaking priorities identified for the individual Growing Settlements;
- are likely to help sustain, enhance or add to facilities with proposals being located within active travel distance of any facility present;
- are compatible in terms of use, spacing, character and density with development within that settlement and demonstrate high quality design;
- can utilise spare capacity in the infrastructure network (education, roads, other transport, water, sewerage etc.) or new/improved infrastructure can be provided in a cost efficient manner, taking into account the Council's requirement for connection to the public sewer other than in exceptional circumstances;
- avoid a net loss of amenity or recreational areas significant to the local community; and,
- would not result in adverse impact on any other locally important natural or cultural heritage feature, important public viewpoint/vista or open space.

Proposals which demonstrate overall conformity with the above criteria will be in accordance with this policy.

Alternative approach

We could instead carry forward the policy from the aIMFLDP unchanged which would support development in a longer list of places. We don't favour this alternative approach because we believe that these are places in less environmentally and economically sustainable locations and/or they lack a reasonably sized, clustered, settlement core.

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Self build housing development

As well as setting out the amount and location of new housing, it is important that we provide people with a choice of housing types. We discuss meeting the needs of the ageing population and delivering affordable housing in other parts of this Main Issues Report but we believe that this diversity should also include housing land within our main settlements for self build. We define self build as where an individual commissions or (whether acting alone or with other individuals) is personally involved in the design and construction of a dwelling that is intended to be the individual's main residence once it is built. This includes "custom build" which is essentially self build homes facilitated in some way by a volume housebuilder.

Research shows there is strong demand for self build and that there are a number of benefits which can be gained from increasing the supply of plots. In recent decades, within the Inner Moray Firth, like within many other parts of Scotland, new housing has been largely delivered by "volume" housebuilders. Whilst this is an important part of the housing market, there is growing recognition that self build in urban areas can play an important role in the supply of new housing. As it would essentially be a new part of the market in some urban areas, it could complement volume housebuilders in promoting faster sales and quicker build out rates. It could also provide a much needed boost for smaller sized developers which have declined in number significantly over recent years. Furthermore, self build can contribute towards placemaking by delivering greater diversity and innovation and enhancing the character of our neighbourhoods. Evidence shows that as self build is often taken up by older people looking to build a more suitable home it can even be a good way of providing housing for an ageing population.

As one of main barriers to self build has been the lack of available sites, we think that the best way to increase the number opportunities is by introducing a new policy which requires a certain proportion of land to be available for self build within larger housing developments. We recognise that the detail of such a policy and how it's applied must be subject to consultation with the development industry and all other affected parties. We also don't want such a policy to undermine the economic viability of sites confirmed through this Plan. To ensure this, the policy's application will be subject to proof of demand for self build in that part of the Inner Moray Firth. The forthcoming, statutory register of interest in self build will provide the evidence necessary to apply the policy. Where registered demand doesn't translate uptake of plots over a defined period then that portion of the site would revert back to general demand housing.

Self build may also be appropriate in rural areas especially where suitable sites are not available within nearby settlements. We will analyse the future statutory register to see where such interest originates and whether both the affordable and market sectors can meet it on allocated sites within

settlements or whether a more flexible approach is required for example by broadening the suggested policy approach below to include consideration of smaller development sites in rural areas.

Issue

Self Build Housing Policy

Preferred approach

We intend to introduce a policy that will require developers to provide a proportion of self build plots on larger housing sites. Our draft policy for discussion is as follows.

Each developer of a large (50 or more dwellings) planning application will be required to safeguard and adequately service part (a minimum of 10 % of the application's total dwelling capacity) of that application site for self build plots. The exact number, location, size and shape of those plots should take account of the Council's statutory register of self build housing interest - i.e. best match the supply of plots to local, registered demand for those plots. Where registered demand doesn't translate into self build plot sales over a minimum, adequate marketing period of one year then that part of the site will revert back to being available for general demand housing. The Council will provide guidance to accompany this Plan which will define self build, adequate marketing, and adequate servicing. The guidance will also explain the relationship of this policy to those on placemaking, affordable housing and developer contributions.

Alternative approaches

This is a developing planning policy topic so there are several alternatives on which we invite comment:

- Should the site size threshold and minimum percentage requirement be higher or lower than 50 dwellings and 10 %?
- Could more self build housing development be achieved by earmarking certain housing sites only for self build development particularly where the landowner agrees?
- Should the public purse subsidise or otherwise financially incentivise (for example by reducing developer contributions for the same application) the provision of self build plots?

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Town centres

One way to achieve this Plan's Outcomes in terms of connectivity, accessibility, viability and reducing the climate change effects of travel is to safeguard and bolster town centres. A network of centres that support the right scale and mix of commercial, leisure, other employment, and community uses appropriate to that part of the Plan area will help achieve these Outcomes.

Town centres are at the heart of communities and are best placed to be hubs for a wide range of activities. Appropriate development within our town centres has the potential to improve their vitality and viability. This can also ensure that investment in our communities is directed in a way that is most beneficial to residents, employees and visitors to our towns.

Issue

Town Centre First Policy

Preferred approach

In order to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres our preferred approach is to introduce a new "Town Centre First Policy". This will effectively replace the "Promoting and Protecting City and Town Centres" in the aIMFLDP. The new Town Centre First Policy will direct all development which generates significant footfall to be located, in the first instance, within the main town centres of the Plan area. The aim is to provide greater support for town centre living and attract a mix of uses which are active throughout the day and evening. This reflects Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan.

At this stage we are proposing to roll forward the Town Centre First policy from the Council's other two area Local Development Plans. However, there is likely to be a rise in vacancy rates as a result of the COVID 19 crisis and we would like to know whether you think there is merit in greater flexibility given to change of use applications as a means of making making our town centres more adaptable.

We think that the Policy should apply to the town centres which play a particularly important economic, social and cultural role within their respective settlement and hinterland. Within the Plan we therefore have identified boundaries for the following places: Alness, Beauly, Dingwall, Invergordon, Inverness City Centre, Muir of Ord, Nairn and Tain. We intend to define town centre boundaries for these places and show them on the maps in the Settlements

section of the Plan, also to undertake town centre health checks for them, and use the findings of these checks to develop town centre strategies which will deliver improvements for these centres.

Our draft policy for discussion is as follows:

Development that generates significant footfall will firstly be expected to be located within the town centres of Alness, Beauly, Dingwall, Invergordon, Inverness City Centre, Muir of Ord, Nairn and Tain as identified by the boundaries on the maps in 3. When identifying sites a sequential assessment will be required demonstrating that all opportunities for regeneration through reuse or redevelopment of existing sites or buildings have been fully explored. Should the scale and type of proposal not be suitable for these locations, edge of town centre locations are favoured second, and then out of centre locations that are, or can be made, easily accessible by a choice of transport modes. This sequential approach does not apply to established uses and land allocations.

Significant footfall developments include:

- retail,
- restaurants,
- commercial,
- leisure uses,
- offices,
- hotels,
- community and cultural heritage facilities, and public buildings including libraries, education and healthcare facilities.

If the Council considers that a proposal may result in an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of any listed town centre, the developer will be required to produce a retail or town centre impact assessment tailored to reflect the scale and function of the town centre in question. The Council will only support proposals accompanied by competent assessments that demonstrate no significant adverse impacts.

A flexible and realistic approach will be required when applying this sequential assessment, however, developers need to consider how appropriate the nature of their proposal is to the scale and function of the centre within which it is proposed. Exceptions may be made for any ancillary uses that support existing and proposed developments.

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Proposals for conversion of buildings to residential use in town centres may be supported, providing there is no loss of existing or potential viable footfall generating use(s). Proposals for conversion to residential use must demonstrate that the property has been marketed for its existing use at a reasonable price/rent without success for a minimum period of 6 months. For vacant upper floor conversions (excluding hotels) support may be given without the requirement for marketing where it can be demonstrated that the proposals would contribute towards a balanced mix of uses.

Alternative approach

We could introduce a more flexible change-of-use policy to respond to likely increases in vacancy rates resulting from the current crisis. For example, we could give greater support for conversion of ground floor retail in town centres and/or reduce the amount of time a property needs to be made available for sale/rent from 12 months to 6 months. These changes are presented as "Alternatives" as we think further information is needed to determine whether it is suitable or not.

Non preferred approach

Given that Scottish Planning Policy requires us to embed the Town Centre First Principle in our plans then we don't think that there are many reasonable alternatives. Certain changes to the Policy above may provide a more permissive approach but this would probably reduce the level of protection the policy provides. A more rigid approach would be to identify town centre boundaries for all our Main Settlements.

1.2.4 Delivering affordable housing

One of the current priorities facing Highland is how best to increase the number of homes so that everyone has a good quality home that they can afford and that meets their needs. Whilst the Scottish Government is making significant resources available for building affordable homes, the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) ([insert link](#)) shows that the need for an affordable home is outstripping the supply. Difficulties in securing land for affordable housing at the right time and in the right places is one of the main limiting factors. Overcoming this issue can help to tackle poverty, give people greater stability and better future prospects.

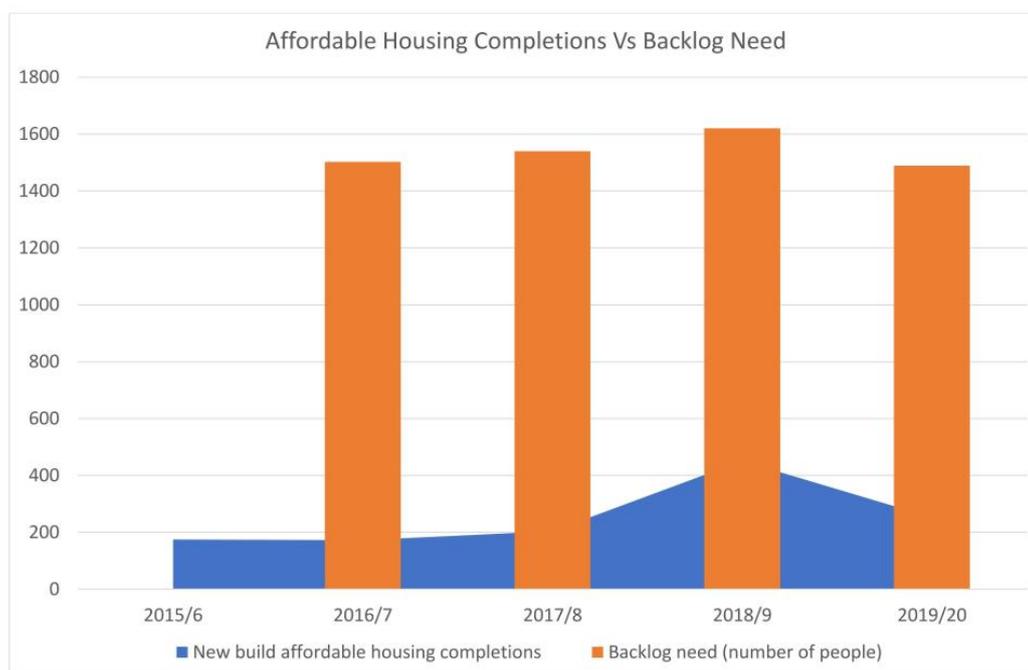
The Scottish Government has committed to build 50,000 new affordable homes by March 2021 via the More Houses Scotland programme. This scheme has allocated £45.6m to Highland for 2019/20 and £48.4m for 2020/21. Investment has not been confirmed for future years but it is anticipated that funding levels will continue at a similar level.

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In the last five years, 1,683 affordable homes have been built in Highland, of which 1,047 have been in the Inner Moray Firth area. Many of these developments have helped to regenerate our town centres, bring brownfield land back into use and sustain communities. The HNDA shows that, despite this increase in supply, it has not cleared the backlog of people on the Highland Housing Register and the need for affordable housing has actually risen. This highlights the ongoing problem of affordability and the need to properly understand the constraints and find new ways of increasing supply.

Figure 1.1 shows that the delivery of affordable housing has not had an impact on reducing the backlog need. It should be noted that the backlog need is taken as a snapshot taken on 1st April each year and changes daily but the indicative figures allow reasonable assumptions that the housing affordable programme needs to be increased to reach a point where the backlog can be cleared.

Figure 1.1 Affordable housing completions



One of the main challenges affordable housing providers face in building new housing is their ability to secure land for development where it's most needed. This is a particular problem in Inverness which has the highest proportion of the need in Highland. Whilst the aIMFLDP allocated a very large amount of housing land, much of it is controlled by volume house builders. In most cases, affordable housing providers are unable to properly compete in securing ownership/options

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on strategic development sites. This has caused a reliance the business plans of the volume house builders for a key part of the ongoing supply of affordable housing. In some situations the release of the land for affordable housing has been programmed in later phases of development. It is felt by some in the housing industry that without a radical change in the housing market it will be difficult to overcome these issues.

As it currently stands, the Council has limited ability to address this issue on its own. In terms of planning policy, certain mechanisms that we have available at present, such as increasing the required level of affordable housing contributions, will likely impact on the viability and effectiveness of specific sites. There is also a potential that these measures could be counterproductive if they result in private sector development not coming forward.

We will continue to work with the Scottish Government and others to assess the barriers to affordable housing delivery and introduce innovative ways in which they can be overcome, such as the use of the landbank and infrastructure loan fund to secure sites. New mechanisms will be required, however, to realise the next stages of the affordable housing programme and provide the social infrastructure needed to support the communities. For example, greater ability to forward fund essential infrastructure would better allow for long term Council capital programming.

To help tackle these challenges for affordable housing delivery the Scottish Land Commission recommend a number of approaches including enhancing the ability to assemble land, streamlining the compulsory purchase process and introducing land value capture measures. The introduction of a strategic investment fund or other innovative finance model would also help ensure that local authorities and housing associations can better compete with private sector house builders in the development market. Better resourcing would allow the public sector to lead in assembling and preparing land and then delivering the necessary levels of affordable housing and securing a diversity of builders. More control over the delivery of the site allows for greater priority on placemaking, infrastructure delivery and a more effective response to the climate emergency. Within the Inner Moray Firth area, this could be best applied to strategic sites, such as land identified in the Inverness East Development Brief.

Issue

Affordable Housing Interventions

Preferred approach

We think that the best way to deliver affordable housing is a combination of one or more of the following:

- We are considering the introduction of a new policy which would set a higher level of affordable housing contributions in places which are shown to be in greater need. The results of the HNDA would help to influence the rate and geographical area to which it would apply. At present we consider an increase to 35% would be most appropriate and apply only to Inverness settlement development area. The policy would continue to apply to developments of 4 or more units but will represent an increase from the current 25 % which is the standard rate across areas of Highland. We would welcome further input during the Main Issues Report consultation from key partners and the private sector to fully assess this proposal.
- Embed within the new policy, measures which ensure that the delivery of affordable housing components of private sector developments are prioritised within the early phases of development. Opportunity could also be provided for a much higher percentage of affordables being delivered within the first phase and taper down after that, as long as they were still designed to be mix communities. As we are mindful of maintaining the viability of allocated development sites this option could form an alternative to an increase in percentage of affordable housing contributions rates.
- As outlined in other Main Issues we support the principle of higher density development as a means of improving placemaking and creating more sustainable, sociable and accessible neighbourhoods. Increasing density can also make developments, such as affordable housing schemes, more viable.

Non preferred approach

We could continue to allocate a very generous supply of housing land - as has been the approach over at least the last decade - to increase competition between landowners and result in reduced land values. However, this approach has been shown not to deliver the scale of affordable housing required and it has led to significant challenges to site delivery and infrastructure planning.

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We could also not increase the affordable housing contribution from 25 %. However, the current framework is not creating enough opportunities for addressing the affordable housing need in the most pressurised areas.

Whilst older plans allocated land exclusively for affordable housing, this option is not preferred because it may lead to suggestions from landowners for "exceptions" sites in unsustainable locations and result in a segregation of tenures.

1.2.5 Matching development with infrastructure capacity

In planning future communities there needs to be close alignment between development and the management of existing and new infrastructure. The capacity of existing services and infrastructure, such as schools, energy, transport and community facilities, and making best use of these, are critical factors for where development can happen. It is increasingly important that digital infrastructure is prioritised as much as infrastructure for physical connectivity. This is not only an essential part of creating and maintaining successful places, but is also required to help achieve other Plan Outcomes, such as creating sustainable transport networks and addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

Highland Council's proposition for the future, which is set out in their [indicative Regional Spatial Strategy \(iRSS\)](#)⁽¹³⁾ submission to Scottish Government for the National Planning Framework (NPF), shows the importance of infrastructure for the Highland region. It is hoped that the new combined NPF4 and Scottish Planning Policy will help to create a consistent approach to the coordination and delivery of high quality digital infrastructure. The Inner Moray Firth area provides infrastructure and services for not just those that live, work and visit there but to serve the wider Highlands and Islands. In this regard, we have been working closely with other stakeholders to identify the necessary infrastructure requirements to support our communities and deliver the collective outcomes. This has helped shape the [spatial strategy](#)⁽¹⁴⁾ and Table 3 which show where we want to direct growth.

There are certain places, particularly in Inverness, which currently have infrastructure capacity issues but which will continue to be the focus of housing and commercial development. Whilst this will lead to further pressure on the Council's capital programme for infrastructure provision, it will require a jointed up public sector / private developer funding to help address the issue.

13 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/927/national_planning_framework

14 https://highland.objective.co.uk/ecc/editor_frame.html

The Plan will set out the headline infrastructure requirements for settlement and site allocations through Placemaking Priorities and Developer Requirements. The Plan's Delivery Programme will be used to monitor and implement the infrastructure needed to support the future growth of our communities. As set out in the new Planning (Scotland) Act, the Delivery Programme will be embedded as a multi agency tool to help coordinate and better manage resources and infrastructure delivery. In combination, these measures will help deliver the infrastructure needed using tools such as conditions on planning permissions and developer contributions.

There are undoubtedly, however, major challenges in delivering suitable infrastructure, both to serve existing communities and to support new ones. It is difficult to reconcile the ability to address existing priorities and support the area to grow. We want to know if you think there are other ways in which to make the most of infrastructure and how to manage this issue.

The financial viability of development is a fundamental consideration for us as it not only ensures an effective land supply but that infrastructure will be delivered when needed. Much of the debate about development is about infrastructure provision or financial payments required to provide the services affected by the development. As the costs of construction are largely fixed, in many situations the viability of a site will depend on the landowner's understanding the infrastructure obligations and having realistic expectations as to the value of their land.

As identified in other Main Issues, higher densities can not only play an important role in promoting active travel, providing better access to facilities, creating good street design and supporting an ageing population, but also make developments more viable. This would help allow for key infrastructure, such as active travel connections, bus services or playparks to be delivered earlier.

Issue

Matching Development with Infrastructure Capacity

Preferred approach

We think that the following measures will help to ensure that development and infrastructure capacity are better aligned:

- Maintain the aim of directing growth to areas that have existing spare infrastructure capacity.
- To ensure that measures are put in place for the delivery of high quality digital infrastructure as a standard requirement for all development.
- Set out the headline infrastructure requirements for settlement and site allocations through Placemaking Priorities and Developer Requirements.

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- Promote the Delivery Programme as the principal tool for monitoring and implementing the infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the proposals and sites shown in the Plan.
- Avoid allocating sites where we consider that the full infrastructure requirements will likely make the site unviable.
- Introduce development frameworks at Proposed Plan stage for larger allocations to ensure placemaking and infrastructure requirements are better understood by key stakeholders.
- Make sure that development proposals clearly demonstrate that mitigation measures are in place to deal with all infrastructure implications, including surface water drainage and transport requirements.
- Take forward a similar "Delivering Development" policy as included in [WestPlan](#)⁽¹⁵⁾ and [CaSPlan](#)⁽¹⁶⁾ to help ensure that development is taken forward in a coordinated and sustainable way with infrastructure provision delivered when needed.
- Ensure that higher density developments commit to the earliest possible delivery of key infrastructure.
- Identify a more specific indicative housing capacity for each allocated development site tailored to the particular circumstances of the site and settlement and require a stronger justification if a developer proposes to vary significantly from it.

Alternative approach

We think that the measures outlined above are all reasonable and represent good practice in better matching development with infrastructure capacity. As a result, we haven't set out alternatives, but please set out how you would do things differently.

1.2.6 Creating a more healthy, sustainable transport network

Everyone in Highland should have fair access to affordable ways to travel sustainably. This means walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport should be the safest, most efficient and reliable choices for moving around.

This Main Issues Report proposes an ambitious new strategy for transport in the Inner Moray Firth area. This topic is far-reaching and therefore goes into detail in this section about the range of transport issues the Plan needs to address. It seeks to transform transport to tackle the climate and ecological emergency by ensuring road space is shared equally between the different transport

15 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/582/west_highland_and_islands_local_development_plan

16 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/283/caithness_and_sutherland_local_development_plan

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modes that need it and that sustainable transport options are prioritised, but do not unfairly disadvantage those that do need to travel by car. A detailed Transport Appraisal accompanies this work and was used to inform the preparation of this part of the Main Issues Report.

The evidence is compelling that we cannot simply continue to build more roads to tackle congestion and encourage never-ending growth in car travel. Looking back at the places that have been delivered in the Plan area, road infrastructure has led to impacts on the quality of some places that are now dominated by the roads that serve them, making walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport less safe, attractive and competitive than driving, creating car-based living. We think this approach has to change to tackle the range of problems society now faces. The Scottish Government too is recognising this need for a new approach through its Programme for Government commitments, including £1 Billion for sustainable transport, and its change of emphasis through its second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). We have set out our transport ambitions at the Highland level through our [Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#)⁽¹⁷⁾.

The COVID 19 pandemic has imposed restrictions on people's movement. The Scottish Government provided direct funding to support communities to physically distance through their Spaces for People programme. The Highland Council secured £1.97m from this fund, with around a quarter of this committed to the IMF area. The pandemic has resulted in there being less traffic on the roads and more people walking, wheeling and cycling. This positive experience in our communities of sustainable travel, coupled with a rapid transition to home-working for many people, means the future of how and when we travel is uncertain, but that we now have the chance to redefine the norm, and create a transport system that can respond to the global challenges we face. We want to use the experience of travel during the current pandemic to demonstrate the transformation that is possible to move to cleaner, healthier travel choices. It gives us the opportunity to provide a stepping stone to change the emphasis of the Council's future investment programme towards supporting sustainable transport infrastructure, such as walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. This does not necessarily mean increasing costs, but rather making best use of new infrastructure to support lots of modes of travel, for the same cost as building traditional transport infrastructure, such as roads, for example by allocation lane space for bike lanes, bus lanes and vehicle lanes where space allows.

Creating a fair and equal transport network

To ensure fair and equal access to transport, we think that new development should be located close to facilities and services and well connected to a sustainable transport network. Higher density (more homes in a given area) development can contribute to this by ensuring more people are close to sustainable transport corridors, meaning they support demand for, and use of, these

17 <https://consult.highland.gov.uk/portal/dp/npf4/npf4?pointId=5619115#document-5619115>

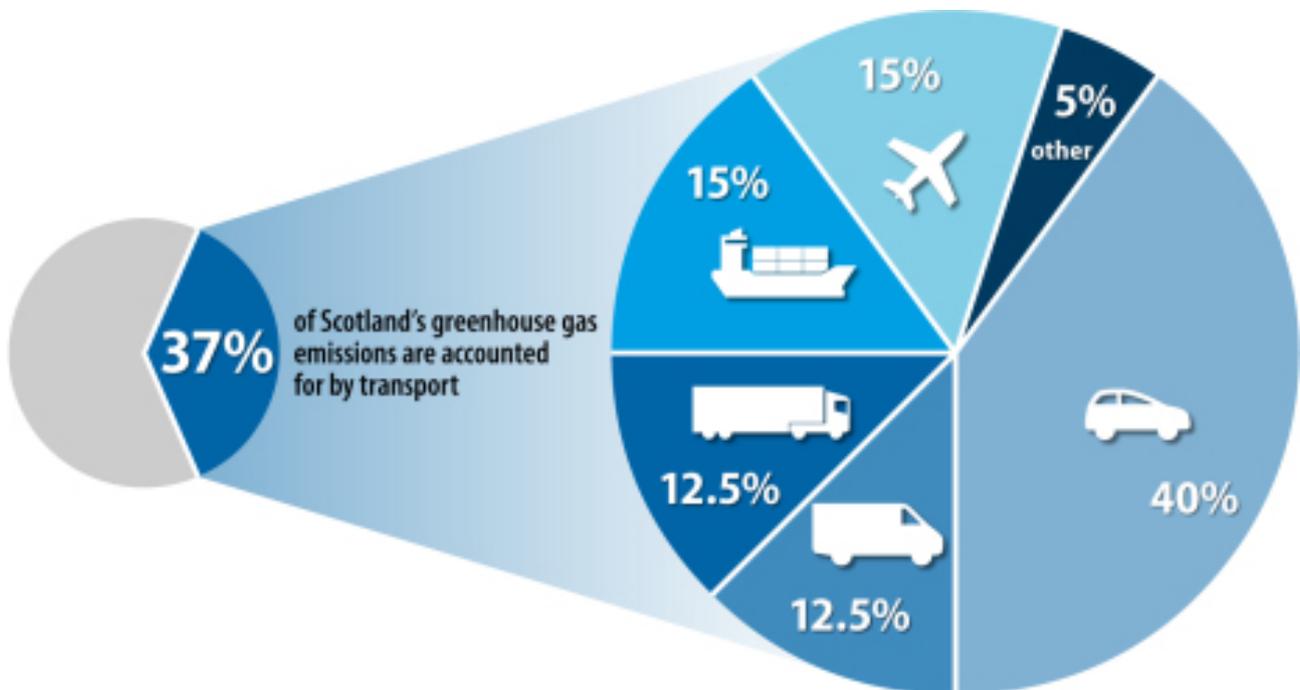
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modes. [Research](#) ⁽¹⁸⁾ has shown that over a million people in Scotland live in transport poverty and most of the areas at risk are in Highland. The homes earning the least have the lowest access to a private car, meaning they depend more on other forms of transport ([only 41 % of households earnings are up to £10,000 have access to a car](#) ⁽¹⁹⁾). Therefore the way we grow our villages, towns and city will determine how fair it is for different people in our communities to access education, employment, services and leisure opportunities. Beyond poverty, our transport system must also be designed to meet the needs of our communities, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

Using sustainable transport to tackle the climate and ecological emergency

By creating a transport network that promotes more sustainable ways to move around, we can decarbonise transport and reduce its impact on climate. The Highland Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration brings transport into the spotlight because it is at the heart of enabling Highland to become a low emissions region. The Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy highlights that 37 % of greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland were from transport and that 40 % of these emissions come from cars.

Figure 1.2 Breakdown of Scotland's transport emissions adapted from NTS2, Scottish Government, 2020



18 https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/2880/transport_poverty_in_scotland_2016.pdf

19 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45852/sct09199889061.pdf>

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Recent local [research](#)⁽²⁰⁾ reinforces these national findings, with car-based travel in the Inverness area shown to have the same carbon footprint as the Council's entire operation. Being the most populated and urban area in Highland, this new plan gives us a major opportunity to help tackle the climate and ecological emergency as well as creating greater resilience to change and disruption by enabling a wider range of transport options in the network.

Tackling congestion and enabling a transition to electric vehicles

To tackle congestion, we think the transport network should provide a fair share of space for all types of transport. Tackling congestion is challenging, particularly in some of the area's towns and Inverness, where it is most pronounced. It is [widely accepted](#)⁽²¹⁾ that building more roads for cars to tackle congestion does not work. This is because as people see new roads being created, they choose to drive and fill up the new road space, causing more congestion. For a lot of the congested parts of the Inner Moray Firth area there simply is not enough room between buildings and other land uses to build more space for cars, and the costs are often prohibitive. Creating a more varied transport network where walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport are genuinely competitive with driving will make more efficient use of available space in a fairer way for all road users. It will reduce the amount of vehicles on the road, and therefore create more space for those that do need to travel by car.

Whilst new technologies like low-emissions and electric vehicles have potential to decarbonise transport ([excluding the carbon-intensive manufacturing process](#)⁽²²⁾) they will not solve the issue of congestion because the same amount of road space is required for these vehicles as is required for fossil fuel vehicles. However, it is important to recognise the potential for such technologies to tackle the area's rural challenges where the only viable mode of transport is often private car. Combined with a range of active travel and public transport interventions in the more urban places, electric vehicles, and in future other alternative technologies such as hydrogen fuel, can contribute to tackling carbon emissions associated with transport. Therefore infrastructure to support the transition to electric vehicles is required during the lifetime of the Plan.

Infrastructure needs for most electric vehicle charging can be met at home, where vehicles are parked in driveways and access to private chargers is easier. For people without off street parking, and where there will be need to charge in public places, including tourists to the region, further

20 https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/73609/item_15_-_inverness_greenhouse_gas_inventory_report

21 <https://tps.org.uk/public/downloads/96cgz/%20Better%20Planning,%20Better%20Transport,%20Better%20Places%20August%202019.pdf?>

22 https://theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/EV-life-cycle-GHG_ICCT-Briefing_09022018_vF.pdf

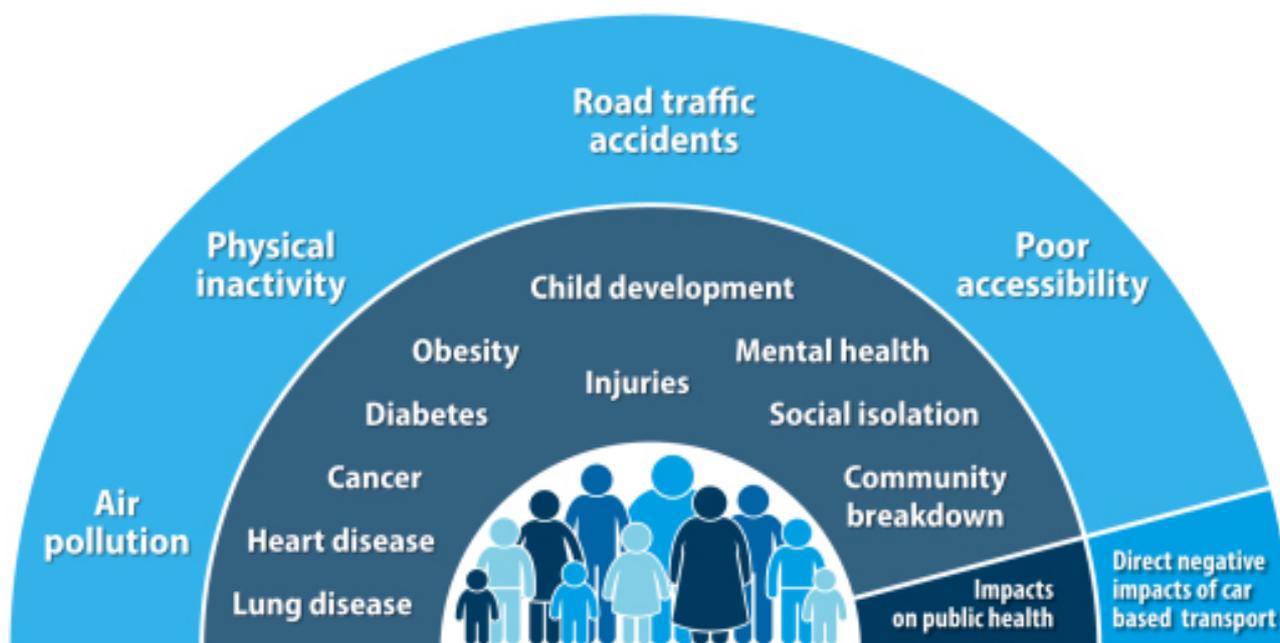
1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

investment is required. Work is currently underway with the Council's Climate Change Team, the Energy Savings Trust and Transport Scotland to deliver, and explore further opportunity to deliver, such publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the Plan area.

Using sustainable transport to improve health and wellbeing

To ensure we have a healthy, active population, walking, wheeling and cycling should be the easiest way to move around. We think the location of new development and quality of active travel infrastructure are key to unlocking the area's potential for being more active. There are strong links between inactivity and people's health, with [UK Government guidance](#)⁽²³⁾ now recommending that adults are active every day and for at least 150 minutes per week. Motorised transport is directly linked to immediate and longer-term health hazards due to inactivity, air and noise pollution, and increased social isolation, as well as collisions and injuries.

Figure 1.3 Health hazards linked to motorised transport



In Scotland, the [Active Scotland Delivery Plan](#)⁽²⁴⁾ commits to ensuring less use of cars and more journeys by walking, wheeling and cycling. [Recent research](#)⁽²⁵⁾ has shown that the health benefits of cycling in Inverness alone results in a reduction of up to 11,000 GP appointments and reduction in harmful pollutants that reduce air quality, a particular problem in the City Centre, which has a

23 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523460/Working_Together_to_Promote_Active_Travel_A_briefing_for_local_authorities.pdf

24 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/active-scotland-delivery-plan/pages/6/>

25 <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/bike-life-inverness/>

designated [Air Quality Management Area](#)⁽²⁶⁾. The Council is actively working to tackle air pollution and has an [Air Quality Action Plan](#)⁽²⁷⁾, the first Action in this plan is to promote smarter travel choices. This means that the more the Plan can do to increase walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, the better chance we have of improving people's health, including through improving air quality.

Developing a new transport strategy

We think the Plan needs to be supported by an ambitious new transport strategy that ensures the creation of a modern, sustainable transport network. This is expressed in the transport strategy drawing below. We think the best way to deliver this strategy is to identify a range of sustainable transport interventions for the Plan area, and to create an ambitious new transport policy, as indicated in the preferred approach shown in Issue.

Issue

Sustainable transport interventions

Preferred approach

We think the Plan needs to deliver a vastly improved and sustainable transport network that maximises the shift to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport wherever possible. The Plan needs to continue to ensure that new developments mitigate impacts on roads but must simultaneously create a more ambitious and sustainable transport network. The Plan will identify the range of measures and requirements for transport in settlement maps, including between-settlement active travel connectivity, developer requirements for sites, and in the transport policy described in Issue.

For Inverness this means:

1. Creating an exemplar fully connected active travel network.
2. Prioritising buses on the network, particularly at known congestion points.
3. Creating a network of park and ride sites at entrances to the city.
4. Effective management of city centre parking to support a transition to sustainable travel.

26 https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=374

27 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/16577/inverness_action_plan.pdf

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5. Improving traffic management technology to make the existing transport network as efficient as possible.
6. Lowering parking standards where an acceptable level of public transport and active travel provides a viable alternative.

For other towns and villages this means:

1. Maximising the use of and connections to existing and planned new rail halts and bus stops.
2. Creating mini park and ride/park and share sites on strategic routes.
3. Delivering active travel improvements to connect communities within and between towns and villages.
4. Lowering parking standards where an acceptable level of public transport and active travel provides a viable alternative.

For more rural places this means:

1. Maximising the opportunities to utilise rail halts and park and ride/park and share sites.
2. Supporting communities to identify and deliver active travel connections that will make sustainable travel a realistic option.
3. Supporting the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at key destinations that rural communities can benefit from.

Alternative approach

The alternative option would be to continue with the current approach to transport, which relies on assessing individual planning applications against the relevant Highland-wide Local Development Plan policies. This is not considered to be an appropriate approach because it does not follow a particular strategic direction and will not deliver the step-change in travel behaviour that is required to create better, more sustainable places that respond to the climate and ecological emergency and other challenges set out in this section.

Issue

Sustainable transport policy

Preferred approach

We recognise that all development has impacts on the transport network and therefore an up to date, overarching transport policy is required:

1. To receive planning permission, development proposals must be able to demonstrate that walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport are at least as, or more, competitive than travelling by private car. The methodology will be based on journey time competitiveness to key employment and other destinations and the requirements for developers and how it will be assessed will be set out in full in the sustainable transport policy. Work has already been undertaken about this and can be read in the Transport Appraisal supporting the Main Issues Report.
2. Travel Plans should be used to support the transition to sustainable transport. Any development considered likely to have significant trip-generating impacts (e.g. more than 50 house development or more than 1000 m² retail, office, business or industrial development) should be supported by a Travel Plan that sets out:
 - a. Clear and measurable targets and objectives to deliver sustainable transport for that development.
 - b. What range of measures will be implemented to mitigate the impacts of development and deliver sustainable transport.
 - c. What monitoring and reporting framework will be used to quantify the effectiveness of measures implemented, and when this will take place and be reported.
 - d. How the existing transport context has determined the measures considered most effective to deliver sustainable transport.
 - e. What mitigation will be implemented if such measures are found to be ineffective through monitoring, and how these will be monitored and reported.

We think a suite of innovative, effective options are available to developers to achieve sustainable transport, as set out in the Transport Appraisal supporting this Main Issues Report.

3. Developer contributions should be secured to support the transition to sustainable transport. Sites allocated in the Plan should ensure future development enables travel behaviour using the most sustainable transport possible and we think that developers

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

should therefore contribute financially to the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure and services:

- a. Where no specific intervention is required, a standard contribution per house or floorspace equivalent will be sought towards improving active travel and public transport infrastructure in the settlement or catchment area.
- b. Where an active travel or public transport priority scheme is identified in the Plan, financial contributions towards their delivery will be sought from development proposals within the settlement, or defined catchment, on a per home or floorspace equivalent basis.

Alternative approach

The alternative option would be to continue with the current approach to transport, which relies on assessing individual planning applications against the relevant Highland-wide Local Development Plan policies. This is not considered to be an appropriate approach because it does not follow a particular strategic direction and will not deliver the step-change in travel behaviour that is required to create better, more sustainable places that respond to the climate and ecological emergency and other challenges set out in this section.

1.2.7 Identifying and safeguarding valued, local green space

All communities in the Plan area should be connected by and have access to high quality green and blue spaces. This will enable people to use natural, healthy environments and help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Green infrastructure

We call the natural features and areas of land valued because of their amenity, recreational and natural heritage value green infrastructure, and believe such features should be safeguarded.

This is a Main Issue because green infrastructure needs to be better recognised for its essential roles in mitigating and adapting to climate change and delivering social, environmental, health and placemaking benefits. To properly safeguard green infrastructure an up to date and

comprehensive audit is required. The policy framework also needs to be brought in line with current thinking because the current approach was prepared in 2012 and national policy and legislation has since changed⁽²⁸⁾.

We have defined two types of green infrastructure we wish to protect and propose a different, better way of identifying and safeguarding each.

Greenspaces are the mapped areas in the Plan that have formal protection from development. They are the discrete and easily identifiable green and blue (waterside or waterbody) spaces that contribute to the character and setting of a place and provide amenity, biodiversity and recreation benefits as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation opportunities. Greenspaces may overlap with areas designated for other purposes such as Conservation Areas or environmentally protected places such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Green networks are different from greenspaces. They may serve one or more of the same functions as greenspaces but in a less formal or more strategic way. Green networks provide the physical, visual and habitat connections for greenspaces and therefore ensure accessibility for both wildlife and people. Development can be more flexibly accommodated within or adjacent to a green network as long as the network's connectivity and integrity is maintained and it is incorporated into a development as a positive landscape and design feature.

Identifying Greenspace

The aIMFLDP includes maps for each main settlement that show valued green spaces. However, the methodology used to identify these spaces can be improved in the new Plan to produce a more comprehensive and accurate audit of these formally protected areas. Greenspaces are not shown in this Main Issues Report because we want to hear people's views on how the audit should be undertaken and invite suggestions for new greenspaces to be considered for safeguarding. The next version of the Plan for consultation will show the proposed areas of greenspace we think should be safeguarded as a result of the audit undertaken, this will include all of the existing safeguarded greenspace shown in the aIMFLDP.

28 The new approach proposed would result in Highland-wide Local Development Plan policies 74, 75 and 76 being superseded for the Plan area.

Issue

Identifying Valued, Local Greenspace

How can we improve the way we audit and safeguard greenspace?

The [Highland Council's Audit of Greenspace](#)⁽²⁹⁾ was undertaken in 2010/11 and, alongside other areas identified in preparing the aIMFLDP, provided the basis for allocating greenspace. The 2010 Audit provides a starting point for IMFLDP2 to consider what greenspace should be safeguarded alongside the suggestions received through the recent Call for Sites consultation and other available sources (e.g. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland).

Our preferred approach

We think that all potential greenspace being considered should be assessed consistently by using specific criteria, and that a greenspace should be identified when one or more of the following criteria is met:

Table 4 Greenspace assessment criteria.

Criterion	Explanation
Helps define the character of the local area .	It helps to make the local area unique and identifiable, this may be in combination with other features, like historic environment features or prominent local landmarks or landforms.
Improves the connectivity of the local area.	Paths and spaces in the area are linked together by the greenspace.
Provides amenity value .	It supports local biodiversity. It gives the local area an attractive setting and/or outlook from adjacent uses and routes.

29 https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/306/highland_greenspace_audit_settlements

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

Gives local people easy access to the natural environment to socialise and interact.	The area can be used by a range of people for informal social interaction.
Provides services and/or facilities that can help mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change .	Trees, drainage features, wetlands and floodplains are protected from development and provide means of mitigating climate change impacts and/or can help to absorb carbon.
Provides an area for sport or recreation .	Sports pitches, playing fields and golf courses facilitate access to greenspace for outdoor play and recreation.
Has potential for community food growing .	Area can be utilised for formal or informal community food growing, which may include the potential to deliver new allotments.

Alternative approach

We have also considered carrying forward the areas identified in the aIMFLDP unchanged. However, we think we can produce an objective assessment of greenspace in the Plan area and include consideration of new greenspace suggestions we received through the [Call for Sites](#)⁽³⁰⁾ process.

Safeguarding Greenspace

When we have identified valued, local greenspace, we need to safeguard it using a suitable planning policy so that any planning application that proposes development of it, or would result in a reduction in its total area or quality, can be properly managed. We think that the draft policy approach below will be more comprehensive and simpler to apply than the existing policies⁽³¹⁾.

30 <https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=38617f77829c4ee6a8a611e8a64d2fe1>

31 The areas that are identified in the adopted IMFLDP are safeguarded by HwLDP Policy 75: Open Space and HwLDP Policy 76: Playing Fields and Sports Pitches. The former protects high quality, accessible and fit for purpose open space from development and the latter safeguards these recreation assets from development. Policy 75 and 76 both allow certain exceptions where it may be acceptable to allow development on these areas (read the policies [Highland-wide Local Development Plan](#) These HwLDP policies would be superseded by a Policy for the Plan area.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

Issue

Safeguarding Greenspace Policy

Our preferred approach

We think that all greenspace identified through the Greenspace audit should be safeguarded from development, including indirect impacts that could affect its quality. For sports and recreation sites only, there may be circumstances where development may be acceptable if:

- It can be demonstrated that development on a minor part of a sports or recreation greenspace would not affect its use and potential for sports and recreation; or
- It can be demonstrated that development on a sports or recreation greenspace would result in the provision of an equivalent or improved replacement facility that is at least as convenient to access and maintains or increases overall playing capacity of the particular activity in the settlement.

Alternative approach

We have also considered retaining our existing policies on this topic unchanged but we believe that a more comprehensive and consistent approach is needed.

Protecting Green Networks

We believe Green Networks should be identified, safeguarded and where possible enhanced because they make up the natural infrastructure that is important to the physical, visual and habitat connectivity of green spaces and therefore their accessibility to people and wildlife⁽³²⁾. Green Networks were not identified in the aIMFLDP, but will be identified in this Plan at its next stage. This work will involve identifying green networks in main settlements and showing them on the settlement maps so that those areas of green infrastructure that connect built-up areas to greenspace and to the surrounding countryside are protected and enhanced through developer requirements on allocated sites and in placemaking priorities identified for settlements. The approach will follow the broad principles and methodology set out in our [Green Networks Supplementary Guidance](#)⁽³³⁾.

32 HwLDP Policy 74 requires that green networks are protected and enhanced and it maps out broad areas where Green Networks should be identified in future. The [Green Networks Supplementary Guidance](#) sets out the further detail of this policy.

33 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2959/green_networks_final_supplementary_guidance.pdf

Issue

Green Networks Policy

We think it is important to include the following new Green Networks policy to ensure that development proposals are consistently assessed against this topic⁽³⁴⁾.

Preferred approach

We will identify Green Networks on the Plan's main settlement maps and safeguard the physical, visual and habitat connectivity of these Networks. A development proposal within or close to an identified Network will be assessed the extent to which it:

- affects the physical, visual and habitat connectivity (either adversely or positively) of that Network; and
- offers any mitigation of these effects.

By connectivity we mean the continuity and accessibility of that Network for people and wildlife whether those users wish to enter, pass through, travel along or derive public amenity value from that Network because of its visual continuity and accessibility.

Alternative approach

We have also considered retaining our existing policies on this topic unchanged but we believe that a more comprehensive and consistent approach is needed.

1.2.8 Placemaking

Across Highland in recent years, lifestyles and social attitudes have been changing, with more people wishing to live in a friendly and welcoming community which has quick and easy access to shops, work places, community facilities and local services, allowing them to spend less time commuting and more time with family and friends. These changing attitudes are resulting in suburban low density, edge of town living becoming less attractive.

34 This approach would be complemented by other HwLDP policies, such as Policy 52: Principle of Development in Woodland and Policy 51: Trees and Development, which would remain part of the development plan's suite of policies that a proposal would be assessed against. Appendix 2 of the Green Networks Supplementary Guidance sets out how the green network and coastal and landward trails will be identified and delivered. It is proposed that this would be updated and replicated in IMFLDP2.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

The Council approach and that of most large housebuilders and commercial developers hasn't responded to these evolving trends. Instead, the development industry has continued building stand-alone housing schemes which poorly connect with each other and the wider areas. Concurrently, shopping, business districts and leisure areas have been built on their own out-of-town sites, distinct from residential areas thereby requiring users to drive to access them. This in turn has led to an increase in traffic which has resulted in traffic congestion around our city and towns and has been detrimental to our air quality and individuals health.

A number of policies already exist in the Council current LDPs which were designed to combat these issues, but they are now dated, piecemeal and poorly understood by the public, the development industry and decision makers, resulting in them being applied in an inconsistent manner.

Figure 1.4 Placemaking principles



Moving forward, our ambition is the creation of sustainable, good quality, well-designed and connected urban communities. To achieve this, we believe we need one clear policy outlining our commitment to quality design, site layouts and developments being built at the right density in the right location, all of which combine to achieve good placemaking whilst at the same time protecting our finite natural and bio-diversity resources.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

In order to do this, we need to embed the fundamentals of placemaking into every stage of the design, planning and development process and will do so through the use of various "Design Tools". Individual Design Tools are designed to be used independently at different stages of the development process, but should come together to attain a single cohesive and comprehensive scheme. The Design Tools are split between the initial design phase and the regulation process and include:

Table 5 Placemaking design tools

Initial Design Tools to guide and shape the development from the outset:	
Development Briefs	Provides clarity and guidance on the development requirements and principles for a specific site.
Masterplans	Provide a clear and detailed direction for development, considering the relationship between uses, buildings, open spaces, and all transport routes, through the use of detailed maps and plans.
Charrette	An intensive planning session where citizens, designers and collaborate work together to prepare a single vision for a site/development.
Design Review Panel	Impartial and multi-disciplinary, expert review panel designed to provide constructive feedback at the pre-application stage of the planning process.
Pre-application Advice ⁽¹⁾	Council provided advice and information on the issues which require consideration as part of the planning application process.
Scheme Design Codes	Used to set out a clear "code" for specific element of a design (e.g street layout). A valuable tool to deliver and achieve specific design principles established earlier in the development process, by making clear what can and can't be done
Local Place Plans	A plan developed by the community which gives them the opportunity to develop proposals for the development and use of land in the place where they live.
Placemaking Audit	New Highland Council tool to be trialed through the MIR for developers and Council to use to guide, inform and assess new developments.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

Regulation Process Tools to describe, illustrate and support the development during assessment:	
Design and Access Statements ⁽¹⁾	Design and Access Statements must be submitted to accompany all planning applications for permission for Major or National developments as defined for Development Management purposes.
Design Statements ⁽¹⁾	Design Statements must be submitted for those applications defined as "local developments" for Development Management purposes within the following areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Areas. • National Scenic Areas. • Site of a Scheduled Monument. • Curtilage of a Category A Listed Building. • Historic Garden/Designed Landscape.

1. These tools are statutorily required for various types of development.

Each tool has a different purpose, value and outcome and very few schemes will require every Design Tool to be used. However, each tool is designed to involve a creative and collaborative process which engages all interested parties. The aim and function of each is to create and deliver sustainable, distinctive and connected developments and wider communities, which respects and enhances the site, wider location and natural resources. Details of each Design Tool is contained in Appendix 1: and further information can be found within numerous [Planning Advice Notes and Guidance available on-line](#)⁽³⁵⁾.

Issue

Placemaking Policy

Preferred approach

All development proposals are expected to follow a design-led approach to achieve sustainable, high quality placemaking and be sited, designed and laid out to create successful, healthy places that make a positive contribution to the architectural and visual quality in which they

35 <https://www.gov.scot/collections/planning-advice-notes-pans/>

area located and encourage good physical and mental health, whilst helping to reduce health inequalities, improve people's wellbeing, safeguard the environment and support economic development.

All applications should include a written statement outlining which Design Tool(s) have been utilised, how the scheme evolved and the changes adopted as a result of using the Design Tool. Furthermore, for development proposals of 4 or more dwellings and major scale non housing applications developers must submit a completed Placemaking Audit based to the criteria outlined in Appendix 3:. Conformity with all the "Essential" criteria must be demonstrated as part of the application submission and adequate demonstration of also meeting the Audit's "Desirable" criteria will classify the proposal as having a net positive effect, conformity with this policy.

Alternative approaches

- We could continue to apply our existing policies on this subject but they are dated, piecemeal, not easily understood by the development industry and decision makers, and applied in an inconsistent manner.
- We could have fewer "Design Tools".
- We could apply the requirements of the Placemaking Audit to fewer or more types/scales of development.
- We could make fewer or more criteria outlined in the Placemaking Audit "Essential" or "Desirable".

1.2.9 Meeting the needs of an ageing population

In common with the rest of Scotland, the Plan area's population profile is ageing; in the near future, a higher proportion of the total population will be in the older age groups. In particular, within Highland, there will be a higher than national average increase in those 75 or over as the "baby boom" generation moves through their 70s and because of increased life expectancy the need for care and specialist housing will increase. Based on current projections it is expected that by 2035 the older population (75 and over) in Highland will have increased by 49% since 2019. Although many people will be able to live at home for longer there will be an increasing need for suitable, accessible accommodation and associated support services. A significant proportion of the elderly population is likely to live alone, bringing a particular set of challenges in terms of housing and care.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues

There is clearly a need to address the issues associated with an ageing population in terms of housing needs. A partnership approach will be required to deliver a vision to support accommodation options that will allow people to stay in their own homes or communities for as long as possible and there is a role for the Local Development Plan to play in this.

Initial discussions have been held internally in the Council; however, there is a need for wider cross-Council and Community Planning partner collaboration to determine what measures will be required to address the issues. There are already examples of innovative models of accommodation across Highland however their capacity is much less than current need. There is also a need for the Council to lobby the Scottish Government to update the Housing for Varying Needs guidance. It is out of date in relation to developments in inclusive design, design for dementia and autism, as well as for disabled people using larger wheelchairs. It assumes wheelchair users and those who use mobility aids need "specialist housing" with integral support rather than mainstream housing. Again this is out of date with the housing requirements and aspirations of the majority of wheelchair users. Nationally there is a call for the Scottish Government to give due consideration of the potential to develop a single cross tenure statutory design standard that provides for an enhanced space standard.

The affordable housing section of the Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance already requires that between 15 and 25% of the 25 % affordable housing requirement should be "wheelchair liveable", which means a prescribed series of building design changes to make it easier for an elderly and/or disabled householder to use and move around the accommodation. It is acknowledged that the costs of developing this kind of housing is higher. Therefore it is suggested that a more proactive approach is needed to ensure that public funding is increased and better matched to the need which is forecast. The affordable housing section of the Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance already requires that between 15 and 25% of the 25 % affordable housing requirement should be "wheelchair liveable", which means a prescribed series of building design changes to make it easier for an elderly and/or disabled householder to use and move around the accommodation. It is acknowledged that the costs of developing this kind of housing is higher. Therefore it is suggested that a more proactive approach is needed to ensure that public funding is increased and better matched to the need which is forecast.

At present there is no onus on private developers to provide "wheelchair liveable" housing. However, it is considered that developers of private housing could provide a broader range of open market accommodation that is flexible to evolving householder requirements. In particular, there is potential for more innovative higher density housing to provide suitable accommodation. This can also help achieve more liveable neighbourhoods which are more socially inclusive and where elderly people will feel less isolated. Achieving this will require the efforts of our community planning partners and housing providers.

Issue

Meeting the needs of an ageing population

Our preferred approaches

We believe that all of the following complementary measures are required.

- The Council, affordable housing providers, and other stakeholders should lobby the Scottish Government for increased funding to ensure that 25% of all new build, affordable housing units delivered across the Plan area are built to a "wheelchair liveable standard" - i.e. meet both the basic and desirable criteria as specified in the [Housing for Varying Needs Guidance](#) ⁽³⁶⁾.
- Private developers of large (50 or more dwellings) planning applications, will be required to provide 5% of the dwellings to be built to a "wheelchair liveable standard" - i.e. to meet both the basic and desirable criteria as specified in the Housing for Varying Needs guidance. This requirement is to be additional to the affordable housing provision required as part of the application. However, to ensure that sites remain viable, the 5% accommodation can be offered at its open market price/rental.
- The Plan could identify sites suitable for accommodation for the elderly and disabled, for example level sites in close proximity to services, facilities and public transport.

Alternative approach

Instead, we could do the following.

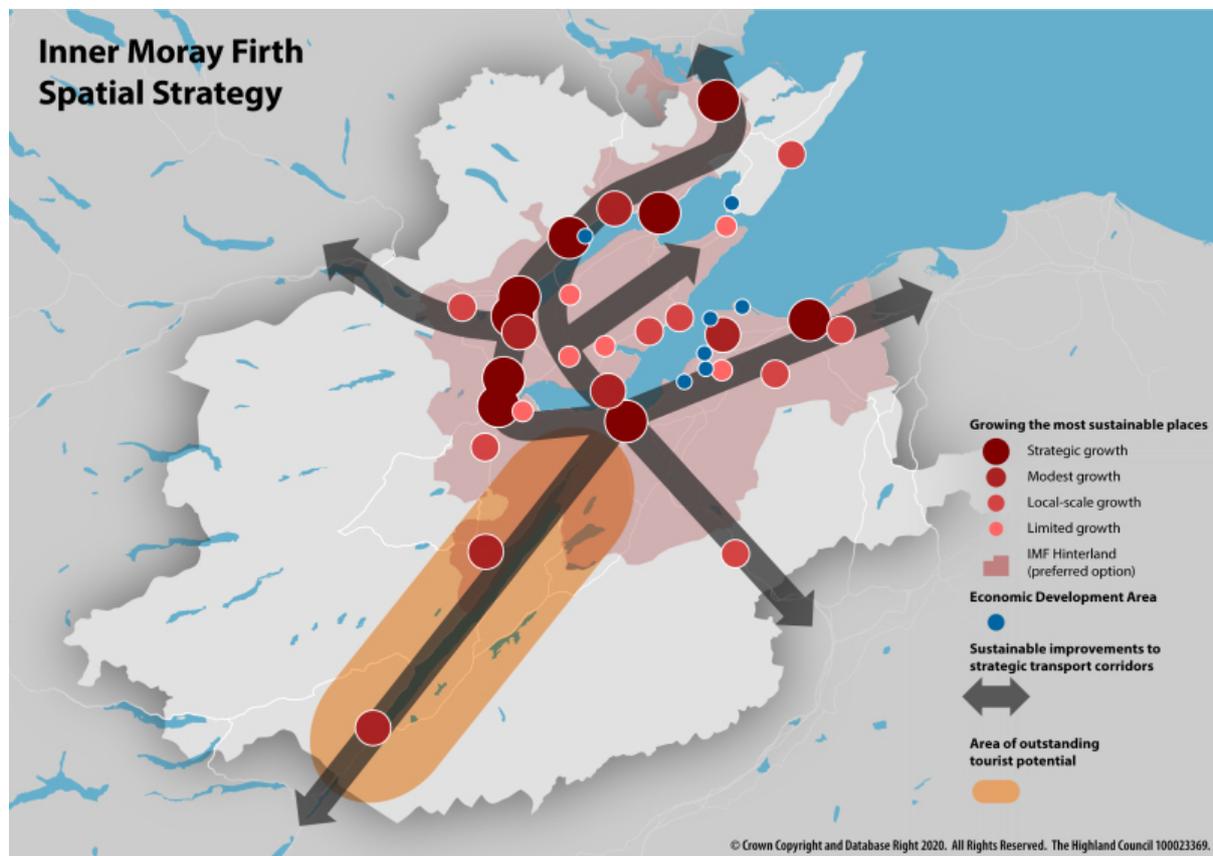
- Continue to accept a lower standard of wheelchair accessibility than that desirable, within the majority of new affordable housing.
- Rely on the development industry to deliver the required type and mix of homes in appropriate locations.

36 <https://web.archive.org/web/20131205120926/http://www.archive2officialdocuments.co.uk/document/deps/cs/HousingOutput/content/index.html>

2 Spatial Strategy

Map 2.1 is a visual summary of our preferred approaches to the 9 Main Issues that we have identified in this Report. It only includes those approaches which have a spatial or geographic dimension.

Map 2.1 Spatial strategy



One significant change from our current policy approach is a suggested shift away from specifically identified growth corridors for land between Inverness and Nairn, and Easter Ross. Instead, we are proposing a finer grained strategy based on the Plan's settlement hierarchy. This hierarchy is based upon optimising environmental sustainability and economic viability in growth location selection. The suggested hierarchy is tabulated and justified, and the expected scale of growth envisaged within each tier of settlement is explained in 1.2.3. We believe this approach will most successfully address the Plan's twin primary aims of addressing the issues raised in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

Outwith the main, identified settlements, our Spatial Strategy is to encourage economic development at specifically identified Economic Development Areas, which have a locational imperative to be there such as the established ports at Whiteness and Nigg. Similarly, the Loch Ness corridor is an established tourism destination where the benefits of tourists' spend and disbenefits of tourists' environmental impact can better be managed to increase and spread economic benefit but also to encourage more sustainable tourism particularly in terms of tourists' mode of travel.

The Spatial Strategy graphic depicts the Plan's suggested:

- Settlement Hierarchy;
- Loch Ness Sustainable Tourism Corridor;
- Economic Development Areas;
- Hinterland Boundary; and,
- Spatial Priorities highlighted within the Council's draft Regional Spatial Strategy.

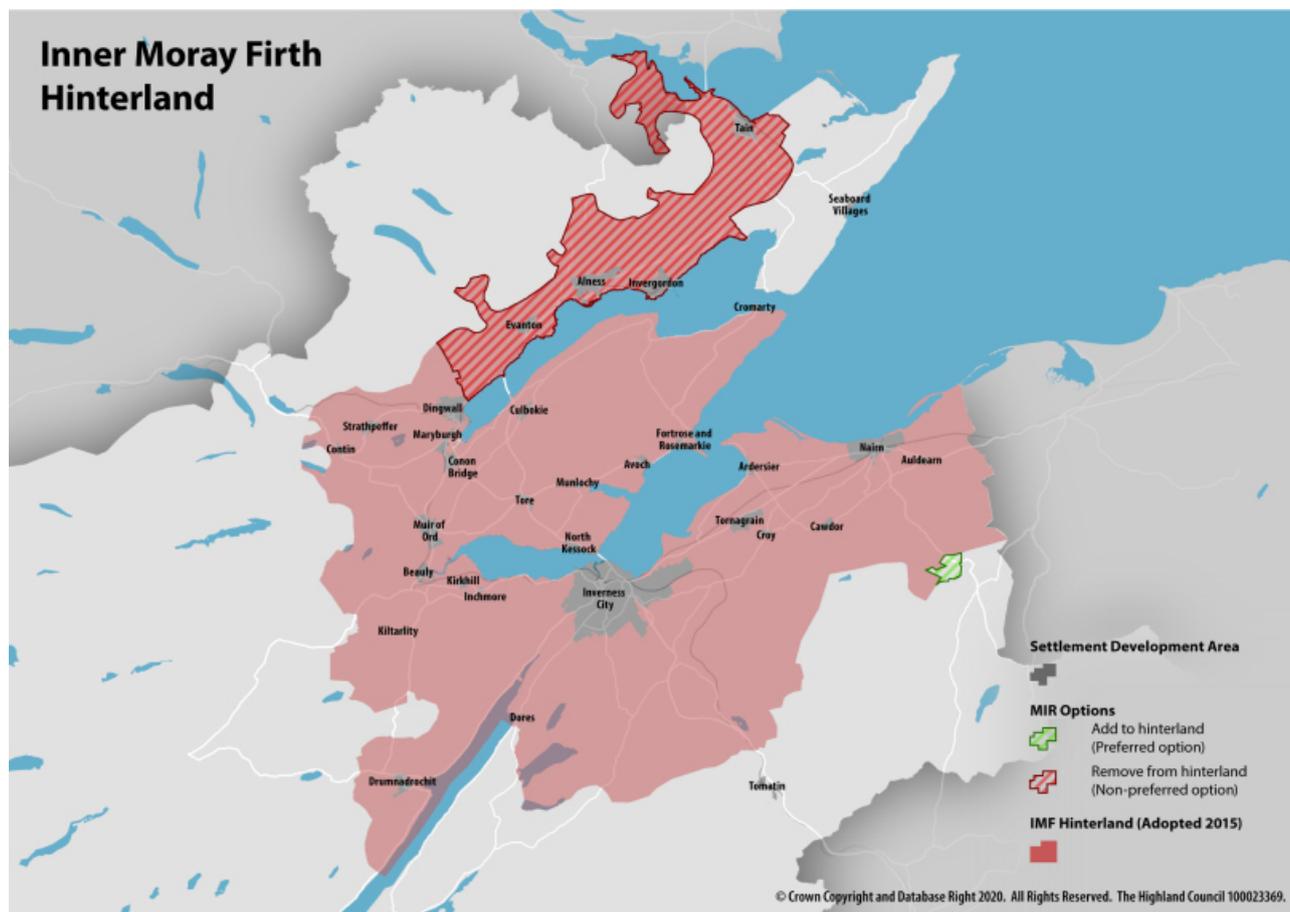
Housing in the Countryside - The Hinterland Boundary

Outwith the main, identified settlements, our Spatial Strategy for housing is better to manage pressure for new building because of its adverse environmental and economic effects. Specifically, uncontrolled, sporadic housing development in the open countryside closest to the major employment settlements, other things being equal:

- increases car-based trips to work and most other activities resulting in higher carbon and other harmful emissions than otherwise need occur;
- suburbanises the open (or dispersed pattern of settlement) landscape character of the existing countryside; and,
- increases the cost of public (and private) service provision such as a wired internet connection, a postal service, a private parcel delivery, a water main connection, waste collection, a public sewer connection, a mobile library van service, a school transport service.

Therefore, we believe that new development in the open countryside should be controlled to favour those with good reason to be there. Housing in connection with a business already in a countryside area or a new enterprise particularly suited to a rural area are existing, sensible exceptions. This includes farmers, crofters and others with a genuine, frequent need to manage their rural land use activity but also managers of kennels, catteries and other "bad neighbour" uses that are not suited to a traditional industrial estate.

Map 2.2 Hinterland



To allow some flexibility given that Highland has a long tradition of dispersed parish based settlement and that many indigenous people have been born and raised in rural areas, the Plan identifies a list of Growing Settlements where proportionate growth can occur without a land or business management justification. Similarly, there is no management justification required within existing housing groups.

This Plan cannot change the planning policy that applies within the Hinterland only the boundary that determines where that policy is applied. Presently, we are reviewing the detail of the policy itself including ways of increasing flexibility such as widening the definition of a housing group. This review is subject to a public consultation process separate from this Plan.

Issue

Hinterland Boundary

Preferred approach

Following an analysis of recent house completion data, demographic trends, and likely changes in future travel to work patterns combined with this Plan's aim of reducing unnecessary car borne travel, we believe that the geographic area of open countryside currently identified as the Hinterland is still fit for purpose. We are suggesting only one minor expansion to the Hinterland boundary at Belivat, Nairnshire, where sporadic development has occurred causing cumulative adverse environmental and servicing effects.

Alternative approaches

Recent house completion data ([insert link](#)) suggests that other expansions to the Hinterland boundary may be appropriate. There has been sporadic development outwith Tomatin and the dualling of the rest of the A9 and a new, safer village junction may increase that pressure. Similarly, the relatively high proportion of total house completions that have occurred outwith settlements in Nairnshire, East Ross and the small West Ross portion of the Plan may justify expansions to the boundary.

Conversely, some Highland Councillors have suggested on behalf of some of their constituents that the Hinterland boundary be significantly contracted in order to actively promote housing development in the countryside. The justification for such an approach is varied. Such development does support the small scale local construction industry, can support self build housing, can provide affordable house plots where related family land is available, and dispersed single house development tends to prompt fewer objections than larger scale proposals concentrated within settlements because of the latter's perceived or actual adverse impact on the residential amenity of immediate neighbours. The suggested contraction is to draw in the Hinterland boundary to the Cromarty Firth Bridge to exclude East Ross. This suggested contraction is not preferred because of the cumulative adverse impacts it would have on the climate, the cost and efficiency of public service provision, and on the local landscape. On a more technical point, the Hinterland was originally born out of a desire to protect the open countryside within a 20 minute drive time around major work centres including Invergordon and Alness so the removal of East Ross would undermine the very principle of this approach and leave a detached portion of the Hinterland area around Dornoch, which is outwith this Plan area.

3 Main Settlements

For each settlement we have outlined the Key Issues and Placemaking Priorities that we think are important for guiding what development can happen in these places. For the main settlements, we have also identified specific development sites and given an initial indication of what we think of them. These development sites have come from 3 sources:

1. land⁽³⁷⁾ suggested by landowners, developers and communities through the Plan's initial "[Call for Sites](#)"⁽³⁸⁾⁽³⁹⁾,";
2. undeveloped or only partly developed sites allocated within the existing aIMFLDP (insert link); and,
3. larger⁽³⁷⁾ sites with an extant planning permission that haven't already been included from source 1 or 2 above.

Each development site option has been given an initial, colour coded, Council preference of "preferred" (green), "alternative" (amber) or "non-preferred" (red). This preference is based on a sustainability appraisal (insert link) consideration of each site/proposal which includes input from a variety of stakeholders including public service providers. Please note that the Council's intention is to confirm for allocation in the next Proposed Plan, only those sites shown as "preferred" in this document. An "alternative" site will only be considered for confirmation where it can be evidenced, in response to this Main Issues Report, that it is clearly better in sustainability appraisal terms than at least one equivalent "preferred" site in that locality. The following explains our approach to site preferences.

Preferred Sites

- Sites that are the most suitable in sustainability appraisal (insert link) terms, i.e. they are the most environmentally sustainable and most economically viable to develop for both the public and private sector especially in terms of infrastructure provision and other mitigation necessary to deliver them.
- Larger (10 or more dwelling units and non housing equivalent) fully committed sites that are under construction as of summer 2020.

37 We have not included some sites because we think they are of too small a scale to be significant to the future of a main settlement (as defined in this document) or they are proposals and/or in locations that are clearly, in our view, environmentally unsustainable.

38 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/

39 inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

Alternative Sites

Sites that are reasonable in sustainability appraisal terms (insert link) but are not required in quantitative terms - i.e. if they were included then the capacity of housing component development sites confirmed in the Plan would be well in excess of the Plan's Housing Supply Target or would represent over-provision within the non housing land supply, e.g. would be likely to displace economic activity from one Plan area location to another rather than increase overall economic activity.

Non-Preferred Sites

Sites that are the least suitable in sustainability appraisal (insert link) terms, i.e. they are the least environmentally sustainable and/or the least economically viable to develop for both the public and private sector especially in terms of infrastructure provision and other mitigation necessary to deliver them.

3 Main Settlements

3.2 Ardesier | Àird nan Saor

With a population of just over 1,200 people, Ardesier is a reasonably sized village which benefits from a range of local facilities including a primary school, several shops, a pharmacy and large children's play park. Despite its relatively close proximity to both Nairn (approximately 5.5 miles) and Inverness (9.5 miles) transport options are limited.

As a former fishing village, Ardesier is located on the southern coast of the Inner Moray Firth and is situated between the shoreline and a steep raised beach. Much of the available development land within the settlement is impacted by flood risk and/or a high water table.

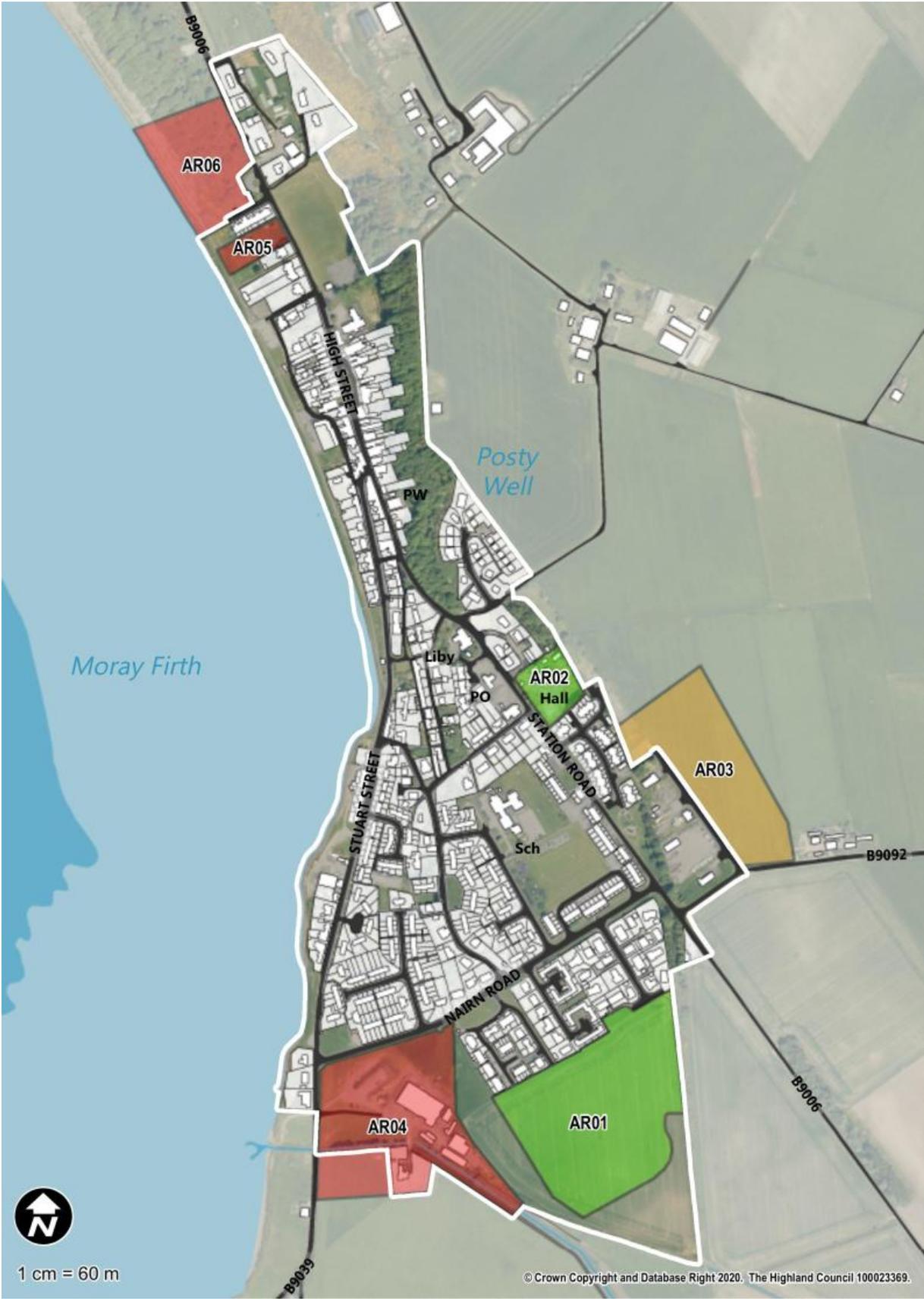
Fort George, a large 18th-century fortress, is located just over a mile to the north with its only access being taken through the village. It is one of the most imposing and well known military barracks in the UK and provides both an ongoing military function and a well established tourist attraction. Its proximity to Ardesier has helped create and sustain services and facilities over and above many other similar sized villages. However, with the announcement by the MoD of the closure of Fort George as a military base, securing a suitable future use will be important to the future of Ardesier.

Planning permission was granted in December 2019 for 117 homes at the south of the village. It is expected that development will help address the majority of housing need in the area for many years to come.

Placemaking Priorities

- Improve transport connections, including for non-motorised users, with key employment destinations, particularly Inverness Airport, Nairn and Inverness. This will include seeking developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of the A96 Coastal Trail.
- Encourage the sensitive renovation and redevelopment of vacant and derelict sites within the village.
- Introduce traffic management improvements to reduce congestion on High Street, particularly to and from Fort George.

Map 3.2 Ardersier



3 Main Settlements

Sites

Preferred Sites

AR01

Name: South of Nairn Road

Use(s): Housing

AR02

Name: West of Station Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

Land south of Nairn Road is preferred as it has permission for 117 new homes and is currently being built out. The land west of Station Road is also supported because it is a centrally located, brownfield site.

Alternative Sites

AR03

Name: Industrial Estate Expansion

Use(s): Industry

Despite the need for industrial land in the area, we are considering removing the site as it has not been actively promoted by a developer or landowner since its allocation in the plan and therefore its availability is uncertain.

Non-Preferred Sites

AR04

Name: Milton of Connage Farm

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

AR05

Name: South of Cromal Terrace

Use(s): Mixed use (Housing, Community)

AR06

Name: Land North of Village

Use(s): Mixed Use (Tourism, Business)

Land at Milton of Connage Farm is non-preferred as it appears to have realised its full business potential on alternative land and expansion has not been sought by the landowner, tenant or a developer. We are therefore uncertain about its availability and development potential. The two existing allocations at the north of the village have not been preferred as the sites are at risk of coastal flooding.

3 Main Settlements

3.5 Beauly | A' Mhanachainn

Beauly is an important local facilities centre for a wider rural hinterland and a tourist destination. It lies approximately 19 km west of Inverness and houses around 1,500 people. Enclosed between the railway line and the River Beauly, its settlement form is compact and centred around an impressive "Village Square" Conservation Area which is characterised by substantial stonebuilt properties in tree lined streets. It is also a popular commuter town for those working in Inverness and Ross-shire and has the sustainable travel advantage of a rail halt. These factors and the abundance of reasonably flat and reasonably well drained land close to central facilities make it an ideal location for growth.

However, there are physical, environmental and service capacity constraints that should be respected. The rising slopes and wooded margins of the adjoining countryside combined with the River Beauly and its flood plain and high water table to the east and railway to the south and west limit where that growth could and should be supported. The Village Square and the central road network were not designed for a high level of vehicle traffic. Similarly the primary school accommodation is outdated.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that this Plan should support the continued expansion of Beauly but in a compact form and hand in hand with improvement to local facilities notably extension of the "Priory Way" loop road that will relieve pressure on the narrowest central road network and new accommodation at or close to the primary school.

The historic village square is key to Beauly's character and is designated as a Conservation Area. The Council will seek to protect, preserve or enhance its special architectural and historic interest. The Council may undertake a Conservation Area Management Plan which will consider key challenges and opportunities facing the conservation area, and provide guidance on the appropriate siting, scale, massing and materials for new development and for the alteration, extension and refurbishment of buildings throughout Beauly Conservation Area.

Placemaking Priorities

- To expand the town respecting the physical limits of the railway line and River Beauly flood plain.
- To complete a peripheral loop road to ease issues created by the outdated central road network.
- To provide land to encourage a more self contained community with local employment opportunities, more housing specifically adapted for the elderly, and better community facilities.
- To protect and enhance the town's historic and vibrant centre.

- To seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of an active travel link between Beauly and Kirkhill.

3 Main Settlements

Map 3.5 Beauly



Sites

Preferred Sites

BE01

Name: Beauly North

Use(s): Housing

BE02

Name: East Wellhouse

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business and/or Residential Institution Non-residential Institution)

BE03

Name: North East of Fire Station

Use(s): Mixed Use (Retail, Business, Tourism)

BE04

Name: South of Rail Line

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Rail Halt Expansion)

BE05

Name: Allotments

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Housing Adapted for the Ageing Population)

BE06

Name: Primary School and Playing Fields

Use(s): Community (Primary School and Playing Fields)

The sites listed above will maintain the compact settlement pattern of Beauly and respects its constraints. Other things being equal, compact mixed use development will encourage active travel because there will be the opportunity to walk or cycle to local employment and local facilities. Business development is directed as close as possible to the town centre to bolster footfall and to the rail station where certain uses may gain a competitive advantage from that connected location.

3 Main Settlements

The allotments at Fraser Street provide a community growing space but this could be provided elsewhere in Beaully. At least part of the allotments site, being flat and central to amenities, could be suited to housing accommodation specifically adapted for the elderly whether that is private flatted or institutional accommodation.

Alternative Sites

BE07

Name: North East of Croyard Road

Use(s): Housing

BE08

Name: West of Cnoc na Rath

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community - Education)

Sites BE07 and BE08 are allocated in the existing approved development plan but have not come forward for development because of land ownership reasons. Although they are otherwise suitable for development they may also be held back by infrastructure costs such as the need to safeguard land for presently unprogrammed high school investment and to progress the "Priory Way" loop road. Given these viability issues and the need only to allocate sufficient, viable housing land we are presently not convinced that the new Plan should include these sites.

3 Main Settlements

3.10 Croy | Crothaidh

Croy is a relatively small village located on the B9091 halfway between Inverness and Nairn. The population of Croy has increased nearly 10% in the past 10 years due mainly to the completion of a large housing development on the north western edge of the settlement.

Scotia Homes have recently begun developing another strategic expansion to the west of Croy which includes 100 new homes. The first phase also saw a cafe and retail unit built and which is now occupied by ANTA.

Due to its lack of facilities and limited sustainable transport options, Croy is positioned within Tier 3 of the settlement Hierarchy which means that future housing development, with the exception of the consented scheme to the west of the primary school, will be limited.

The new town of Tornagrain lies immediately to the north and as the rate of development has progressed there has been increasing pressure on local infrastructure including Croy Primary and the road network.

Placemaking Priorities

- Improvements to the transport network, particularly around the junction of the B9091 and the B9006 and along Croy Road to Tornagrain.
- Ensure that the new primary school at Tornagrain is delivered at an appropriate time to avoid undue pressure on the existing school.
- Seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of the A96 Landward Trail.

Map 3.9 Croy



3 Main Settlements

Sites

Preferred Sites

CR01

Name: West of Primary School

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail and Community)

Land west of the Primary School is preferred as it has recently received planning permission for the development of 100 homes and is currently being built out.

Non-Preferred Sites

CR02

Name: East of B9006

Use(s): Housing

CR03

Name: North West of Primary School

Use(s): Housing

CR04

Name: East of Heatherpark

Use(s): Housing

Whilst the land east of the B9006 is centrally located and is arguably a logical expansion of the settlement, no interest has been shown in taking the site forward. The development of 100 new homes west of the primary school is also expected to address the village's housing needs for the foreseeable future.

The land north west of the primary school (identified by the developer as Phase 2) is not preferred due to Croy's position (tier 3) within the settlement hierarchy. Strategic levels of housing development will not be supported in the places which have limited facilities and sustainable transport options.

Similarly, land to the east of Heatherpark is non-preferred due to its position in the settlement hierarchy and as it would result in Croy unnecessarily expanding in a different direction that what is currently supported.

3.13 Dores | Duras

Dores is a small village of just 145 residents with facilities including a primary school (currently at 58 % capacity but due to increase to 84 % in 10 years time), a bar/restaurant and free church. It is a popular visitor destination due to its attractive location, nestled on the western banks of Loch Ness and long, south facing pebble beach.

Other facilities are fairly limited, with a basic playpark and grass sports pitch in the centre of the village. Inverness Royal Academy is forecast to experience significant capacity pressure and a major extension will be needed. The bus service is the only means of public transport and despite its infrequency it does provide an opportunity for commuting to Inverness.

There are a handful of development options with suggested housing sites located at the north and south of the village and proposals for mixed use and community uses in the centre.

Due to the size of Dores and the scale of development proposed we consider that there may be merit in reclassifying it as a Growing Settlement.

Placemaking Priorities

- Protect and enhance the playpark and grass sports pitch in the centre of the village.
- Increase car parking facilities to serve both the local community and visitors during peak times.
- Deliver new affordable housing to help retain young people and families to the area.
- Work with Scottish Water to upgrade the water supply capacity.

3 Main Settlements

Map 3.12 Dores



Sites

Preferred Sites

D001

Name: Land south of Church of Scotland **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community, Tourism)

The existing Mixed Use allocation south of the Parish Hall is preferred for development as it is a logical infill site within the settlement. It also has developer interest and can deliver a mix of uses, including a potential expansion of the cemetery.

Alternative Sites

D002

Name: North of Mill Croft **Use(s):** Housing

D003

Name: South of Dores Hall **Use(s):** Housing

D004

Name: North of Playing Field **Use(s):** Community

As Dores is identified near the bottom of the settlement hierarchy and considered among the least sustainable places, only very limited development opportunities are supported. The site south of Dores village hall benefits from having developer interest and the potential to improve the existing access to the hall. However, it is a sloping wooded site which will require improved active travel provision to the village centre. If developed to a high standard of architectural siting and design, the land north of Mill Croft could form a reasonable expansion of the settlement. However, at present there is limited quantitative need and other sites are more preferable. The large area

3 Main Settlements

allocated for community uses to the north of the football pitch is shown as Alternative as it is unclear whether it poses an effective development site. More information is needed on what is being proposed and whether it will be made available by the landowner.

Non-Preferred Sites

D005

Name: Land at South Dores

Use(s): Housing

Land proposed at Dores south is not preferred as it is a sloping wooded site which would require substantial investment in providing active travel connections to the centre of the village. There are better alternative sites which meet local housing need.

3.14 Drumnadrochit | Druim na Drochaid

Drumnadrochit benefits from a range of facilities beyond what would be expected for the size of the settlement and wider Glenurquhart catchment population. The principal settlement accommodates around 1,150 permanent residents and this figure has shown a slow but steady increase over the last 20 years. Its popularity is based upon its: proximity to the work centre of Inverness; attractive setting close to Loch Ness; good range of local facilities; and, location straddling a major tourist route. The local high and primary schools have some spare capacity and investment to protect the village centre from flooding is programmed.

However, it is not a sustainable location for significant further growth. Car based travel to larger facilities and work is still necessary and improving public transport or active travel provision to Inverness would not be cost effective relative to the extra population that could reasonably be accommodated in Glenurquhart. Similarly, local water and sewerage capacity is constrained and additional investment to increase capacity is not programmed by Scottish Water. Add in the physical constraints of the steep surrounding hill slopes, areas of flood risk, the restrictions on new access to the A82 trunk road, and the environmental and amenity benefits of preserving local greenspace then we believe that a cautious approach to future growth is sensible.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that the "legacy" allocations at Drum Farm and adjoining the new Co-op store should be completed but that no new expansion areas should be promoted.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate the village by supporting the completion of its central development sites.
- To secure an improved range, quality and location of commercial and community facilities.
- To improve active travel accessibility to these more centralised facilities.
- To preserve the greenspaces and green corridors that permeate through the settlement and enhance their role as active travel routes.

3 Main Settlements

Map 3.13 Drumnadrochit



Sites

Preferred Sites

DR01

Name: Land Adjoining New Co-op

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Business)

DR02

Name: Drum Farm

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

DR03

Name: Land West of Post Office

Use(s): Mixed Use (Tourism, Business, Retail, Community)

DR04

Name: Retail Units on A82/Balmacaan Road and Land Adjoining

Use(s): Mixed Use (Retail, Business, Housing, Community)

DR05

Name: Shinty Pitch and Adjoining Land

Use(s): Community

DR06

Name: Schools Junction

Use(s): Community

The two large central sites represent previous, in principle, development commitments. DR01 is part permitted and part constructed. Land at Drum Farm can also help consolidate the settlement in a central location where, other things being equal, a mix of uses can promote more sustainable travel to local facilities and employment. Land to the rear of the post office will be better protected from flooding following completion of the programmed flood scheme and is also in an optimum central location close to other commercial facilities and the principal public car park. Other than

3 Main Settlements

these sites, expansion of shinty facilities would most sensibly be made adjoining the existing pitch and underutilised land closer to the high and primary schools may have potential for complementary education or other community use.

Non-Preferred Sites

DR07

Name: Land South of Medical Centre

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Business, Community)

DR08

Name: Easter Milton

Use(s): Either Housing or Community

The preferred sites above are existing commitments with firm developer interest and are part serviced. In contrast, land south of the medical centre is more speculative albeit also part serviced. We believe that the housing capacity of the preferred sites are sufficient to accommodate the village's growth requirements in the short and medium term. Allocating another large site for development in Drumnadrochit would not meet the Plan's overall sustainability objective. The suggested development site between the village and Milton is bordered by an area of flood risk and is relatively distant from the village centre and its facilities.

3.16 Fort Augustus | Cille Chuimein

Fort Augustus only accommodates a stable, year round population of just over 600 but expands during the tourism season because it is well placed to capture trade passing along its trunk road, canal and long distance trail corridors. It also supports higher order facilities such as a high school because of its distance from any urban area. Education, water and sewerage facilities have adequate existing or programmed capacity.

In terms of constraints, the same transport, river and tourism corridors create severance of movement across the village, junction constraints, heritage features that should be protected, flood risk areas, and marked seasonal variations in demand and therefore employment. The patchwork of crofting tenancies and ownership within the village continues to thwart attempts to assemble larger development sites.

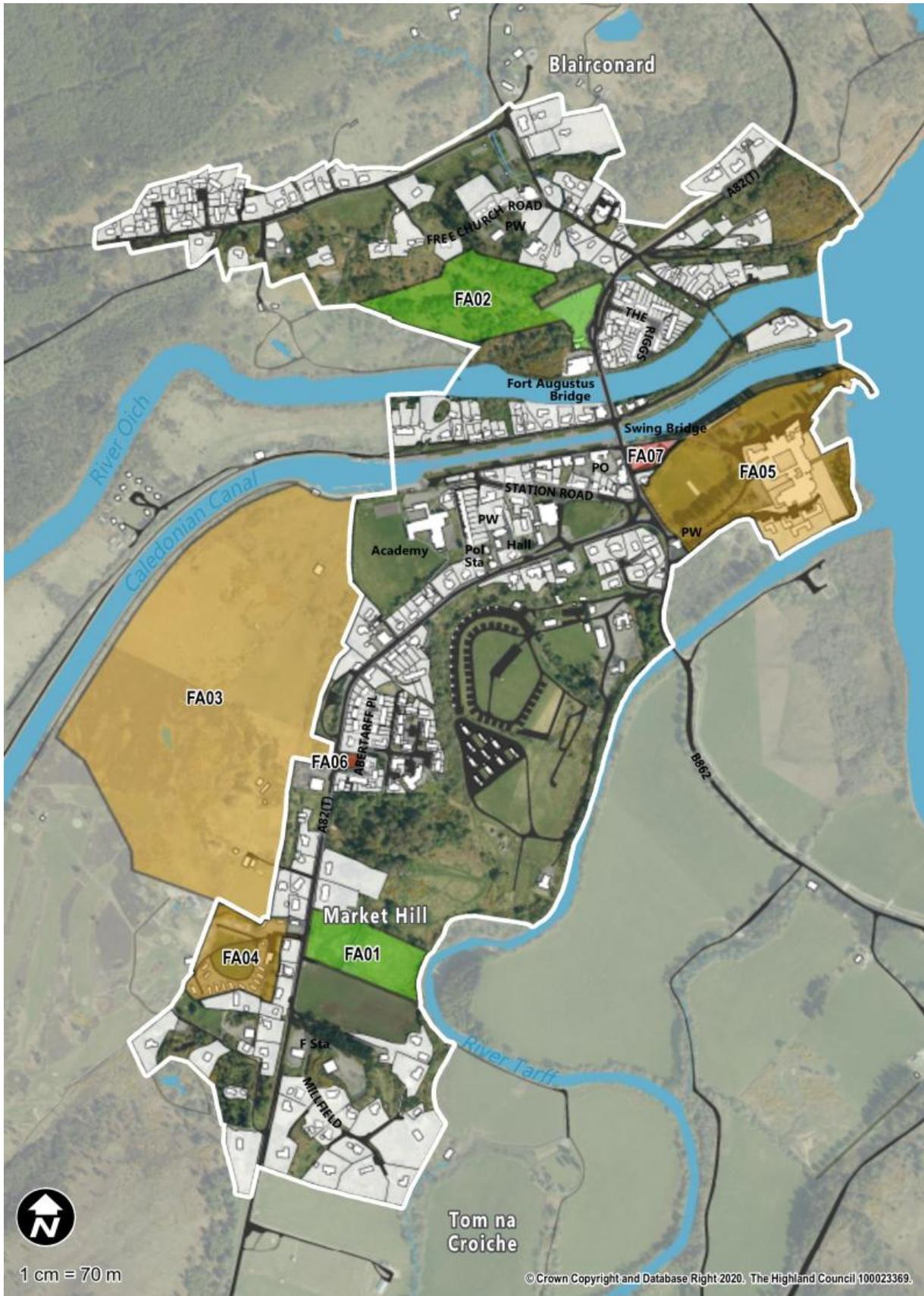
Taking account of these development factors we believe that this Plan should consolidate rather than seek to promote expansion of Fort Augustus. In practice, this means a preference for smaller infill sites.

Placemaking Priorities

- To support smaller scale infill expansion where land ownership and other constraints allow.
- To complete water supply improvements.
- To encourage comprehensively serviced mixed use development close to the village centre and south of the Old Convent.
- To avoid fluvial flood risk issues and mitigate the severance of active travel movement caused by the transport corridors.

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Map 3.15 Fort Augustus



Sites

Preferred Sites

FA01

Name: Glebe

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business)

FA02

Name: Village Centre Car Park and Adjoining Land

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Retail)

The fragmented pattern of landownership within the village and other constraints limit the land that is available and viable for significant development. Land south of the Old Convent is already subject to developer interest and if successful then could be extended. Land within and adjoining the village car park is in the most sustainable location and could be reconfigured to allow more and better laid out car parking plus enabling mixed use development.

Alternative Sites

FA03

Name: Market Hill

Use(s): Housing, Golf Course Extension, Community

FA04

Name: A82 Caravan Park

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

FA05

Name: St Benedict's Abbey

Use(s): Community

3 Main Settlements

Land at Market Hill and the A82 Caravan Park is unlikely to be released for properly serviced, significant development because of landownership/crofting interests. Remaining development potential at the Abbey is limited by its heritage constraints.

Non-Preferred Sites

FA06

Name: Abertarff Place

Use(s): Housing

FA07

Name: South East of Swing Bridge

Use(s): Business/Tourism

Land at Abertarff Place is underutilised but has underground sewerage and some amenity value to adjoining residents. The Clansman Centre and its adjoining car parking is well utilised and therefore its reallocation for business/tourism use is unnecessary.

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3.18 Inchmore | An Innis Mhòr

Inchmore is no longer a suitable location for significant growth. Its primary school has closed, its spine road is no longer trunked, public transport connectivity and local employment opportunities are limited, high voltage lines pass overhead, flood risk affects the eastern end of the settlement and previously allocated development land has not been released to developers. There is also very limited local primary school and water supply capacity and therefore we do not believe that Inchmore merits classification as a "main" village in the Plan's hierarchy of settlements. Instead we believe it should be classified as a growing settlement which means that smaller scale development may be supported subject to the placemaking priorities set out below.

Placemaking Priorities

- To direct any further, smaller scale housing and other development to land adjoining the former village hall and away from more steeply sloping and visually prominent land to the south, and land subject to unacceptable flood risk to the east.
- To limit the scale of any development to the capacity of local infrastructure in particular the capacity of junctions onto the A862, of Kirkhill Primary School and of Glen Convinth Water Treatment Works.
- The settlement has very limited public greenspace and therefore the few attractive features such as the former school playing field, road side verges and woodland clusters should be protected from future development proposals.

Map 3.17 Inchmore



3 Main Settlements

Sites

Non-Preferred Sites

IC01

Name: West of Former Primary School

Use(s): Housing

IC02

Name: East of Inchmore Gallery

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail)

IC03

Name: Former Inchmore Hall

Use(s): Business

The former village hall is in a now long standing business use which has not sought expansion onto adjoining land. The other two sites in the approved development plan have had no recent development interest. This lack of availability and the other constraints outlined above suggest that they should not be specifically re-identified in the new Plan.

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3.20 Inverness | Inbhir Nis

The city of Inverness is the major administrative, employment and service centre for the Highland region, and is commonly referred to as the "Capital of the Highlands". It is the most populated settlement and has seen a continued focus on major urban expansion in recent decades.

The combined advantages of its ideal location for easy access to the abundant outdoor opportunities and other highland and islands destinations and its offer of modern city living make it an attractive place to live, work and do business.

Pressure for growth continues as it expands its offer of attractions as a modern, growing city, with strong transport links for all modes. Around 290 homes are built per year in the city (10 year average), which dominates delivery of housing in Highland, making up 29 % of all homes built in the region (based on 2018 HNDA data).

Some of the housing delivered, particularly over the last decade, has created communities that are disproportionately dependent on the private car for making everyday journeys due to the location of these developments and the nature of their design. These neighbourhoods have typically been dominated by road-centred layouts which prioritise driving as the primary mode of travel, over walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport. The result of such an approach, as well as environmental and health, are adverse impacts on the quality and sense of place. This approach has occurred in a relatively small urban city where active travel and public transport *should* be the logical travel choices. These factors, coupled with the delivery of out of town retail development, have resulted in driving tending to dominate people's travel choices, even for shorter day to day trips, which contributes to increasing vehicles on the network and therefore congestion. In addition, the expansion of out of town retail development continues to impact on the city centre, which presents challenges when competing with car-based retail and maintaining its role as the vibrant and vital core of the city and region.

Infrastructure to support communities in Inverness is under pressure from the levels of growth being delivered. Major expansion of the city, including the delivery of much-needed affordable housing, is dependent on the Council committing funds from its Capital Programme to deliver infrastructure required to support new communities. For example, the preferred and long-established strategy for expansion of the city to the east is dependent on increasing education capacity through the delivery of new schools. Schools across the city are experiencing capacity issues, and work is underway to tackle these demands, including seeking financial support from developers to mitigate the impacts of their developments. Doctors' surgeries are also commonly reported in local media as being under increasing pressure due to capacities, suitability of premises and staffing. The Council is currently working with NHS Highland on the future of primary healthcare provision in Inverness. New infrastructure has been identified in recent Plan documents, such as

the Inverness East Development Brief, which identifies land for new schools, a doctor's practice and public parks and open space as well as a protocol for developers to contribute to funding the delivery of this infrastructure. We think that such an approach is the best way to support growth of the city, will ensure that communities are supported by the infrastructure they need and, it will give infrastructure providers, such as the Council, the confidence about where to target limited funds to address pressures of new development. Improving digital connectivity combined with the impacts of the pandemic will mean that working from home is a viable option for many City employees.

We already coordinate the development of the City's largest expansion areas and regeneration sites via a range of development briefs.

These vary in age, content and relevance, with some areas that are covered nearly fully built out. To ensure these documents remain the key driving force for the forward planning of the city, they will be reviewed and incorporated into the Local Development Plan at Proposed Plan stage, with those considered no longer relevant removed. It is proposed that the following approach be used:

Inverness Development Briefs

The following Development Briefs are proposed to be prepared or reviewed and carried forward in IMF2, and incorporated as new policies in the Plan at Proposed Plan stage:

- Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief
- Inverness City Centre Development Brief
- Inverness East Development Brief
- Longman Landfill Development Brief
- Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief
- Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief

The following Development Briefs are proposed to be superseded by IMF2 and therefore archived as historic documents only:

- A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework
- Firthview-Woodside Development Brief
- Hedgefield, Inverness Development Brief
- Inshes and Milton of Leys Development Brief
- Longman Core Development Brief
- Ness Development Brief

3 Main Settlements

In terms of the Plan's contribution to the City's economic recovery, we have identified a range of employment land opportunities in sustainable and economically viable locations. Within the industrial property market, there is a relatively old stock of premises but demand remains high. Occupancy is increasing and, with limited choice, many occupiers "make do" with what is available. A large proportion of this stock is likely to become obsolete over the next 10-20 years. This poses a risk to the area's future industrial competitiveness and could restrict economic growth. Work is currently underway to redevelop the former Longman landfill site for business and industrial uses, however, this is not expected to provide the single solution due to land contamination and licensing issues limiting extent of development within the lifetime of the Plan. There is therefore a pressing need to ensure enough land is identified in the Plan for industrial use. Within several of the city districts new industrial sites are suggested, based on a high-level assessment of potential sites. This includes land at Torvean Quarry, Inverness Campus Phase 3, Longman Landfill, and the option of densifying land in the existing Longman Industrial Estate.

The spatial strategy for the city needs to ensure that future development delivers sustainable places where people can make genuine choices about how to move around, are supported by good facilities, services and employment opportunities that are easily accessible. We have proposed a new Spatial Strategy for Inverness - Map 3.19 'Inverness City Spatial Strategy' - that reflects the Placemaking Priorities for the City. Once the Plan is adopted, it is proposed that all future development applications in Inverness will be assessed against these city-wide priorities and spatial strategy, as well as those for the city district within which the proposal is located.

City-wide Placemaking Priorities

- Support the regeneration of Inverness City Centre by directing footfall-generating uses there first and limit further out of town retail development.
- Celebrate the City centre as a core of living, working and leisure destinations for the Highland region.
- Deliver the City's housing needs in strategic expansion areas so that services and infrastructure can be effectively planned and delivered.
- Focus housing development within places that reduce the need to travel and where it is easy to walk, wheel, cycle or use public transport to reverse the trend of car-dependent suburban housing development.
- Bolster existing neighbourhood service centres and employment destinations by ensuring new development is conveniently located and well connected with them.
- Prioritise transport improvements that get more people walking, cycling and using public transport.
- Safeguard and enhance the green networks that run through the City and those that surround it.

Map 3.19 Inverness City Spatial Strategy

TO FOLLOW

West Inverness

This district hosts significant landscape assets that are defining features of the city, including the western riverfront of the Ness, the Caledonian Canal and the rising slopes of Craig Phadraig, Dunain Hill and Torvean Esker. Together, these features make up the limiting features for development and provide the west and southwestern wooded and farmed backcloth of the city, important both to its setting and character. We think this is an appropriate approach to manage development because, together with coastal flood risk, these features present landscape, visual, physical and environmental limits to further development.

Major development has been and will continue to be delivered in this area, focused on housing at Westercreags, replacement sports and other facilities at Torvean, and the West Link transport project.

Key issues for this district include the need to extend and enhance supporting infrastructure networks. Waste water and digital connections require extension and, perhaps most significantly, schools are forecast to experience capacity issues, for example Kinmylies Primary School is predicted

3 Main Settlements

to reach 113% of its capacity by 2024/25. The [Care and Learning Service](#)⁽⁴¹⁾ is responsible for managing the school estate and a range of projects are identified in the [IMF1 Delivery Programme](#)⁽⁴²⁾ that seek to address these issues. We believe that the optimum solution to address these capacity issues would be the delivery of a new 3-18 campus at Charleston Academy, which is identified as a preferred site in this document. Coupled with land identified at Torvean North, these sites provide two opportunities to address capacity issues in this part of the City.

Key development sites in this district will help to deliver the overarching spatial strategy and placemaking priorities for the City, as shown by the preferences in this Main Issues Report.

Placemaking Priorities

- Support the completion of the Westerbraigs City expansion area, including sensitive redevelopment of Craig Dunain Hospital.
- Promote the regeneration of Muirtown and South Kessock into vibrant mixed use neighbourhoods centred on new canal destinations that serve locals and visitors to the City.
- Encourage the creation of more walkable communities by supporting infill development in existing neighbourhoods.
- Promote redevelopment of the former Torvean Golf Course as a new City destination with parks and open space and new leisure, retail and food and drink destinations that celebrate the Caledonian Canal.
- Safeguard the setting of the City in the west and south west afforded by the wooded and farmed slopes by restricting development to the current built up area of Westerbraigs, Kinmylies and Scorguie.

41 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council_information_performance_and_statistics/387/council_structure/2

42 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/809/delivery_programmes

Map 3.20 West Inverness



3 Main Settlements

Sites

IN01

Name: Westercraigs South

Use(s): Housing

IN02

Name: East of Stornoway Drive

Use(s): Housing

IN03

Name: South of Golfview Road

Use(s): Housing

IN04

Name: East of Golfview Road

Use(s): Housing

IN05

Name: East of Charleston View

Use(s): Housing

IN06

Name: West of St Valery Avenue

Use(s): Housing

IN07

Name: East of Dochfour Drive

Use(s): Housing

IN08

Name: Westercraigs North

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail)

IN09

Name: Torvean Quarry

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Business, Industry)

IN10

Name: East of Muirtown Locks

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Business)

IN11

Name: Muirtown Basin

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Tourism, Leisure)

IN12

Name: Merkinch Shore

Use(s): Community

IN13

Name: Torvean North

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community (Education), Greenspace)

IN14

Name: Torvean South

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Leisure, Office, Business, Retail, Housing (limited to one bedroom homes))

IN15

Name: Charleston Campus

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community (Education), Greenspace)

The preferred sites shown above will enable the completion of the Westercraigs City expansion area, including new development, transport links and a new retail opportunity that will improve facilities for local people and help to create more sustainable, walkable neighbourhoods. A focus on redevelopment at Muirtown Basin will support the regeneration of this area as well as new sites that can deliver new homes in sustainable locations. Land allocated in the southern part of the district will support community ambitions to create new uses for Torvean Quarry and to support the Council's vision to create a new gateway to the City and the Great Glen. Land preferred at Charleston Academy and Torvean North provide options to address existing and future forecast school capacity issues within the district.

3 Main Settlements

Alternative Sites

IN16

Name: Dalneigh Primary School

Use(s): Housing

IN17

Name: Highland Council Headquarters

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

IN18

Name: UHI Riverside

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Leisure)

IN19

Name: Clachnaharry Quarry

Use(s): Housing

All but one of the above alternative sites are allocated for development within the approved development plan. However, no development has commenced during the last 5 years for a variety of reasons, most notably the respective landowners have not sought development. We therefore don't consider that they will provide viable development sites over the next 5-10 years and therefore suggest that they are not carried forward. The newly suggested site at Dalneigh Primary School would result in loss of local green space and is not supported for that reason. However, it could deliver affordable housing close to facilities and therefore views are invited on its acceptability to the local community.

Non-Preferred Sites

IN20

Name: North West of Carnac Crescent

Use(s): Housing

IN21

Name: West of Glendoe Terrace

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Leisure, Retail)

IN22

Name: East of Glendoe Terrace

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Leisure, Retail)

Recent community engagement resulted in expressed local community opposition to development at Carnac Crescent on the grounds of loss of green space. Redevelopment of land near Glendoe Terrace may not be acceptable due to coastal flood risk.

South Inverness

The northwest-facing slopes of the city are made up of agricultural land, Fairways Golf Course, Leys Castle Designed Landscape and Daviot Wood. These assets mark the limiting features to development. They provide the green network connections and undeveloped green backcloth that help to define the setting and character of the city and provide the entrance to more remote countryside to the south. We think these are appropriate characteristics to use to limit the extent of development to the south and south west of the city.

The district is predominantly made up of established and more recent residential neighbourhoods. The area south of what is commonly referred to as the southern distributor road has accommodated significant planned suburban housing development in recent decades, taking advantage of the attractive aspect looking across the Beauly and Moray Firths. However, this has resulted in some neighbourhoods being dependent on cars to make everyday journeys, due to the steep slopes, low density of development and remoteness of neighbourhoods from major employment and other destinations. Car-based retail dominates the retail and service offer, which is mainly located along the southern distributor road.

Strategic city expansion sites at Ness-side and Ness Castle are active and will continue to deliver a significant number of homes to meet current and future demands. Other sites across the district will enable the consolidation and completion of previous strategic expansion areas at Slackbuie, Inshes and Milton of Leys.

Redevelopment of the Raigmore Hospital site, including a new public transport connection into Raigmore housing estate; completion of the Inshes District Park; delivery of a new Primary School at Ness Castle, and expansion of facilities at Milton of Leys Primary School will help to meet employment and community needs for the district and city.

3 Main Settlements

Originally these neighbourhoods and the commercial facilities spread along the Southern Distributor Road were largely designed for car-based travel. It is now necessary to retrofit these areas, via application of our new approach to Placemaking approach explained in the Main Issues section of this document and Placemaking Priorities for Inverness, to ensure that existing communities and future ones are sustainable in terms of reducing carbon footprint and creating or improving communities where most day to day needs can be met within walking distance, or by using quality, frequent bus services.

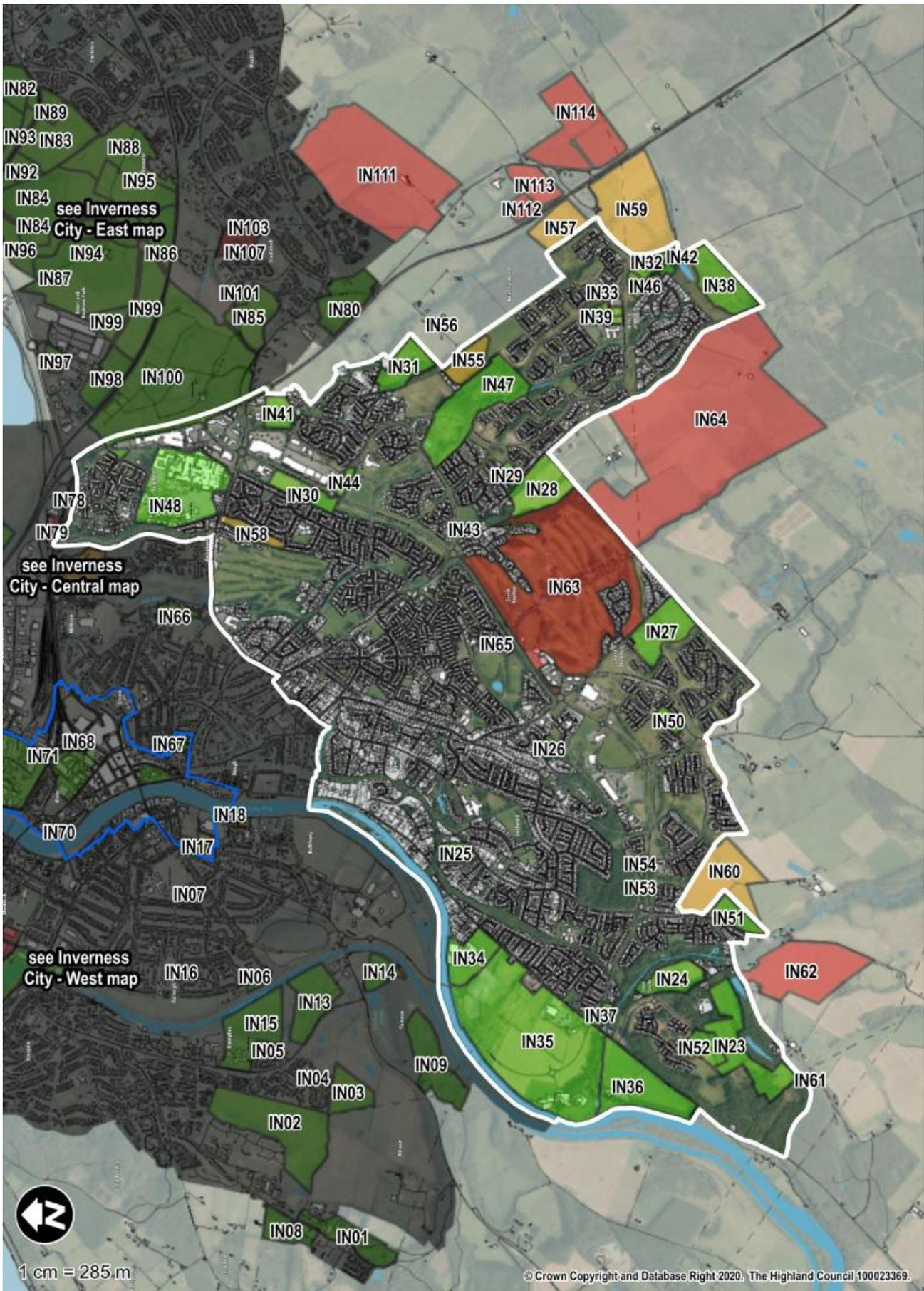
Limited existing and likely future infrastructure capacity notably in schools is a common theme across all City districts but some short term solutions have been identified and land allocated for a new primary school to serve Ness-side and Ness Castle plus a nursery "extension" at Milton of Leys. Other investment supported by the Plan includes: a new public transport connection from Raigmore Hospital into Raigmore housing estate and completion of the Inshes District Park.

The strategic expansion sites described above will help to deliver the overarching spatial strategy and placemaking priorities for the city, as shown by the preferences in this Main Issues Report.

Placemaking Priorities

- Support the long-term strategy of delivering new, sustainable city expansions at Ness-side and Ness Castle.
- Encourage more sustainable, walkable communities by delivering neighbourhood services and facilities, as well as housing, in central locations where it is easy to move around by active modes (walking, wheeling and cycling).
- Support the delivery of improved active travel and public transport provision by ensuring higher density development, where appropriate.
- Safeguard the character and setting of the City to the south by limiting further expansion upslope.

3 Main Settlements



Sites

Preferred Sites

IN23

Name: Ness Castle South

Use(s): Housing

IN24

Name: Ness Castle East

Use(s): Housing

IN25

Name: Drummond Hill

Use(s): Housing

IN26

Name: Culduthel Place

Use(s): Housing

IN27

Name: Earl's Gate

Use(s): Housing

IN28

Name: Druids Temple

Use(s): Housing

IN29

Name: Parks Farm

Use(s): Housing

IN30

Name: Sir Walter Scott Drive

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN31

Name: Inshes Small Holdings

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements

IN32

Name: North East of Castleton Village **Use(s):** Housing

IN33

Name: Milton of Leys Centre **Use(s):** Housing

IN34

Name: Ness-side (North) **Use(s):** Housing, Greenspace

IN35

Name: Ness-side (Central) **Use(s):** Housing, Greenspace

IN36

Name: Ness-side (South) **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Care Home)

IN37

Name: North of Holm Burn **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

IN38

Name: Bogbain West **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

IN39

Name: Milton of Leys Centre (North) **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Care Home)

IN40

Name: East of Milton of Leys Primary School **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail)

IN41

Name: Dell of Inshes **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

IN42

Name: North of Redwood Avenue

Use(s): Business

IN43

Name: Old Edinburgh Road South

Use(s): Mixed Use (Retail, Community, Business)

IN44

Name: Land at Inshes Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Housing, Retail, Business)

IN45

Name: Milton of Leys Centre East

Use(s): Mixed Use (Retail, Business)

IN46

Name: North of Castleton Village

Use(s): Community

IN47

Name: Inshes District Park

Use(s): Community

IN48

Name: Raigmore Hospital

Use(s): Hospital

IN49

Name: Milton of Leys Primary School

Use(s): Community (Education)

IN50

Name: Slackbuie Pitches

Use(s): Community

3 Main Settlements

IN51	
Name: Knocknagael West	Use(s): Community (Allotments)
<hr/>	
IN52	
Name: Ness Castle Primary School	Use(s): Community (Education)
<hr/>	
IN53	
Name: Culduthel Avenue West	Use(s): Retail (Funeral Home)
<hr/>	
IN54	
Name: Culduthel Avenue East	Use(s): Retail
<hr/>	

Approved development plan allocations and extant planning permissions support the reallocation of most of the above sites. These will complete part-established neighbourhoods and provide additional community, commercial and employment facilities.

Alternative Sites

IN55	
Name: Wester Inshes Farm South	Use(s): Housing
<hr/>	
IN56	
Name: Balvonie of Inshes	Use(s): Business
<hr/>	
IN57	
Name: East of Balvonie Braes	Use(s): Community
<hr/>	
IN58	
Name: Drakies House	Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)
<hr/>	

IN59

Name: Milton of Leys South

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community)

IN60

Name: Knocknagael East

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

The above sites are shown as alternative rather than preferred because some are of a scale that would significantly increase the amount of people dependent on car travel for everyday journeys; some have uncertainty over their viability to provide for the city's development needs and some, despite being allocated for more than five years in the adopted plan, have not come forward for development. Land at Milton of Leys South has been demonstrated not to be a viable business site, being allocated for such use for the lifetime of the adopted plan. Should other, preferred sites prove not to provide an effective housing land supply for the next 20 years, this site could provide an alternative housing site, and views are sought on this option. Land at Knocknagael is adjacent to community land that provides for local food growing on relatively good quality agricultural land and the local community is actively seeking to secure this site for expansion of such uses. It is not in walking, wheeling or cycling distance of most services or facilities and therefore its development for housing could give rise to an increase in car-based living. However, it is in public ownership and is relatively free of infrastructure constraints. Should other, preferred sites prove not to provide an effective housing land supply for the next 20 years, this site could offer an alternative, and views are therefore sought on this option, including the mix of uses that should be considered to make it a successful place.

Non-Preferred Sites

IN61

Name: Torbreck

Use(s): Housing

IN62

Name: Torbreck East

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements

IN63	
Name: Fairways Golf Course	Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Office, Retail)
IN64	
Name: Welltown of Leys	Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community (Education))
IN65	
Name: Castle Heather Drive	Use(s): Housing

The non-preferred sites above are not supported because some are of a scale that would take strategic growth of the city in a new, unsustainable direction; some are too distant from existing services, facilities and major employment destinations, and some would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the setting and character of the city, as well as resulting in the loss of publicly accessible green space.

Central Inverness

This district covers the city centre, the Longman Industrial Estate and the neighbourhoods of Crown, Haugh and Kingsmills. It is the heart of the city and region and serves as a centre of commercial, administrative and transport activities.

Significant focus continues on the revitalisation of the city centre as a vibrant multi-functioning place to live, work and visit. During the lifetime of the last plan key regeneration sites have been the focus of development activity: Midmills Campus residential development and artists studios, demolition of Longman College and construction of the new Justice Centre nearby, commencement of development of a hotel on the site of the open two-storey car park on Rose Street, and commencement of the redevelopment of the former swimming pool site at Glebe Street into a hotel; planned regeneration of Inverness Rail Station, the Victorian Market and various other public realm and travel improvement projects.

Central to the city centre strategy for tourism, a cornerstone of the Highland economy, is the creation of a major new tourist attraction at Inverness Castle. The relocation of the Scottish Courts Service to the new Longman Justice Centre has opened up the opportunity to create a modern facility that complements other city centre attractions and draws in visitors. Temporary Covid-19

measures have demonstrated that the transport network can continue to function, whilst more space can be shared for people walking, wheeling and cycling in these major footfall-attracting areas.

A range of other key opportunities are either planned or have been realised in recent years that aim to get people living back in the city centre. Such an approach contributes to improving the district's vibrancy and vitality and provides opportunities for sustainable living, working and leisure. This theme remains a key priority and as such land is identified to support city centre living, employment uses and diversity of other uses and attractions on offer in the heart of the Highland capital.

Elsewhere, most land is previously developed so opportunities are limited to refurbishment, redevelopment, remediation or reclamation. This reuse of land in a central and connected location is environmentally sustainable but raises infrastructure capacity issues, albeit projects such as the planned upgrade of the A9/A82 junction will increase development potential, in terms of vehicular traffic. Key regeneration opportunities are also identified at the prison, the former landfill site and the harbour, which may be constrained by the coastal and river environment it is located within.

These strategic projects and vision for the city centre are reflected in the Placemaking Priorities and site preferences below which will help to deliver the overarching spatial strategy for the city.

Placemaking Priorities

- Consolidate the city centre and prioritise urban living through strategic expansion of residential-led mixed use development to the north (Longman Phase 1) and reuse/repurposing of existing buildings (e.g. empty and under utilised floorspace above retail units), while safeguarding retail, food and drink and business opportunities.
- Increase employment opportunities by supporting redevelopment of existing buildings for office, business, healthcare and community uses.
- Support diversification of the economy, including the creation of new and unique visitor and leisure attractions, including Inverness Harbour expansion, which make best use of existing assets and improve the urban environment.
- Embed walking and cycling as the logical choice and easiest way to make every journeys, including delivering active travel and public realm improvements across the city centre.
- Meet regional and local industrial land supply needs at the former Longman landfill site.
- Harness the district's built and cultural heritage assets to ensure the area is distinctive and attractive.

3 Main Settlements

Map 3.22 Central Inverness



Sites

Preferred Sites

IN66

Name: Diriebught Depot

Use(s): Housing

IN67

Name: Porterfield Prison

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Tourism)

IN68

Name: Inverness Central

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

IN69

Name: Inverness Castle and Bridge Street

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community, Tourism)

IN70

Name: Glebe Street

Use(s): Mixed Use (Hotel, Business, Leisure)

IN71

Name: Shore Street City Centre Expansion

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, retail, Industry, Community)

IN72

Name: Harbour Gate

Use(s): Mixed Use (Port, Marine, Commercial, Cultural, Tourism)

IN73

Name: Former Longman Landfill

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Industry, Temporary Stop Site for Travelling People)

3 Main Settlements

IN74

Name: Former Longman Landfill East

Use(s): Industry

IN75

Name: Stadium Road West

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business, Industry)

IN76

Name: Stadium Road East

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Industry)

All of the preferred sites above are previously developed or involve reclamation and therefore represent an efficient use of "brownfield" land. In most cases the list of supported uses are more viable and/or more needed than the current use(s) of the land or buildings and will help central Inverness regenerate and revitalise. Coastal and fluvial flood risk issues may affect the suggested expansion at the harbour and this will need to be assessed and debated through the Plan process in partnership with SEPA and SNH as more definitive development proposals emerge.

Alternative Sites

IN77

Name: Cameron Barracks

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Housing, Tourism, Community)

IN78

Name: Millburn Road South

Use(s): Retail

This district's two alternative sites are currently allocated within the approved plan but are now thought to be unlikely to be available for significant development within the next 5 to 10 years and are therefore not supported for retention.

Non-Preferred Sites

IN79

Name: Millburn Road North

Use(s): Retail

Similarly, land north of Millburn Road is in an existing bulky goods retail use, is not considered suitable, in sustainable travel terms, as a location for smaller scale unrestricted retail development use which should be located within an established city or district centre.

East Inverness

This district is defined by the Inner Moray Firth waterbody to the north, the settled agricultural landscapes to the east, and the wooded and farmed slopes to the south. These assets form the limiting features to development for this part of the city. We think these are appropriate assets to use to define the limits to development, coupled with steeper upper slopes, fluvial flood risk, the Highland Mainline Railway, the A96 and the proximity to the Culloden Battlefield site.

Historic development east of the A9 trunk road in Culloden, Smithton, Westhill and Cradlehall has established the residential role of the east of the city. A range of local-scale facilities and employment are present but most major employment and service opportunities are more than 1 km distant, which has led to a dependence on cars for moving around. Recent investment at Inverness Campus has enabled the delivery of public transport and active travel links over the A9 and Highland Mainline railway and further investment is planned to connect this district, including to the city centre.

Major Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal funds are committed in the area through the East Link road project, which is at an advanced stage of planning, will unlock the opportunity to realise the long-established spatial strategy to expand the city at Stratton and Ashton Farms, which has an up to date Development Brief in the aIMFLDP.

Key development sites are already active, including at Stratton, with other major sites offering potential to deliver much needed affordable and open market housing, such as the consented Balloch Farm site.

Similar to the rest of the city, education capacity is limited in this district. The delivery of housing will depend on public support to contribute to funding new primary and secondary school capacity which, coupled with existing committed transport investment, will unlock this strategic expansion area.

3 Main Settlements

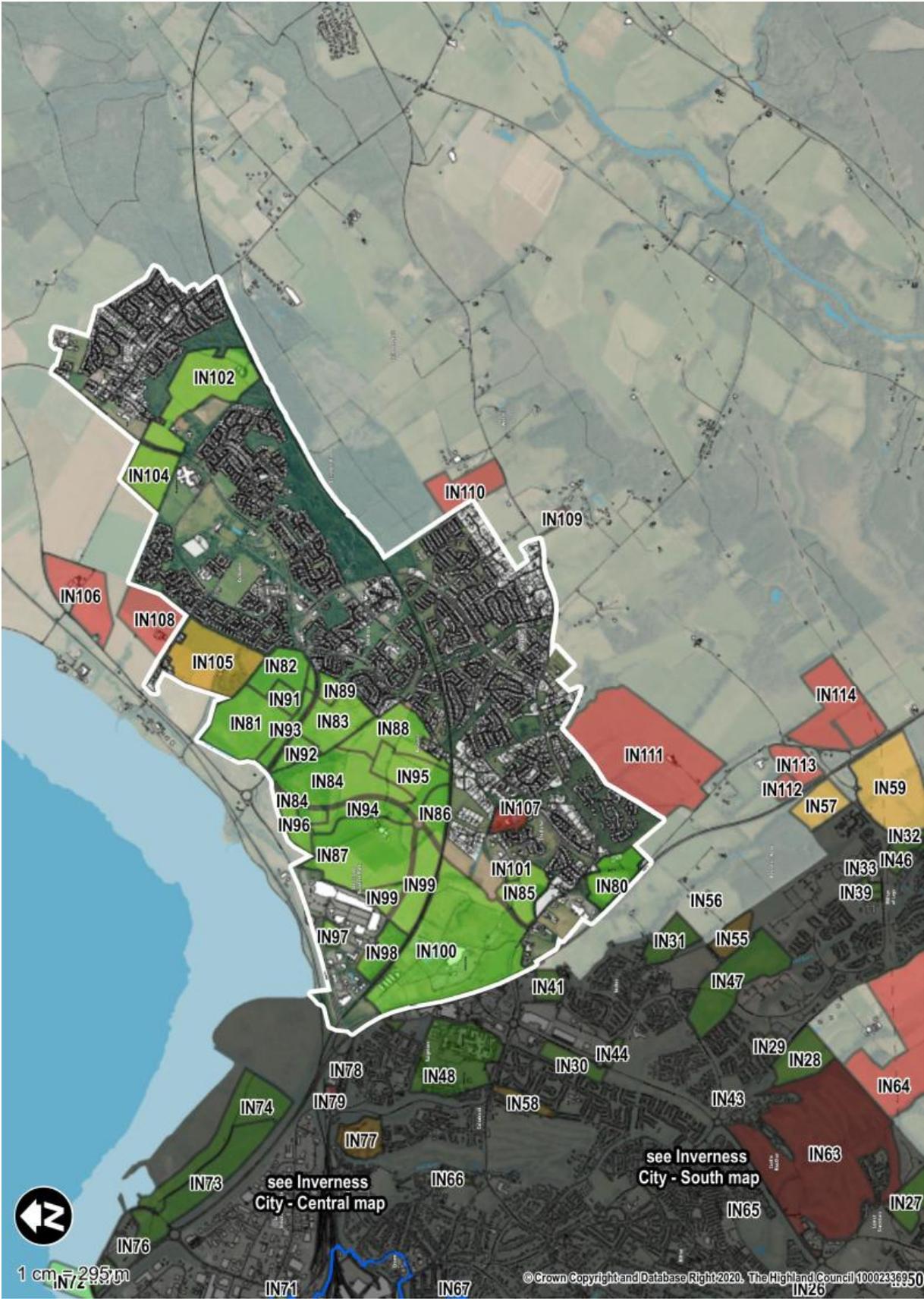
Other development opportunities include: diversifying uses at local neighbourhood centres to support more walkable communities; supporting the refurbishment and extension of Culloden Academy to address existing school capacity issues, and diversifying uses of HIE-owned land adjacent to Inverness retail park to address pressing needs for industrial use.

These key development sites will help to deliver the overarching spatial strategy and placemaking priorities for the city, as shown by the preferences in this Main Issues Report.

Placemaking Priorities

- Support the established strategy of delivering new sustainable city expansion at Ashton and Stratton farms.
- Support the diversification of uses at neighbourhood centres to achieve vibrant mixed-use employment and retail uses.
- Apply the Inverness East Development Brief to deliver modern, sustainable city expansion.
- Safeguard the green network, character and setting of the City by limiting development to the existing built edges of Culloden, Balloch, Westhill and Cradlehall.

Map 3.23 East Inverness



3 Main Settlements

Sites

Preferred Sites

IN80

Name: Easterfield

Use(s): Housing

IN81

Name: Stratton North

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN82

Name: Stratton East

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN83

Name: Stratton South

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN84

Name: Ashton East

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN85

Name: Castlehill

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN86

Name: Ashton South

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN87

Name: Ashton West

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community (Primary School), Business, Retail)

IN88

Name: Ashton Central

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community (High School) Business, Retail)

IN89

Name: Stratton Central

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

IN90

Name: Stratton Health Centre

Use(s): Healthcare

IN91

Name: Stratton Primary School

Use(s): Community (Primary School)

IN92

Name: Stratton West

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Park and Ride)

IN93

Name: Stratton Park

Use(s): Community

IN94

Name: Ashton Park

Use(s): Community

IN95

Name: Ashton District Park

Use(s): Community

IN96

Name: Inverness East Recycling Centre

Use(s): Community (Recycling Centre)

3 Main Settlements

IN97

Name: Eastfield Way

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business)

IN98

Name: Highland Prison

Use(s): Prison

IN99

Name: Ashton Southwest

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business, Industry)

IN100

Name: Inverness Campus

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business, Community)

IN101

Name: Castlehill Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Office, Business)

IN102

Name: Balloch Farm

Use(s): Housing

IN103

Name: Cradlehall Court

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business, Retail, Greenspace)

IN104

Name: Culloden Academy Extension

Use(s): Community (High School)

All of the above preferred sites benefit from an extant planning permission and/or a development allocation in the approved development plan. Together they will promote the coordinated expansion of the eastern part of the City - i.e. with improved connectivity in particular by sustainable travel means and provision of facilities and employment opportunities more local to each neighbourhood and wider district

Alternative Sites

IN105

Name: Milton of Culloden South

Use(s): Housing

Land at Milton of Culloden South, although allocated in the approved development plan, is in fragmented ownership and there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that it is a viable development site. Coupled with education capacity constraints within the wider district and the site's distance from the centre of the district, we do not support its retention in the emerging Plan unless its viability can be confirmed.

Non-Preferred Sites

IN106

Name: Inverness East Gateway

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Office, Business, Retail, Leisure)\

IN107

Name: Cradlehall Farm

Use(s): Housing

IN108

Name: West of Caulfield Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Office, Business, Retail)

IN109

Name: Northeast of Copperfield

Use(s): Housing

IN110

Name: West of Blackpark Farm

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Campsite)

3 Main Settlements

IN111	
Name: Lower Muckovie Farm	Use(s): Housing
IN112	
Name: Drumossie Brae	Use(s): Housing
IN113	
Name: Drumossie	Use(s): Housing
IN114	
Name: Easter Bogbain	Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Office, Business, Community)

Almost all of the above sites have been non-preferred because some are more peripheral to the City's structure and facilities than the sites that have been preferred; some would result in new strategic directions for city expansion less sustainable than those preferred by this document and, some would encroach onto the undeveloped landscapes important to the character and setting of the city. The site at Cradlehall Farm raises site specific issues in terms of likely adverse impacts on woodland and access.

3.21 Kiltarlity | Cill Taraglain

Kiltarlity parish's main settlement at Allarburn has a dormitory function. Local employment opportunities, commercial facilities and public transport connectivity are all very limited. As such it is not a sustainable location for significant further growth. With an immediate village population of around 470, a constrained local road network and limited water supply and waste water treatment capacity, the settlement cannot support major future development without a similar increase in public investment and that level of investment would not be cost effective relative to investing in other areas. The parish church burial ground may reach capacity within the Plan period so we believe it would be prudent to safeguard land for its future extension.

As such, we believe future development should be limited to completing sites that already benefit from allocation in the existing development plan and/or have planning permission. The local primary school and sewage works can accommodate this limited expansion.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate Allarburn village as a compact hub of facilities to serve the wider parish catchment and to safeguard land for the expansion of the parish burial ground.
- To limit further housing development to the capacity of existing education, water and sewerage assets.
- To direct that development to the core of the settlement. Land at Glebe Farm is part developed, part serviced and close to the local primary school. There are other alternative development sites in close proximity to Kiltarlity's facilities but these would open up much larger development opportunities for which there is neither quantitative need nor servicing capacity.
- Mature woodland, amenity area and recreational pitch features surround and punctuate the village, are important to its character, and therefore merit protection.

3 Main Settlements

Map 3.24



Sites

Preferred Sites

KT01

Name: Glebe Farm Phase 2

Use(s): Housing

KT02

Name: Glebe Farm Phase 1

Use(s): Community

KT03

Name: Kiltarlity Parish Church

Use(s): Community (Burial Ground Extension)

KT04

Name: Old Mill

Use(s): Business

Land at Glebe Farm is part developed, part serviced and close to the local primary school. The Old Mill is a brownfield redevelopment opportunity that could provide local opportunities. Additional lair capacity may be needed at the parish burial ground within the Plan period.

Alternative Sites

KT05

Name: North of Balgate Phase 1

Use(s): Housing

KT06

Name: South of Allarburn Drive

Use(s): Housing

KT07

Name: Glebe Farm Phase 3

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements

These other alternative development sites are in close proximity to Kiltarlity's facilities but would open up much larger development opportunities for which there is neither quantitative need nor servicing capacity. KT04 and KT05 breach existing woodland and road village boundaries and would therefore set a precedent for further expansion.

Non-Preferred Sites

KT08

Name: North of Balgate Phase 2

Use(s): Housing

The later phase of potential development land north of the village hall would be outwith a reasonable walking distance from the village primary school.

3 Main Settlements

3.22 Kirkhill | Cnoc Mhoire

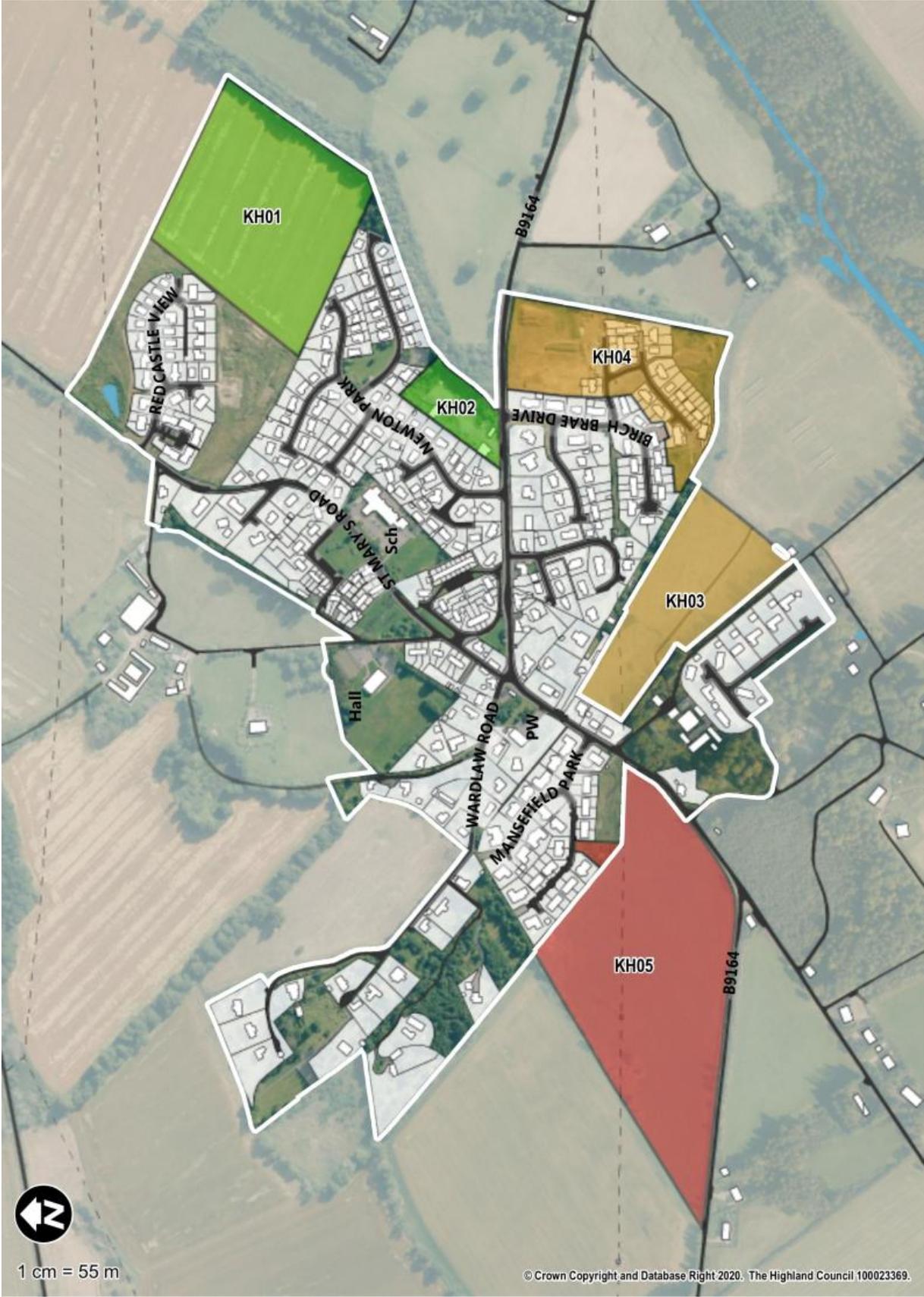
With a permanent population of around 750, Kirkhill is a large village in Highland terms but has a largely dormitory function with local employment opportunities, commercial facilities and public transport connectivity all very limited. As such it is not a sustainable location for significant further growth. Its side road network is constrained, its primary school over capacity and its water supply and waste water treatment capacity limited. As such, the settlement cannot support major future development without a similar increase in public investment and that level of investment would not be cost effective relative to investing in other areas.

As such, we believe future development should be limited to completing sites that already benefit from allocation in the existing development plan and/or have planning permission. The local primary school, with a small extension, and sewage works can accommodate this limited expansion.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate Kirkhill with new development closest to its facilities but to curtail larger, peripheral expansion.
- To limit further housing development to the capacity of education, water and sewerage assets.
- To direct that development to land at Groam Farm which is part developed, part serviced and close to the local primary school and is the optimum location for consolidating the village in a compact form.
- Mature woodland, amenity area and recreational pitch features surround and punctuate the village, are important to its character, and therefore merit protection.
- To seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of an active travel link between Kirkhill and both Beauly and Inverness.

Map 3.25 Kirkhill



3 Main Settlements

Sites

Preferred Sites

KH01

Name: Groam Farm East

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

KH02

Name: Contractor's Yard

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Industry, Retail)

Land at Groam Farm is close to the local primary school and is already part serviced. The builder's yard is central to the community, has been underutilised for several years and would therefore benefit from redevelopment.

Alternative Sites

KH03

Name: Achnagairn

Use(s): Housing

KH04

Name: East of Birch Brae Drive

Use(s): Housing

Land at Achnagairn has been allocated for many years but has not come forward for development. Similarly, the housing development site on the south east edge of the village has been slow to build out and the small area that remains doesn't justify a specific allocation. Moreover, there is neither quantitative need nor servicing capacity for these sites in addition to the preferred sites above.

Main Settlements Non-Preferred Sites

KH05

Name: Wester Kirkhill

Use(s): Housing

Land at Wester Kirkhill is more distant from and poorly connected to Kirkhill's facilities, affected by high voltage overhead pylons and in common with the sites above, good farmland.

3 Main Settlements

3.31 Tomatin | An Tom Aiteann

Tomatin is a small village, approximately 16 miles south of Inverness. The current settlement emerged mainly as a result of both the creation of the Tomatin Distillery and its position on the former A9.

Whilst the distillery remains the main economic driver in the area, planning permission was granted in 2018 for a major redevelopment of the former Little Chef site including the creation of a hotel, shops and filling station. The village has also benefited greatly from several new community facilities including a new community hall/sports venue and office space which opened in November 2019 with the previous hall being converted into a shop.

Only a handful of new homes have been built on the allocated sites within Tomatin. There has been a trend over the past decade towards large single houses built on side roads surrounding the village. With no coordinated approach towards providing active travel connections to the village core, this has led to the a reliance on private car journeys for getting around.

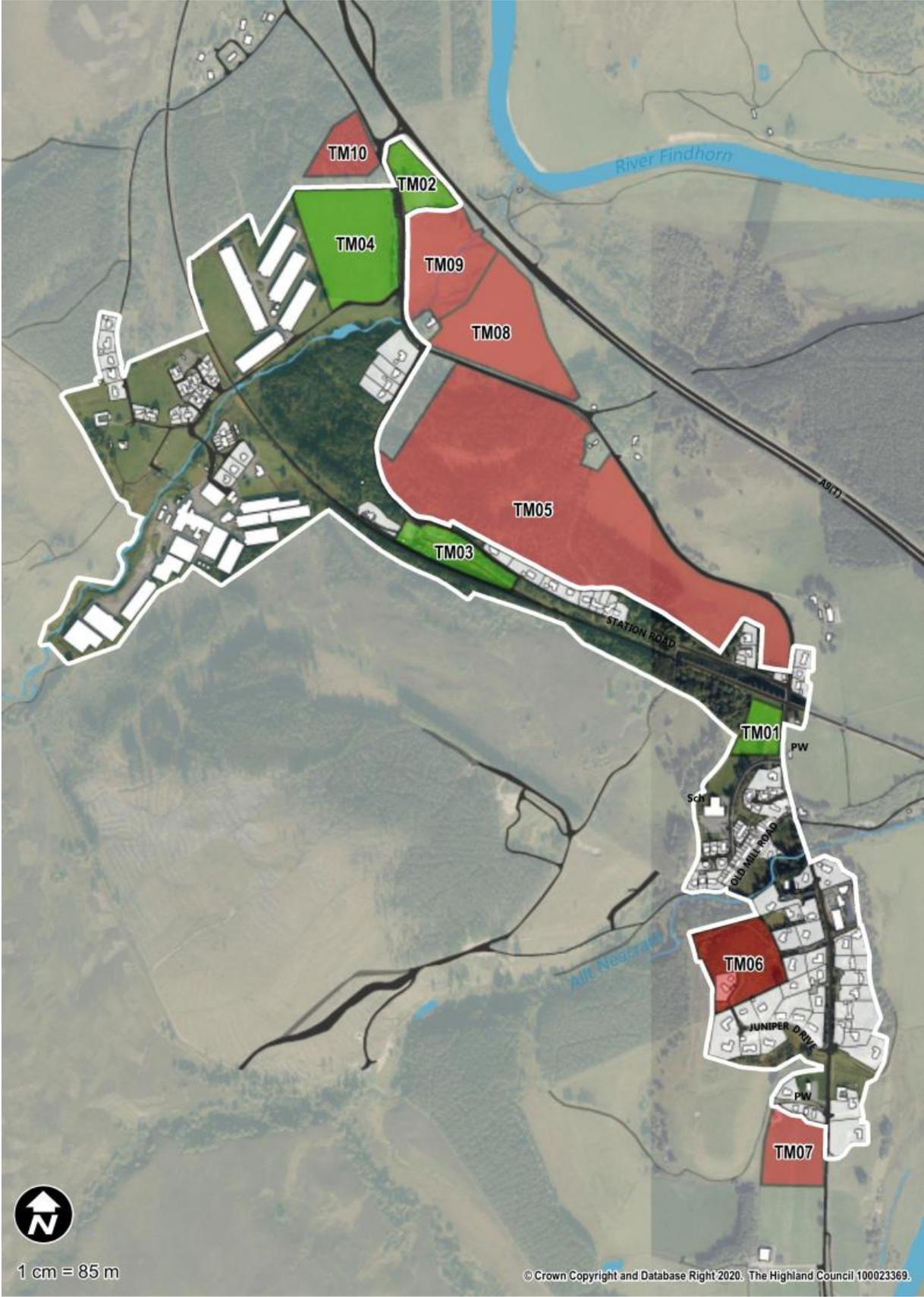
We're continuing to support opportunities for commercial development at the north end of the village, near the A9 junction, and at the former railway station. However, as Tomatin is not considered the most suitable place for large scale, strategic expansion the only housing site we are supporting is the land west of the church.

Due to the size and dispersed nature of Tomatin together with the scale of development proposed, we consider that there may be merit in reclassifying it as a Growing Settlement. This would still mean that we will direct development towards Tomatin but only on a scale more reflective of the existing settlement size and focused on infilling and rounding off.

Placemaking Priorities

- Creation of a new mixed use development close to the A9 junction to take advantage of its proposed improvement and the passing trade and employment opportunities that may flow from it.
- Develop new housing, particularly affordable housing to help retain young people and attract new people to the community.
- Create a continuous active travel connection between Tomatin and Moy.
- Explore potential for reinstating a rail halt to enhance public transport options for residents, attract business and tourists and reduce traffic on A9.
- Safeguard all areas of woodland in and around the settlement from development.

Map 3.34



3 Main Settlements

Sites

Preferred Sites

TM01

Name: West of Church of Scotland

Use(s): Housing

TM02

Name: Former Little Chef

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Tourism, Retail)

TM03

Name: Former Railway Station

Use(s): Industry and Business

TM04

Name: Distillery expansion

Use(s): Industry

Land to the west of the church is preferred for housing development as it is centrally located, part brownfield and has developer interest. The former Little Chef site is brownfield site which is located in a prominent location immediately adjoining the A9 trunk road. It offers a prime commercial opportunity and planning permission was recently granted for a road-side retail and tourism centre. For these reasons we are proposing to allocate it for a mix of commercial uses. There is a long held aspiration within the community for the reinstatement of a railway station. Whilst there is no specific plans to take this forward at present the site offers potential for such uses and/or commercial space. We believe that the land to the east of the existing warehouses should be allocated for industrial uses as it owned by the distillery and forms part of their long term expansion plans.

Non-Preferred Sites

TM05

Name: North and East of Station Cottages

Use(s): Housing

TM06

Name: Hazelbank

Use(s): Housing

TM07

Name: West of War Memorial

Use(s): Housing

TM08

Name: North West of Porters Lodge

Use(s): Community

TM09

Name: South of former Little Chef

Use(s): Waste Water Treatment Facility

TM10

Name: West of former Little Chef

Use(s): Business

All of the above sites are allocated for development within the approved development plan. However, they have not come forward for development and most of them require expensive and presently unprogrammed sewerage provision. Therefore we have significant doubts about their economic viability and propose their deletion from the Plan unless new evidence emerges such a developer commitment to build and Scottish Water's commitment to invest in a new sewage works or extension of pipework from the existing works.

3.33 Tornagrain | Cnoc na Grèine

Tornagrain is a planned new town which lies between Inverness and Nairn. Over the next 30 to 40 years it is expected to provide 5,000 homes together with new schools, shops and a range of other facilities. With the over 300 homes now granted detailed planning permission, the first residents moved in during 2017 and demand has been relatively high with house sales steadily increasing .

Due to its high quality of layout and design, with many traditional features it already looks much like a long-established, attractive village. Several community facilities have been delivered in the first phase, including a nursery, tennis courts, and shop unit.

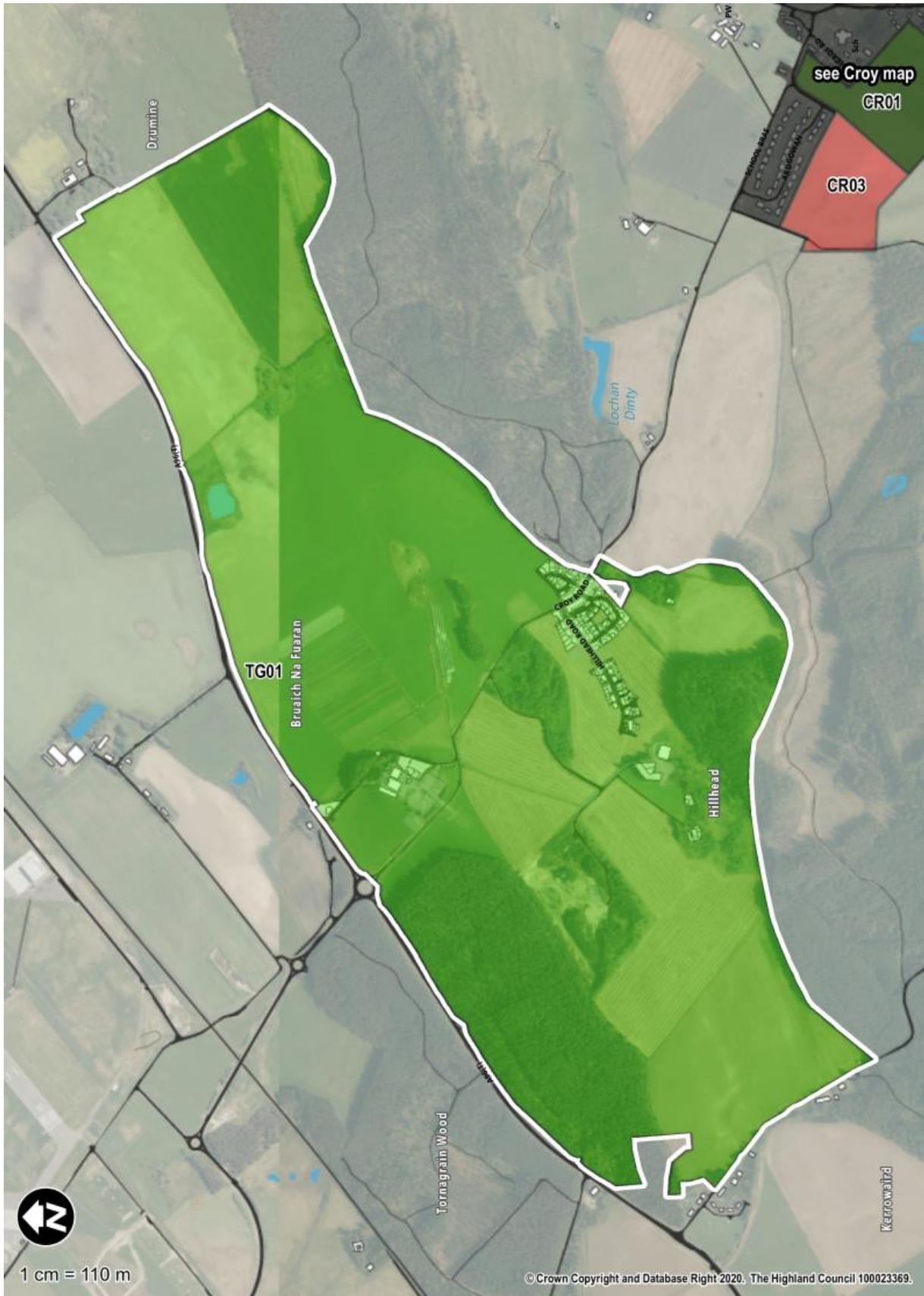
In line with the overall planning consent, the town will be progressed on a phased basis, comprising 7 main phases of development.

Placemaking Priorities

- Continue the early delivery of key facilities and infrastructure.
- Ensure affordable housing is delivered and meets the needs of the wider community.
- Enhance connections by active travel and sustainable transport to key employment destinations, including Inverness Airport Business Park and Dalcross Airport Industrial Estate.
- Maintain the delivery of high quality design and layout by following the principles set out in the masterplan and design code
- Seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of the A96 Landward Trail.

3 Main Settlements

Map 3.36 Tornagrain



4 Growing Settlements

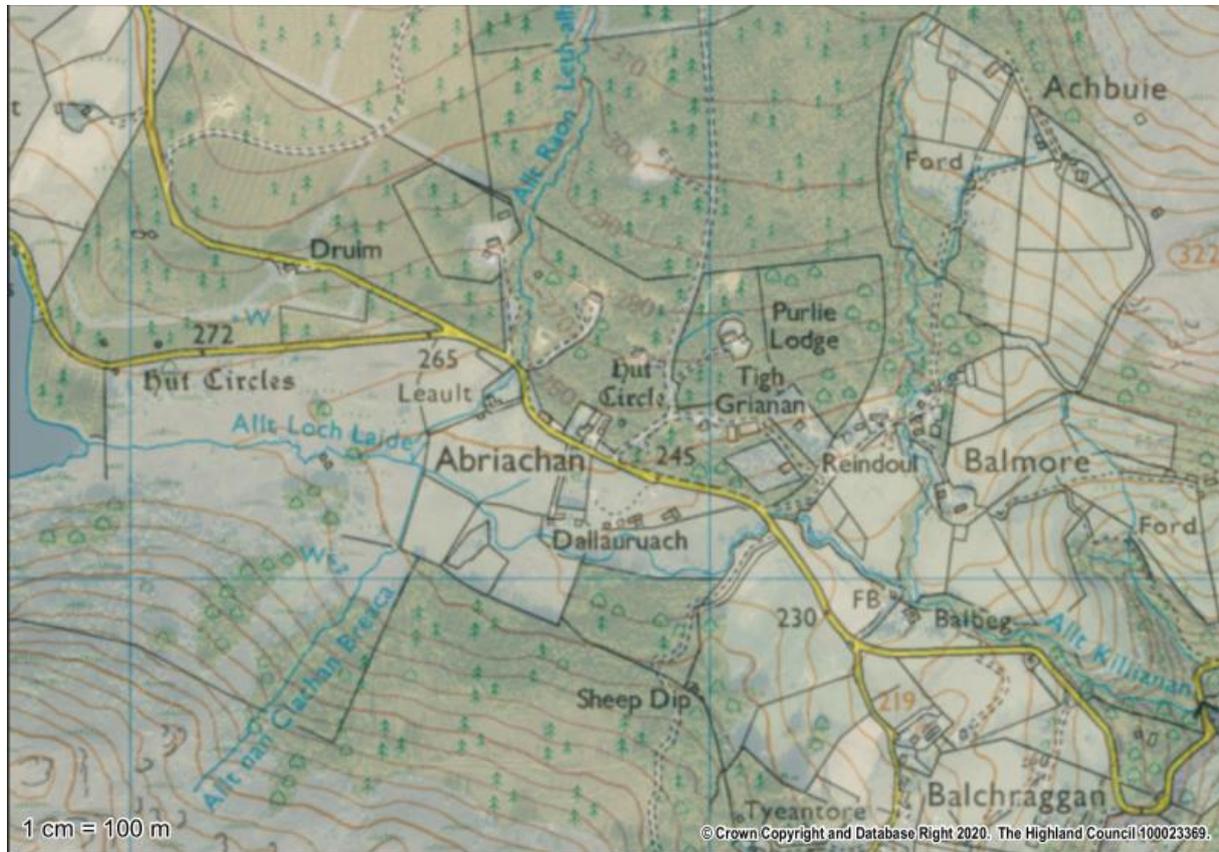
The aIMFLDP contains an "Other Settlements" policy which, within a defined list of places, supports a lesser scale of development than within the "Main Settlements" but a more positive approach than within the countryside. Settlements currently included are places which have/had at least one community facility (e.g. a school or public hall). We intend to bring our policy approach to these smallest settlements in line with our other local development plans for Highland. We wish to call them "Growing Settlements" and not use the existence of a facility as the sole reason for including or excluding places from the list. Instead, we will only include places that have some development pressure, few environmental constraints to development, and facility/service networks that can accommodate additional building. These are listed as Tier 5 settlements in Settlement Hierarchy. For each potential "Growing Settlement" this Main Issues Report sets out draft key issues and placemaking priorities for comment. An annotated aerial photograph is included for each settlement but please note that this is for illustrative purposes only and that the photograph's geographic extent is of no policy significance. Once finalised, these will be applied in determining planning applications in these places.

Abriachan Obar Itheachan	Page 230
Balnain Baile an Àthain	Page 232
Barbaraville An Cladach	Page 234
Cannich Canaichannich	Page 235
Farr and Inverarnie Fàrr agus Inbhir Fheàrnaidh	Page 237
Foyers Foithir	Page 239
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Hill of Fearn Cnoc na Manachainn	Page 244
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Milton of Kildary Baile a' Mhuilinn	Page 247
Marybank Bruach Màiri	Page 247
Portmahomack Port MoCholmaig	Page 251
Rhicullen/Newmore XXXXX	Page 253
Tomich An Tomaich	Page 255

4 Growing Settlements

Abriachan | Obar Itheachan

Map 4.1 Abriachan



Issues

- The scattered crofting township at Abriachan sits high above Loch Ness on its northern flank and parts of the community offer an elevated outlook across and along the loch.
- There is a village hall but many other local facilities have closed because of the proximity of facilities in Inverness and Drumnadrochit.
- Housebuilding within the community has been slow but steady but there is a lack of local employment opportunities other than offering tourist trail accommodation and crofting.
- There are active local community groups who have pioneered many local enterprises and initiatives including ownership of the Abriachan Forest with its car park, walks and hides.

Placemaking Priorities

- To respect the historic pattern of crofts and absence of a public sewerage system which necessitate continuity of the loose scatter of buildings and small existing groups of buildings at Balchraggan and Balmore.

- To take account of the limitations of the substandard horizontal and vertical alignment of the township road and its largely unadopted side roads which reduce the scope for safe vehicular access;
- To avoid the more visually prominent land either side of the road which should remain substantially open.
- To respect the settlement's elevation and climatic exposure which suggest that new building plots should be located where they offer some shelter.
- To protect the identity and setting of the community by avoiding its sporadic extension.

4 Growing Settlements

Balnain | Baile an Àthain

Map 4.2 Balnain



Issues

- Balnain lies alongside the A831, some 5km west of Drumnadrochit and within commuting distance of Inverness. It provides basic facilities for a scattered population throughout Glenurquhart.
- Local farming, forestry and estate work supports most local jobs.
- Opportunities to develop local tourist facilities and accommodation may arise with further promotion of the A831 tourist route and the Western Glens, and the Glenurquhart's archaeological, fishing and forest based recreation assets.
- Existing development is clustered around the primary school and hall, flanked by rising farm and woodland.

Placemaking Priorities

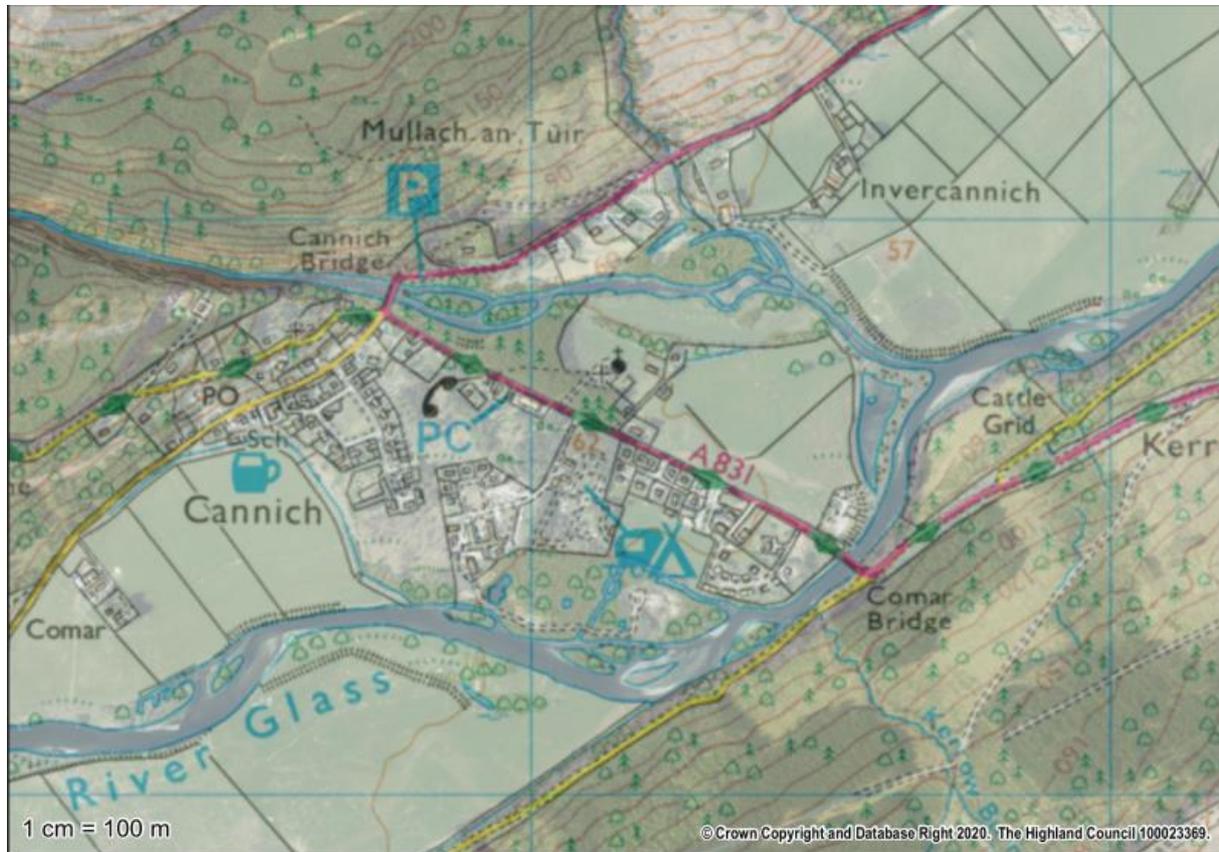
- To support further small scale housing development where it will help underpin local community facilities.

4 Growing Settlements

- To direct most future development north of the A831 so as to protect the fine outlook west across open ground bordering Loch Meikle and avoid land at risk to flooding or erosion.
- To respect the limited local waste water treatment capacity.
- To support community initiatives to enhance local amenities, including management of the woodland beside the school, refurbishment of the play area and creation of a visitor focal point with better signage of local attractions and places of interest.

Cannich | Canaichannich

Map 4.4 Cannich



Issues

- Cannich is a small village in a compact physical form occupying the glen floor between steep slopes.
- That glen floor is shared with the Rivers Cannich and Glass and their associated flood risk areas which curtail where further development can occur.
- Cannich lies at a strategic point on the A831 tourist route equidistant from the main gateway centres of Drumnadrochit and Beaulieu and is the most important entry point for visitors to the Western Glens.
- Its distance from other centres allows it to support a limited number of local facilities including a shop and school.
- Traditional forest and hydroelectricity employment are giving way to conservation and recreation management opportunities for which the village could provide a broader range of upgraded services.

4 Growing Settlements

- The local road system is "pinched" at the bridge or largely single track. Local water and sewerage facilities are adequate but of limited capacity.
- There is no confirmed private or affordable housing developer interest in the settlement.

Placemaking Priorities

- To diversify local employment opportunities taking advantage of Cannich's Western Glens visitor gateway location.
- To support further central housing development in parallel with this diversification including at the land adjoining the camping and caravan site.
- To respect the physical constraints of the settlement by not supporting development within or adjacent to the fluvial flood risk areas and not allowing sporadic development up the glen sides.
- To support a scale of development that helps sustain local facilities but doesn't overburden the limited capacity in the local water and sewerage network.

Farr and Inverarnie | Fàrr agus Inbhir Fheàrnaidh

Map 4.5 Farr and Inverarnie



Issues

- Farr and Inverarnie include several relatively small settlements strung out over 2km alongside the B851
- There has been relatively high numbers of new houses completed over the past 20 years, with distinct clusters at Farr and Inverarnie.
- Farr Primary School has a healthy roll which is expected to continue. However, Inverness Royal Academy is under increasing pressure.

Placemaking Priorities

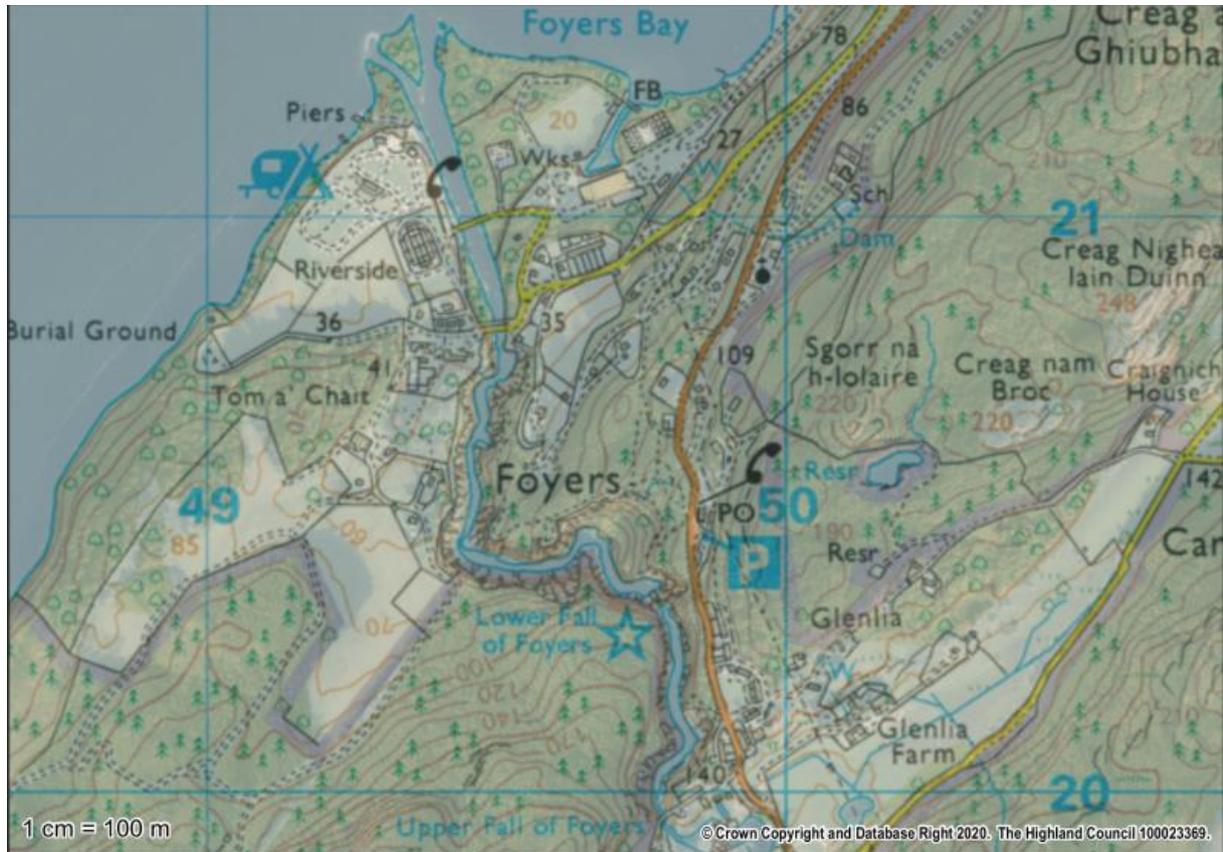
- Future development must only add to the existing clusters at Farr and Inverarnie. Limits of development should be Croftcroby junction to south and the Hall to north.
- Risk of flooding will limit further development in certain areas particularly further westwards towards the bridge over River Nairn and the area surrounding the bridge over the River Farnack.
- Safeguard areas of woodland from development.

4 Growing Settlements

- Continue to develop community and recreational facilities and enhance the environmental features within the community-owned School Wood and Milton Wood.
- Create a continuous active travel connection between the two settlements.

Foyers | Foithir

Map 4.6 Foyers



Issues

- Steep slopes and mature native woodland provide an attractive setting but also limit development opportunities.
- The area has a rich heritage with several listed building, including the A listed former Aluminum Factory.
- Foyers Primary school has a low roll and it is expected to decline further in the coming years. It is also rated 'poor' in terms of both condition and suitability.
- The reduction in families may be the result of the conversion of existing houses to tourist accommodation.
- Foyers benefits from a range of facilities including a public hall, playing fields and medical centre. There is also a waste water treatment works which serves Foyers.

Placemaking Priorities

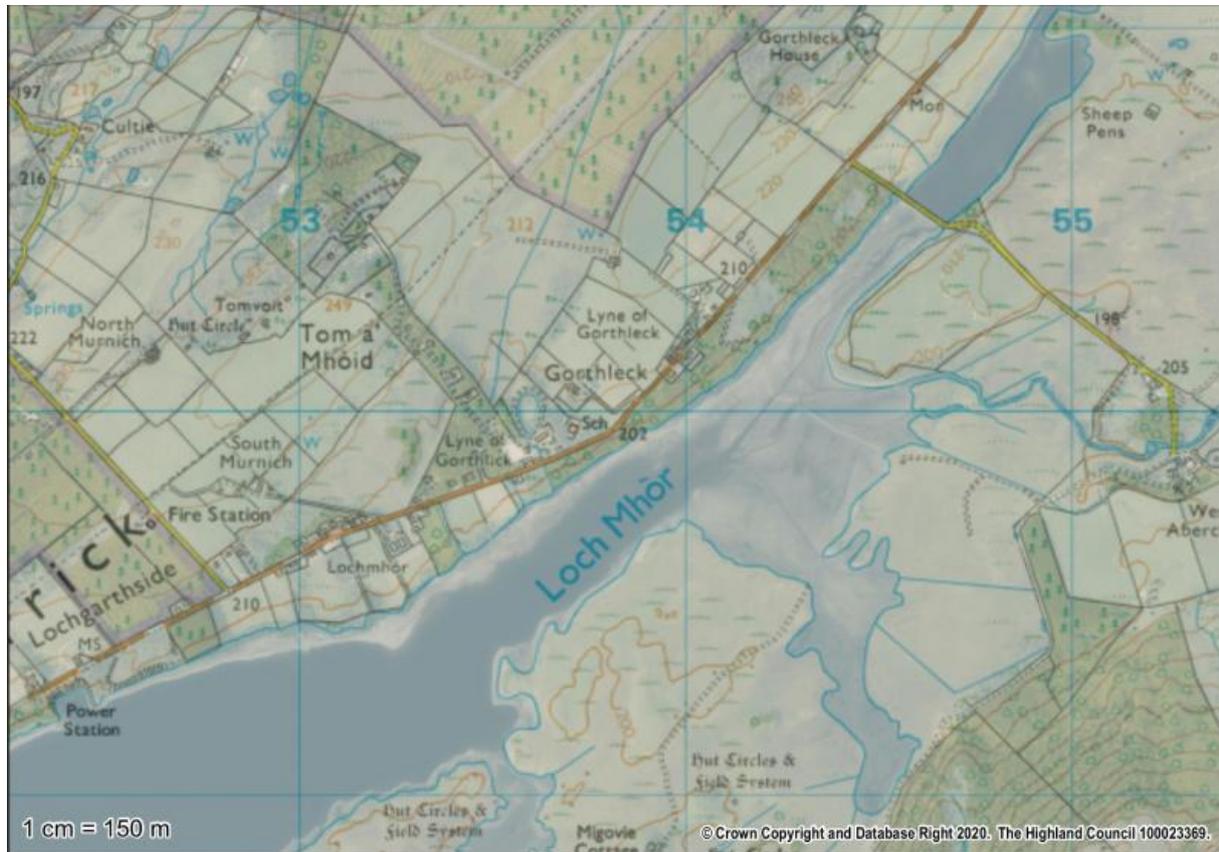
- Encourage families and young people to the area to bolster the school roll
- Protect and enhance all areas of woodland

4 Growing Settlements

- Make the most of the National Cycle Network which runs through the village.
- New housing should be located close to facilities, such as the school and shop, or add to existing clusters of development.
- Support the renovation/redevelopment of Boleskine House to help boost the local economy.

Gorthleck | Goirtlig

Map 4.8 Gorthleck



Issues

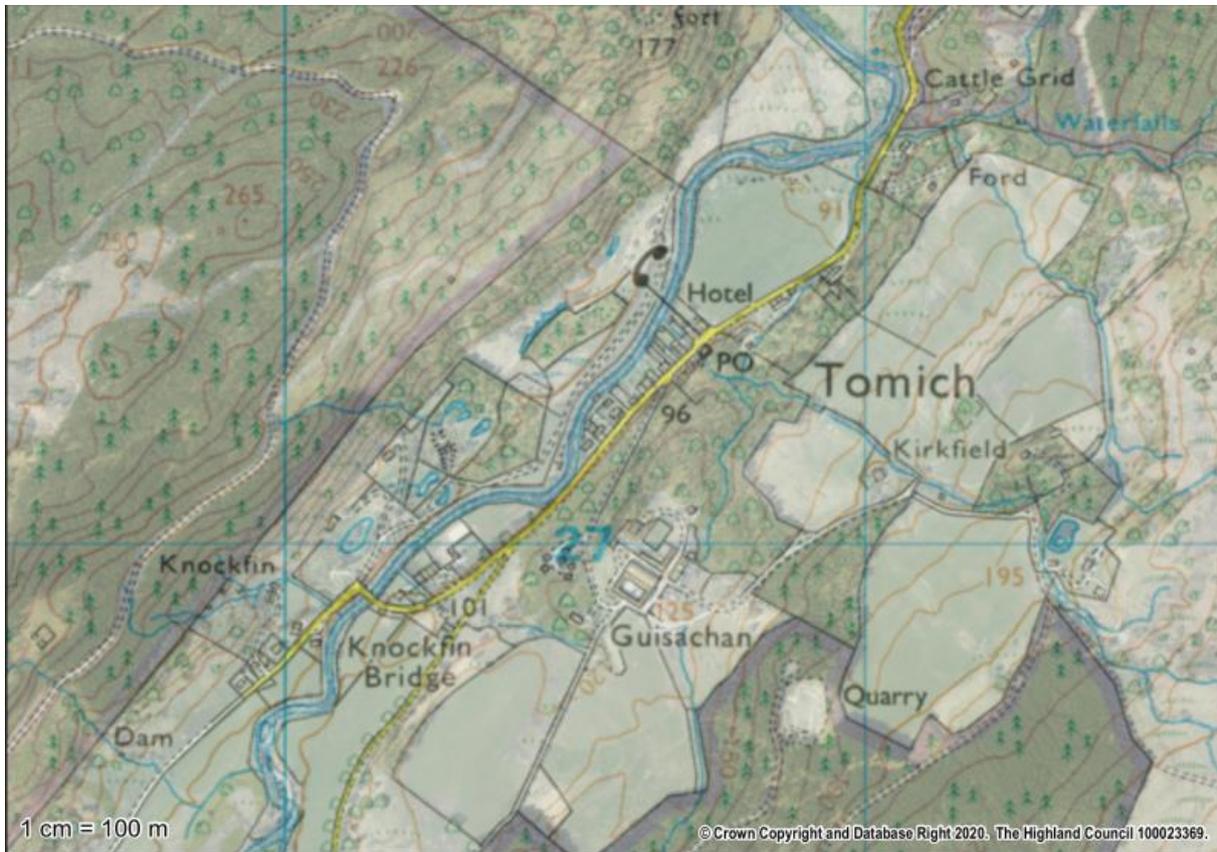
- Gorthleck has seen steady levels of housing development over the last 10 years with most located in a reasonably contained area, approximately 1 km from the school.
- Stratherrick Primary is a slightly more modern school than many other rural schools. As a result it is rated as 'fair' in terms of condition and suitability.
- Lack of public drainage system may limit development opportunities.

Placemaking Priorities

- Housing development should continue to be focused in close proximity to the school and typically be infill between existing clusters of development
- Preserve public views across Loch Mhor.
- Safeguard the pockets of native and ancient woodland from development.
- Further development along side roads will be required to upgrade the roads to adoptable standards.

Tomich | An Tomaich

Map 4.15 Tomich



Issues

- Tomich is a "planned" conservation village at the heart of the Guisachan Estate and is afforded Conservation Area status which will have a major influence on the design and siting of any development.
- Water and sewerage facilities have limited spare capacity and there are adjoining flood risk areas.
- There are no community facilities although there is a limited hours post office, an hotel and a large self catering complex.
- The village is remote from other settlements and higher order services and therefore not a sustainable location for significant growth.

Placemaking Priorities

- To protect the architectural character of the settlement which is strongly linear in form.

4 Growing Settlements

- To support limited expansion opportunities that are in keeping with maintaining this linear form.
- To support the further expansion of visitor facilities at Tomich particularly where these are also available to the permanently resident population.

Whitebridge | An Drochaid Bhàn

Map 4.16 Whitebridge



Issues

- Certain areas of land at Whitebridge are at risk of flooding from River Fechlin and Allt Breinbeag.
- Crofting interest to the south at Drummond.
- Both the bridges at Whitebridge are of historical interest with the Old Bridge being A Listed and the New Bridge being B Listed.

Placemaking Priorities

- Safeguard the pockets of native and ancient woodland from development.
- Support the hotel to continue to provide an important role within the community.
- Ensure development respects the setting of the Listed Buildings.

5 Economic Development Areas

The Main Settlements detail employment land allocations within the Plan area's main towns and villages but there are several other strategic sites which can generate significant job opportunities outwith these settlements that we think should be identified. We call these Economic Development Areas (EDAs) and they are listed and mapped below. A set of guiding principles is included for each EDA identified in the Plan. These will be used to guide future development and assist in determining the extent and location of suitable opportunities.

We have chosen not to roll forward previously allocated economic development sites (known as Strategic Employment Sites in the aIMFLDP) at Fendom and Fearn Aerodrome. This is mainly due to concerns over their deliverability as we are not aware of any significant commercial interest or potential future development pressures.

Two bids were made at Call for Sites stage for tourism and leisure related developments at land near Nigg Yard and Kildary. Instead of allocating these sites, a more general reference has been made in the Growing Sustainable Tourism sector to the wider opportunities which exist in Easter Ross to bolster the tourism industry. If full planning permission is granted then we may consider allocating them in the future.

Castle Stuart Caisteal Stiùbhart	Page 259
Fort George Gearastan Dheòrsa	Page 261
Highland Deephaven Deephaven na Gàidhealtachd	Page 263
Inverness Airport Business Park Pàirc Gnìomhachais Port-adhair Inbhir Nis	Page 265
Nigg Energy Park Pàirc Cumhachd Nigg	Page 267
Whiteness XXXXX	Page 269

Castle Stuart | Caisteal Stiùbhart

Issues

- Permission granted in 2006 for 2 championship golf courses and a range of leisure facilities, including 141 tourist lodges and apartments, 75 bed luxury hotel and spa and office space.
- First phase was completed in 2009 which included Castle Stuart Golf Links course and iconic Art Deco style clubhouse.

Placemaking Priorities

- Create a golf course resort of outstanding quality and repute that complements the rich fabric of golf in the Highlands and benefits the local area.
- Ensure suitable improvements to the transport network and encourage sustainable modes of travel to and from neighboring settlements.

Map 5.1 Castle Stuart



5 Economic Development Areas

Economic Development Area

CS01

Name: Castle Stuart

Use(s): Business

There is a well established long term vision for Castle Stuart which, as part of the first phase of development, has seen the creation of a world renowned golf course. We continue to support the remaining phases of development.

Fort George | Gearastan Dheòrsa

Issues

- Fort George is one of the most imposing and well known military barracks in the UK and provides both an ongoing military function and well established tourist attraction.
- Ministry of Defence announced in 2017 the closure of the military base by 2032, after 250 years of service.
- Currently designated as a Scheduled Monument but may be reclassified as part of military base closure.
- Located just over a mile to the north of Ardersier with its only vehicular access available through the centre of the village.

Placemaking Priorities

- All development must respect the historical integrity of Fort George and its Scheduled Monument listing.
- Securing a suitable future use will be important for the economic and social prosperity of the local area.
- Improve active travel connections between Fort George and Ardersier.
- It is considered that main stream housing is not suitable for the Fort due to the physical nature of the site and its limited access to facilities.

5 Economic Development Areas

Map 5.2 Fort George



Economic Development Area

FG01

Name: Fort George

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Business, Tourism, Retail)

Fort George is preferred as an Economic Development Area to support and promote its reuse if and when it becomes decommissioned as a military base.

Inverness Airport Business Park | Pàirc Gnìomhachais Port-adhair Inbhir Nis

Issues

- Inverness Airport Business Park includes 200 ha of land set out for business and enterprise uses, with recent completions including a 130 bed hotel, regional distribution centre and modern, flexible industrial units.
- Council owned Dalcross Industrial Estate, which lies to the west of the airport, is well established and is currently fully built out and at capacity.
- Located beside the region's main hub airport, alongside the A96 and near to the A9 trunk road.
- A new railway station on the main Inverness to Aberdeen line is due to be completed by 2022/2023.

Placemaking Priorities

- Continue to support business and industrial development and promote the site as a leading commercial hub for the Highlands.
- Maximise opportunities to create competitive and attractive year-round active travel connections within the sites and to/from the new Dalcross Train Station. To deliver high quality active travel connections which reflect the ambitious long term vision for the wider area, developer contributions should be sought from all developments to enable specific projects to come forward, such as sheltered/covered walkways and EV shuttle buses.
- Consider solutions to the ongoing shortages of parking within the Industrial Estate and informal parking problems. This should include investment in options for making other forms of transport more competitive.
- Expansion of Dalcross Industrial Estate would help address the shortage of industrial land in the wider Inverness area.

Whiteness | XXXXX

Issues

- At 160ha, the former fabrication yard is one of the largest brownfield sites within the Inner Moray Firth area, having laid vacant for 20 years.
- As an employment hub it would be located within close proximity to main centres of population, including Ardersier, Nairn, Tornagrain and Inverness
- Its coastal position results in parts of the site being at risk of flooding - detailed assessment and mitigation maybe required.
- The site benefits from direct access to the A96 trunk road and marine access. However, relatively regular dredging is required to maintain its deep water capabilities.
- The current owners are seeking renewal of the mixed use permission which is due to expire this year. This proposal, which was reflective of the policy position in HwLDP (adopted in 2012), includes the construction of nearly 2,000 homes, a new school, marina, hotel and health club. This would essentially mean the creation of a 'new town' requiring significant levels of new infrastructure. The IMFLDP (2015) allocated the site for industrial uses only. We want the new Plan to provide a clear and updated position on what land uses will be accepted.

Placemaking Priorities

- Promote the redevelopment of the site to form a strategically important industrial and energy hub.
- Enhance connections between the site and the neighboring communities.
- Avoid adverse impact on the population of bottlenose dolphins of the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and common seal of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC, the Inner Moray Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Moray Firth proposed SPA.

5 Economic Development Areas

Map 5.6 Whiteness



Economic Development Area

WH01

Name: Whiteness

Use(s): Industry

We are preferring Whiteness for industrial uses as it is a large scale brownfield site with good access to the A96 and the Moray Firth. We are not supporting it for a mix of residential, tourism and community uses as there are better alternative and more sustainable options within the Plan area.

5 Economic Development Areas

Map 5.4 Inverness Airport and Business Park



Economic Development Area

IA01

Name: Inverness Airport and Business Park **Use(s):** Business and Industry

IA02

Name: Dalcross Industrial Estate Expansion **Use(s):** Industry

Inverness Airport and Business Park is allocated as it represents a strategic employment hub which benefits from being alongside trunk road and rail routes and within close proximity to urban centres.

We are also supporting the expansion of Dalcross Industrial Estate on easy to access, flat land to the north which is in Council ownership.

Appendix 3: Placemaking Audit

The Highland Council Placemaking Audit

Table 9

Design Quality	Ambition	Requirement
Distinctive	D1 The development, when completed is designed to create a distinctive high quality 'sense of place', which respects and enhances the existing site, locale and landscape features and avoids heavily engineered proposals.	Essential
	D2 The development protects important and distinctive buildings and natural heritage assets within or in proximity to the site. It maintains views of existing landmarks and landscapes and follows the principles in ' Creating Places '.	Essential
	D3 Developments at the edge of settlements provide a positive distinction between the urban and rural environments and create a 'sense of arrival' into the urban area.	Essential
	D4 Within or close to built heritage designations, the built form, material finish and palette of buildings and hard landscaping protects and enhances the traditional local character and design.	Essential
	D5 Development makes use of innovative designs, 'Passive House' design criteria, off-site construction techniques and/or modern methods of construction.	Desirable
	D6 External material selection is appropriate for the highland climate and is chosen to respect and enhance its wider setting,	Essential
	D7 Potential for personalisation of individual properties by prospective owners.	Desirable
	D8 Within Inverness City, major or locally significant developments have been presented to the Inverness Design Review Panel and the outcomes respected.	Desirable
	D9 Ground floor commercial unit's shopfronts to conform to the Council Shopfront Design Guide .	Essential
Safe & Pleasant	S1 <i>Active frontages</i> , including 'corner turner' style houses, overlook well-lit streets, footpaths and open/green spaces, resulting in natural surveillance using outwards facing <i>perimeter blocks</i> along key routes.	Essential
	S2 In-curtilage garages and parking areas located to the side or rear of properties to avoid car dominance of the streetscape.	Essential
	S3 Provision of appropriately designed residents and visitor cycle parking in a sheltered, secured and overlooked position, in conformity with the Council's Roads and Transportation Guidelines .	Essential
	In urban flatted developments, individual in-unit cycle storage is encouraged.	

Appendix 3: Placemaking Audit

	S4	Provision of open public spaces in accordance with relevant Local Development Plan (LDP) policy to be fit for purpose, usable, flexible (including utility hook-ups to civic spaces) and cost effective to maintain. Delivered in compliance with PAN 65: Planning and Open Space .	Essential
	S5	Well located and sufficient play opportunities provided, in areas which benefit from natural surveillance and are integrated into the overall scheme. Play equipment to be inclusive and serves a range of ages (incl. adults).	Essential
	S6	Play areas achieve a minimum 'Bronze' <i>PiPA</i> (Play Inclusive Play Areas) accreditation.	Desirable
	S7	External lighting sited and designed to avoid light pollution and use energy efficient LED fittings. New Street lighting to be in the form of dimming LED columns/fittings.	Essential
	S8	<i>Secured by Design</i> : Homes (2019) and/or Commercial Developments (2015) respected and awarded to a minimum Bronze standard.	Desirable
	S9	Scheme designed to comply with the BRE ' <i>Home Quality Mark</i> ' scheme.	Desirable
	S10	An accessible Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is provided.	Desirable
	S11	The development accords with a Local Place Plan.	Desirable
	W1	Developments require to be designed to assist residents and visitors orientate and move around the site without becoming disorientated. This can be achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · providing or accentuating landmarks to create or improve views; · locating public art to identify places. Public art provided in accordance with relevant LDP policy/Supplementary Guidance; 	Essential
Warning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · use of '<i>Sequence Markers</i>' · careful siting of signature buildings or utilising contrasting massing; · providing high quality signage and / or distinctive lighting to illuminate attractive/important buildings; · proportionate provision of high-quality street furniture and signage. 	
	A1	The layout should include a mixture of uses, building densities, housing types and tenures.	Essential
Adoptable		Affordable housing provision to be provided in accordance with LDP policies.	

Appendix 3: Placemaking Audit

	Within the urban cores flattened developments could include vertical mixed-use blocks.	
A2	Affordable house design conforms to the Council's 'Firm Foundations Design Brief: Building Homes for the Highlands' & Scottish Government's 'Housing for Varying Needs Design Standards'	Essential
A3	Infrastructure provided for 'Fibre to the Premise' (FTP) installation.	Desirable
A4	In housing developments, <i>self-build house plots</i> are provided in accordance with LDP policy.	Essential
A5	Utility infrastructure hardware (e.g. substations, telecommunication cabinets and pumping stations) are appropriately designed, sited and screened from public view.	Essential
A6	Infrastructure (cable routes) provided for 'in-curtilage' Electric Vehicle (EV) charge-point installation.	Essential
R1	The development is of a suitable density to avoid excessive land-use and does not detrimentally affect neighbouring established uses.	Essential
R2	Existing mature landscaping within and adjacent to the site is retained, protected and enhanced to create new <i>wildlife corridors</i> .	Essential
R3	Within residential developments, an area for <i>allotments, community gardens, community woodlands</i> or a community orchard or community food growing space is provided in a location which encourages public harvest.	Essential
R4	Built developments located out-with the relevant SEPA flood extents and shown to avoid flood risk.	Essential
R5	Decorative well integrated <i>SUDS</i> scheme which includes a degree of natural surveillance and designed to conform to the current edition of Sewers for Scotland or the CIRIA SUDS Manual The long term inspection and maintenance regime and organisation responsible identified at the outset.	Essential
R6	Watercourses and wetlands areas retained, improved and incorporated into the scheme. Including adoption of the Council Riparian policy.	Essential
R7	Incorporates the use of water conservation principles; including individual properties rainwater collection and reuse systems.	Desirable
R8	Appropriately designed and sited in-curtilage storage space for refuse & recycling and the provision/locations for on-street collection points identified.	Essential
R9	For residential developments over 100 units, appropriately designed and sited communal glass recycling facilities and community composting areas provided.	Essential
R10	The layout should be designed to:	Essential
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maximise benefits from <i>solar gains</i> and internal daylighting to individual properties 	

Resource
Efficient

Appendix 3: Placemaking Audit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · minimise <i>wind-channelling</i> between units and protect buildings from the prevailing weather; · have properties with '<i>living roof</i>' and/or '<i>living wall</i>' systems; · avoid the use of dead-end '<i>cul-de-sacs</i>' and limited use of private access roads; · ensure rear garden access to mid-terraced properties is achieved; · deliver the higher density units closest to community facilities and public transport nodes. 	
R11	The development makes use of <i>micro-renewable</i> technology and / or enhanced energy efficiency/recovery systems (improvement on the levels sought in the Building Standards).	Desirable
R12	Bio-diversity aspects are mitigated, protected and restored as part of the development, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · An initial <i>Wildlife Assessment Check</i> is undertaken and submitted as part of the proposal. · Following the above assessment, formal appropriate wildlife & species assessments are prepared, and outcomes respected and incorporated into the scheme. · The inclusion of nesting boxes and habitat creation (bird, bat and insect boxes) are provided across the scheme. · Invasive non-native species identified and removed. · Wildflower meadows and/or <i>mini-forests</i> established on site. 	Essential
R13	Construction material sourced from environmentally managed supplies and construction waste is minimised and recycled where possible.	Desirable
R14	The development applies the RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide (2019) to the design of both buildings and places.	Desirable
EasyE1 to Move Around & beyond	Developments to be well connected to bus and rail nodes in accordance with PAN 75: Planning for Transport . New or extended bus routes to be served by well located, high quality bus shelters which are well lit and provide sheltered seating and real time bus information.	Essential

Appendix 3: Placemaking Audit

- E2** A clear road and street hierarchy is designed to conform with '[Designing Streets](#)' Essential and the Council's [Roads and Transportations Guidelines for New Developments](#) and should include:
- Road *design speed* appropriate to the form and nature of the street design and development layout;
 - Road junction designed to prioritise *active travel*;
 - Consideration given to future road connections for adjacent/later schemes;
 - Underground utilities located within service strips/road verges;
 - Varying road designs, widths and surfacing to differentiate the hierarchy.
- E3** The layout includes 'Homezones', 'Town Squares' and/or 'Play Streets' to encourage Desirable greater mode share of the street network.
- E4** The location and distances to existing facilities (e.g. education, retail and Essential community uses) are assessed against [PAN 75: Planning for Transport](#) and the requirement for expanded or new facilities should be addressed.
- E5** A network of *fully accessible* compliant interconnected, permeable, well-lit, intuitive Essential and overlooked *active travel* routes which follow [desire lines](#) and are suitably graded are created. These should link to or extend existing *active travel* networks, *National Cycle Networks*, 'Safer Route to School' networks and/or *Core Paths* where they exist and allow for future extensions into adjacent lands.
- E6** Communal parking, *parking barns* and visitor parking areas designed to: Essential
- Conform to the Council's [Roads and Transportations Guidelines for New Developments](#);
 - ensure they are overlooked and well lit;
 - avoid dominance of the streetscape;
 - ensure parking bays are broken up into groups of no more than five bays and interspersed with soft landscaping/*street trees*;
 - provide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging locations;
 - provide 'Car Club' spaces;
 - comply with the *Safer Parking 'Park Mark'* Scheme.

Appendix 3: Placemaking Audit

The Highland Council Placemaking Audit Glossary

Table 10

Active Frontage	A street where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground and upper floors of buildings.
Active Travel	Journeys undertaken by physically active means, like walking, wheeling or cycling.
Allotment	A small piece of ground, in or just outside an urban area that a person rents for growing vegetables, fruits, or flowers.
BRE Home Quality Mark	An assessment tool to demonstrate high quality homes and to differentiate them in the marketplace. At the same time, it gives householders the confidence that the new home are well designed and built, and cost effective to run.
Community Garden	A single piece of land, gardened collectively by a group of people.
Community Woodland	Woodland where the local community has control over how the woodland is run or managed.
Corner Turner	A building located on a corner (e.g. at a road junction), designed to provide an <i>active frontage</i> to both streets.
Core Path	Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, Councils have a duty to prepare a Core Paths Plan. The purpose is to identify a network of key routes for outdoor access; an Interactive Map of Highland Council Core Paths is available.
Cul-de-sac	A street with only one inlet/outlet, connected to the wider street network.
Design Speed	The design speed is a logical speed to travel a road with respect to the topography, anticipated operating speed, the adjacent land use, and the functional classification of the highway.
Desire Lines	A route which represents the shortest or most easily navigated route between an origin and destination.
Fully Accessible	All routes designed to conform to the Equality Act to ensure routes are fit for purpose and open to all users.
Green Network	Local Development Plan designation of green areas within an urban area, which could be put to a multitude of uses (including play areas).
Greenspace	Formally recognised in the Local Development Plans. Contains no built development and is safeguarded. It will contribute to the character and setting of a place and provide amenity, biodiversity, recreation and other benefits.

Appendix 3: Placemaking Audit

Home Zone	Residential areas designed to ensure that the quality of life in the residential area takes precedence over ease of vehicle movement. They usually involve narrow shared surfaces roads with built-in elements (raised tables/chicanes) combined with features such as trees, planters and street furniture to limit traffic speeds.
Living Roof	A roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium.
Living Wall	Panels of plants, grown vertically using hydroponics, on structures that can be either free-standing or attached to walls.
National Cycle Networks	A UK-wide network of signed walking and cycling paths connecting cities, towns, and the countryside.
Micro-Renewables	Small scale systems that generate electricity and/or heat.
Mini-forests	Tiny, dense forests achieved by planting saplings close together, three per square metre, using native varieties adapted to local conditions. A wide variety of species, ideally 30 or more planted to recreate the layers of a natural forest.
Parking Barn	Communal open frontage covered parking area.
Perimeter Blocks	The public facing parts of buildings are orientated to face the street and the more private (garden) elements are located within the block.
Play Streets	Simple, effective and low-cost way for children to be able to play out in the streets where they live.
PiPA	PiPA (Play Inclusive Play Areas) provides a comprehensive six point assessment tool to help inform/improve new play space design to ensure all children benefit from the play provision. Bronze, Silver & Gold accreditations available.
Safer Parking 'Park Mark'	A national standard for UK car parks that have low crime and measures in place to ensure the safety of people and vehicles.
Safer Routes to School	Routes designed to decrease traffic and pollution and increase the health of children and the community, by promoting walking and biking to school.
Secured by Design	A Police initiative that improves the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit.
Self-build house plot	A house plot available for an individual or group of individuals to build house(s) to plans and specifications decided by them.
Sense of arrival	A special feeling a person experiences during the first ten seconds or so after entering a location.

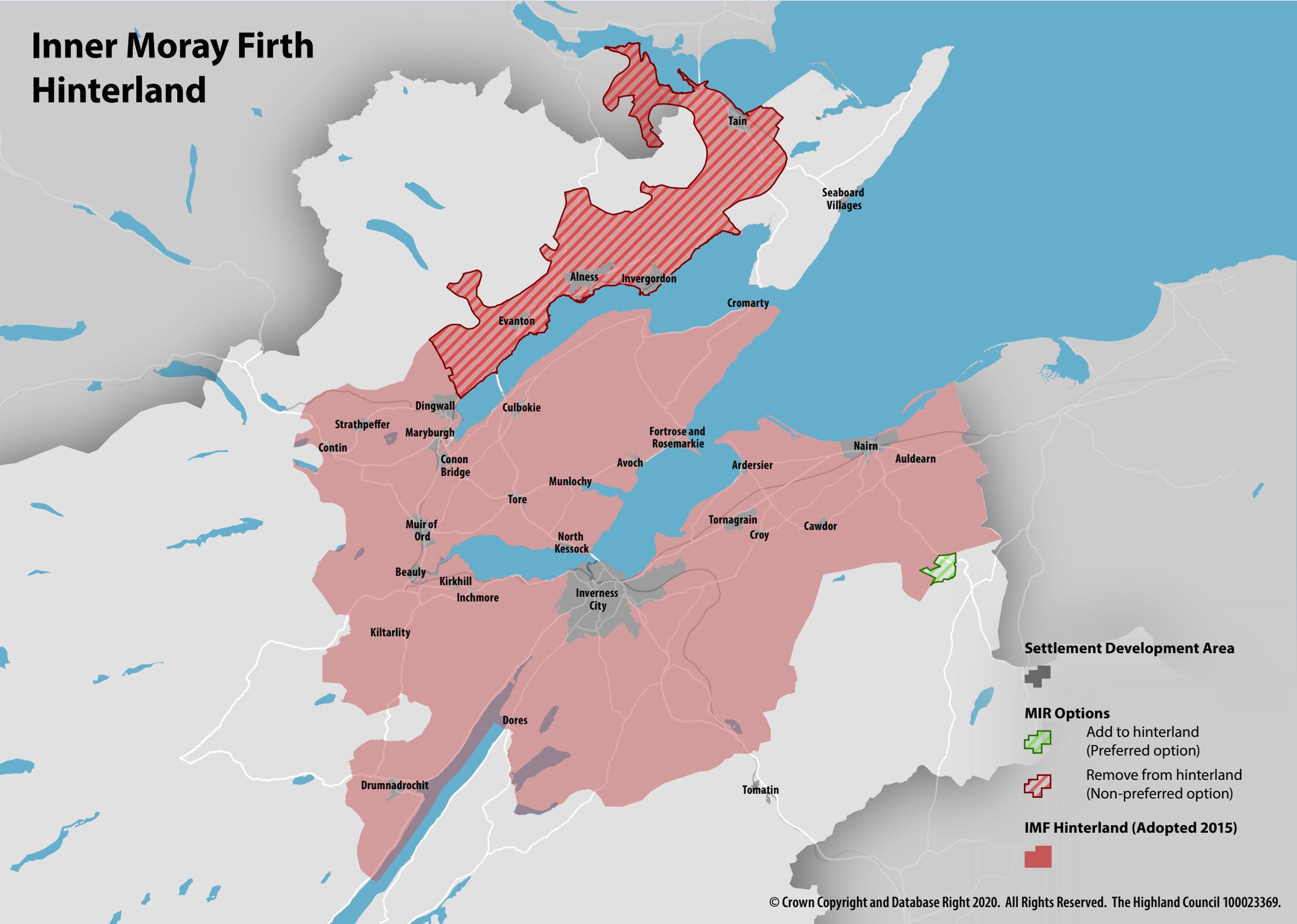
Appendix 3: Placemaking Audit

Sense of place	The context as well as the identity or unique characteristics of a building or space that creates meaning for the occupant or user.
Sequence Markers	A physical/built item that helps a user to orientate themselves. Can be either a natural landmark or view or a man-made feature, including; differing house styles, street furniture, decorative feature or path design/finish.
Street Trees	A tree located on land forming or adjacent to a road which affects, in some way, those using that highway.
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems are water management practices that aim to align modern drainage systems with the natural water cycle.
Town Squares	An open public space located in the heart of an urban area used for community gatherings and events.
Wildlife Assessment Check	Free online tool available from ' Biodiversity in Planning ' for small to medium-scale developers to check whether they will need expert ecological advice before submitting a planning application. The tool is not intended for large development projects where formal Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) are required according to EIA regulations
Wildlife Corridor	Interlinked greenspaces to provide connections across sites for biodiversity.
Wind Channelling	A negative effect resulting from a ridged layout which channels wind between buildings.

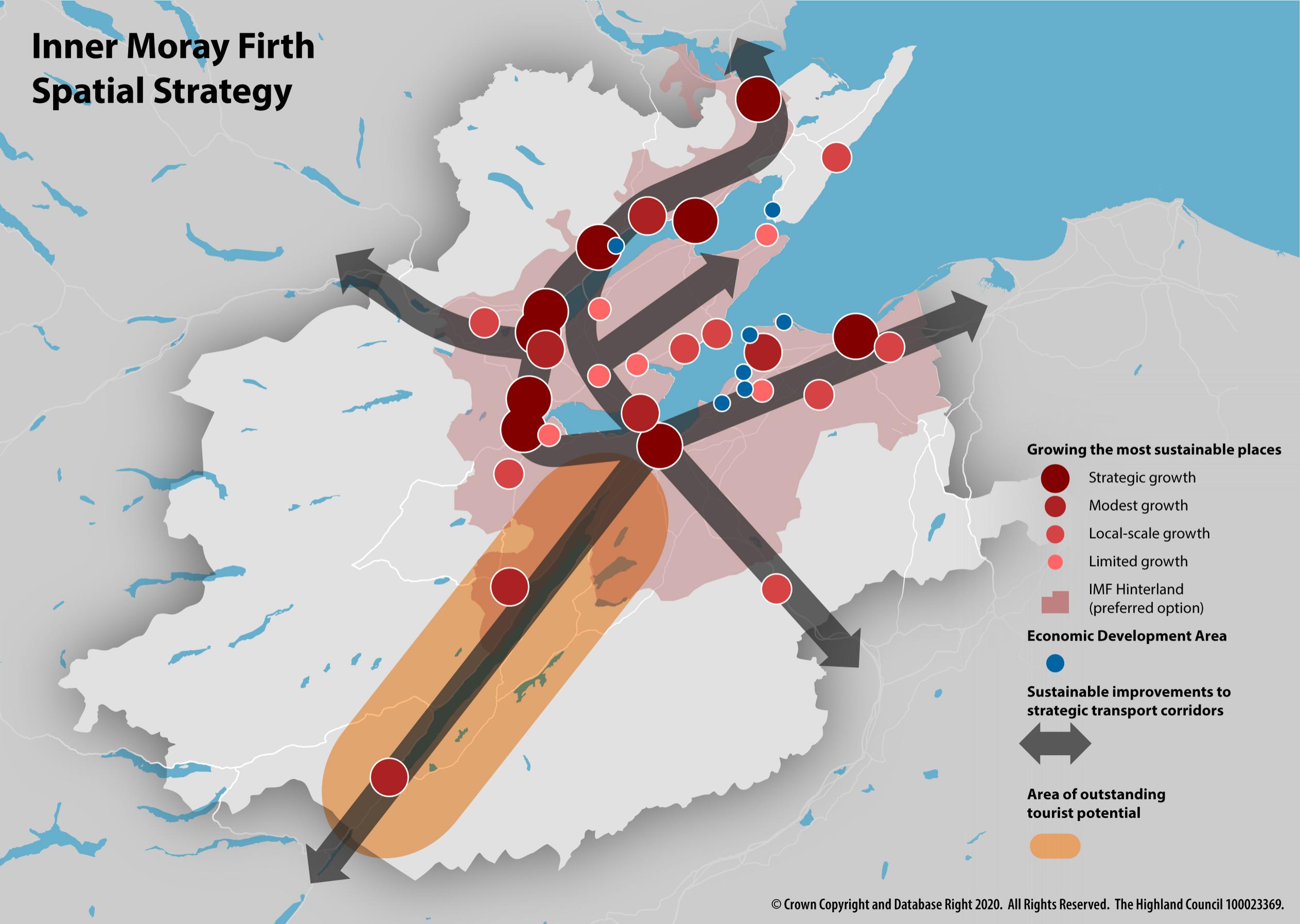


**The Highland
Council
Comhairle na
Gàidhealtachd**

Inner Moray Firth Hinterland



Inner Moray Firth Spatial Strategy



Growing the most sustainable places

- Strategic growth
- Modest growth
- Local-scale growth
- Limited growth
- IMF Hinterland (preferred option)

Economic Development Area

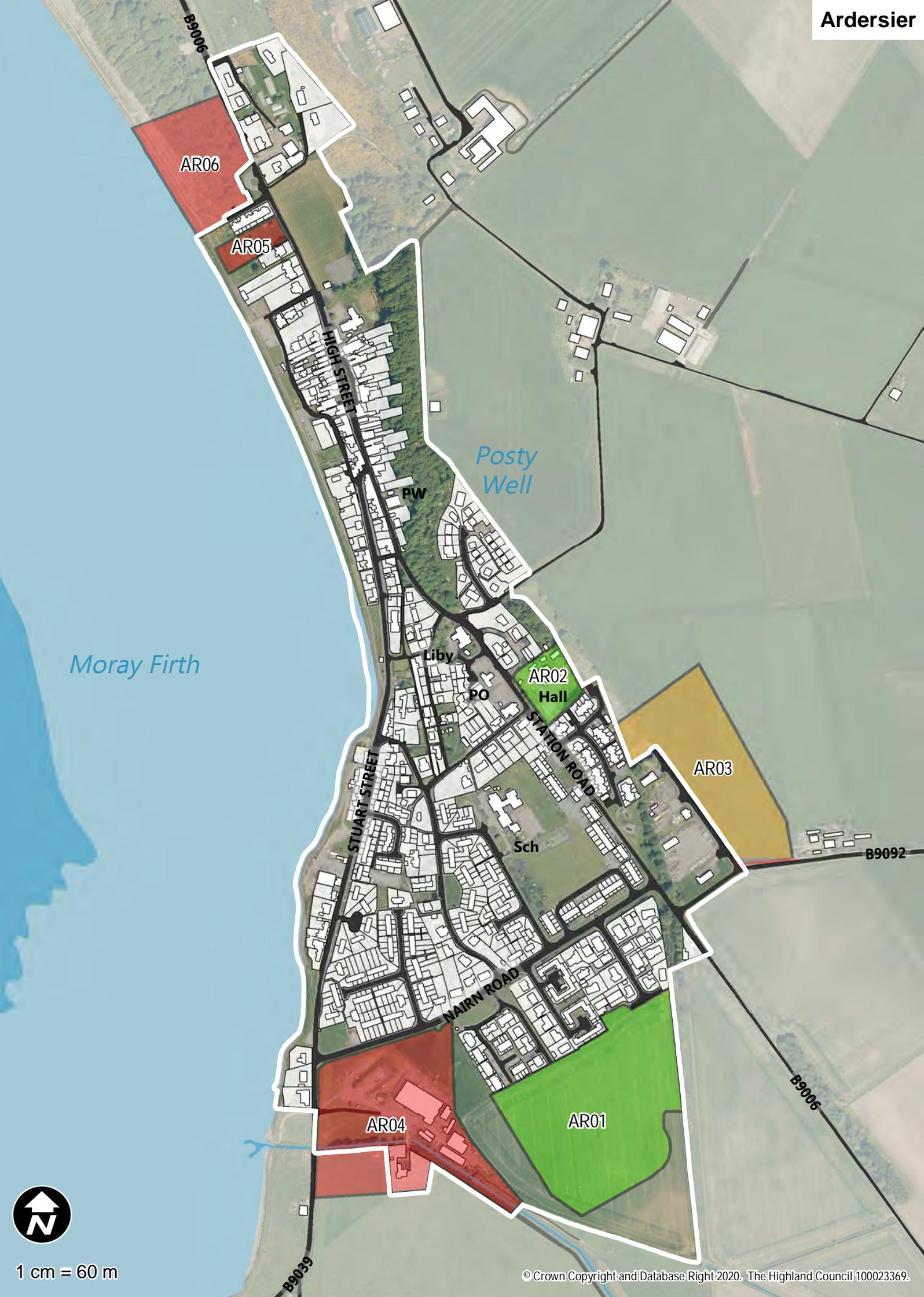


Sustainable improvements to strategic transport corridors



Area of outstanding tourist potential





Moray Firth

Posty Well

AR06

AR05

HIGH STREET

PW

Liby

PO

AR02
Hall

STATION ROAD

AR03

STUART STREET

Sch

B9092

NAIRN ROAD

AR04

AR01

B9006



1 cm = 60 m



1 cm = 60 m



CR04

CR02

CR01

CR03

HEATHFIELD

Hall

ARD CROY RD

DAL CROY RD

Sch

SCHOOL BRAE

ARDGOWAN

PW

B9006

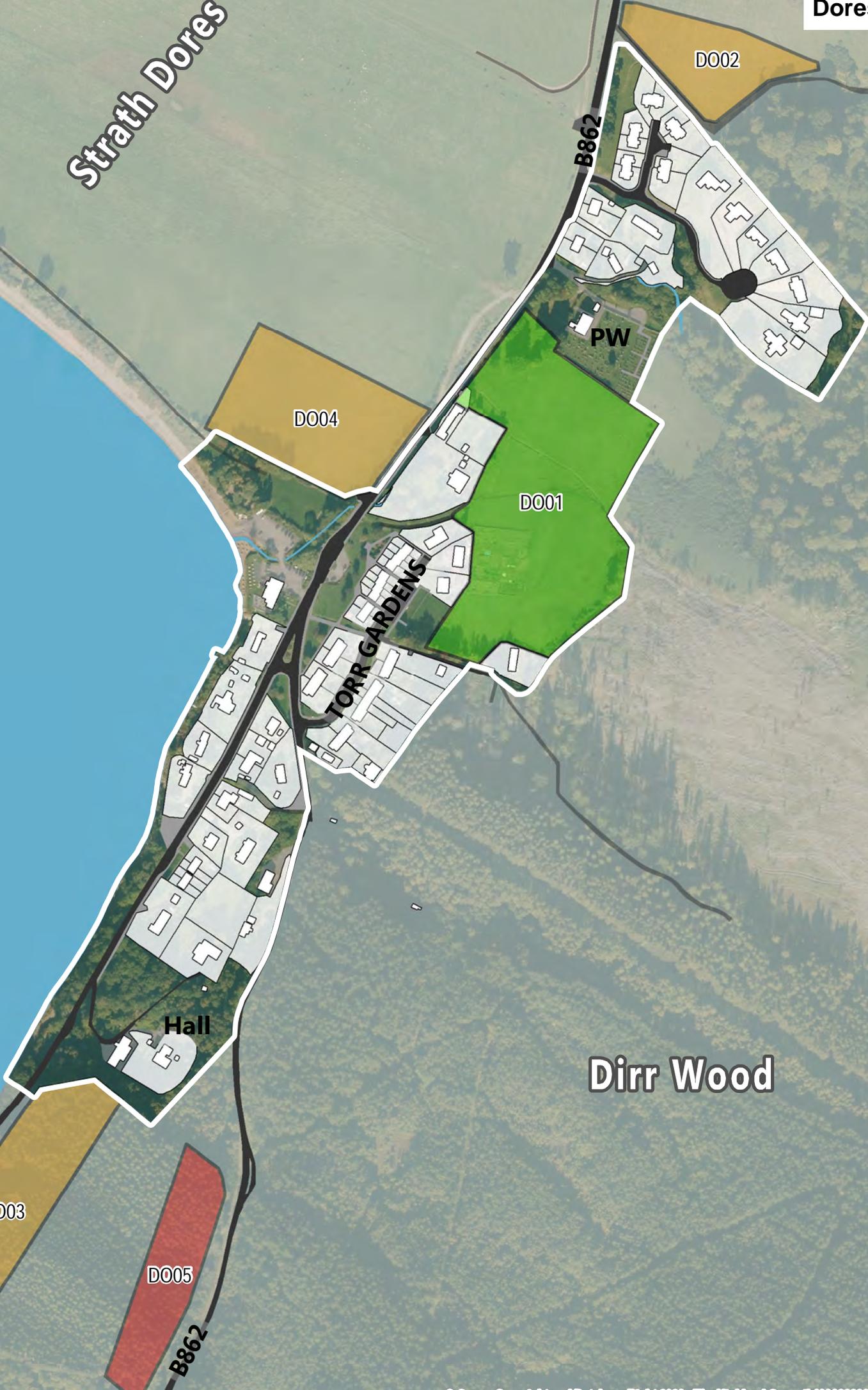
B9006



1 cm = 50 m

Strath Dores

n Ness



1 cm = 40 m



Easter Milton

DR08

Kilmichael

DR03

PO

Pol Sta

Pitkerrald

DR02

DR06

DR05

DR04

DR01

KILMORE ROAD

COTTIE CRESCENT

PW

Hall

Craig Mony

Sch

DR07 Lewiston

A82(T)

Borlum

Tornabrack



1 cm = 100 m

Blairconard

FREE CHURCH ROAD
PW

FA02

A82(T)

THE RIGGS

Fort Augustus Bridge

Swing Bridge

FA07

FA05

STATION ROAD

PO

PW

Academy

PW

Pol Sta

Hall

FA03

FA06

ABERTARFF PI

B662

Market Hill

FA04

FA01

F Sta

MILLFIELD

Tom na Croiche



1 cm = 70 m



A862

IC01

IC03

IC02

B9164

A862



1 cm = 30 m

see North
Kessock map

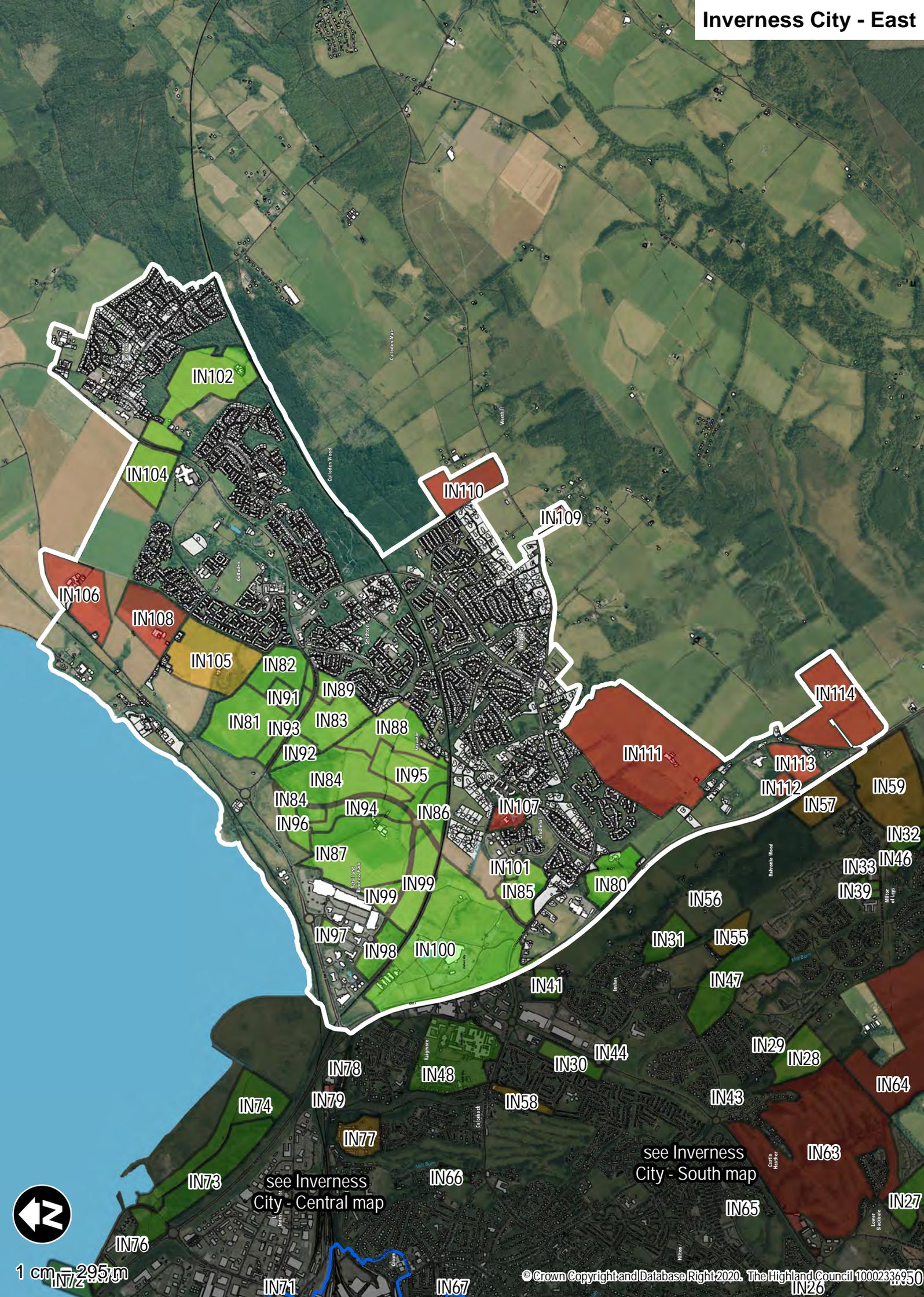


see Inverness
City - West map

see Inverness
City - South map



1 cm = 160 m



IN102

IN104

IN110

IN109

IN106

IN108

IN105

IN82

IN89

IN81

IN93

IN83

IN88

IN111

IN114

IN113

IN112

IN57

IN59

IN32

IN33

IN39

IN46

IN84

IN95

IN84

IN94

IN86

IN107

IN101

IN85

IN80

IN87

IN99

IN99

IN97

IN98

IN100

IN41

IN56

IN31

IN55

IN47

IN74

IN79

IN78

IN48

IN58

IN30

IN44

IN29

IN28

IN64

IN73

see Inverness City - Central map

IN66

see Inverness City - South map

IN63

IN65

IN27

IN76



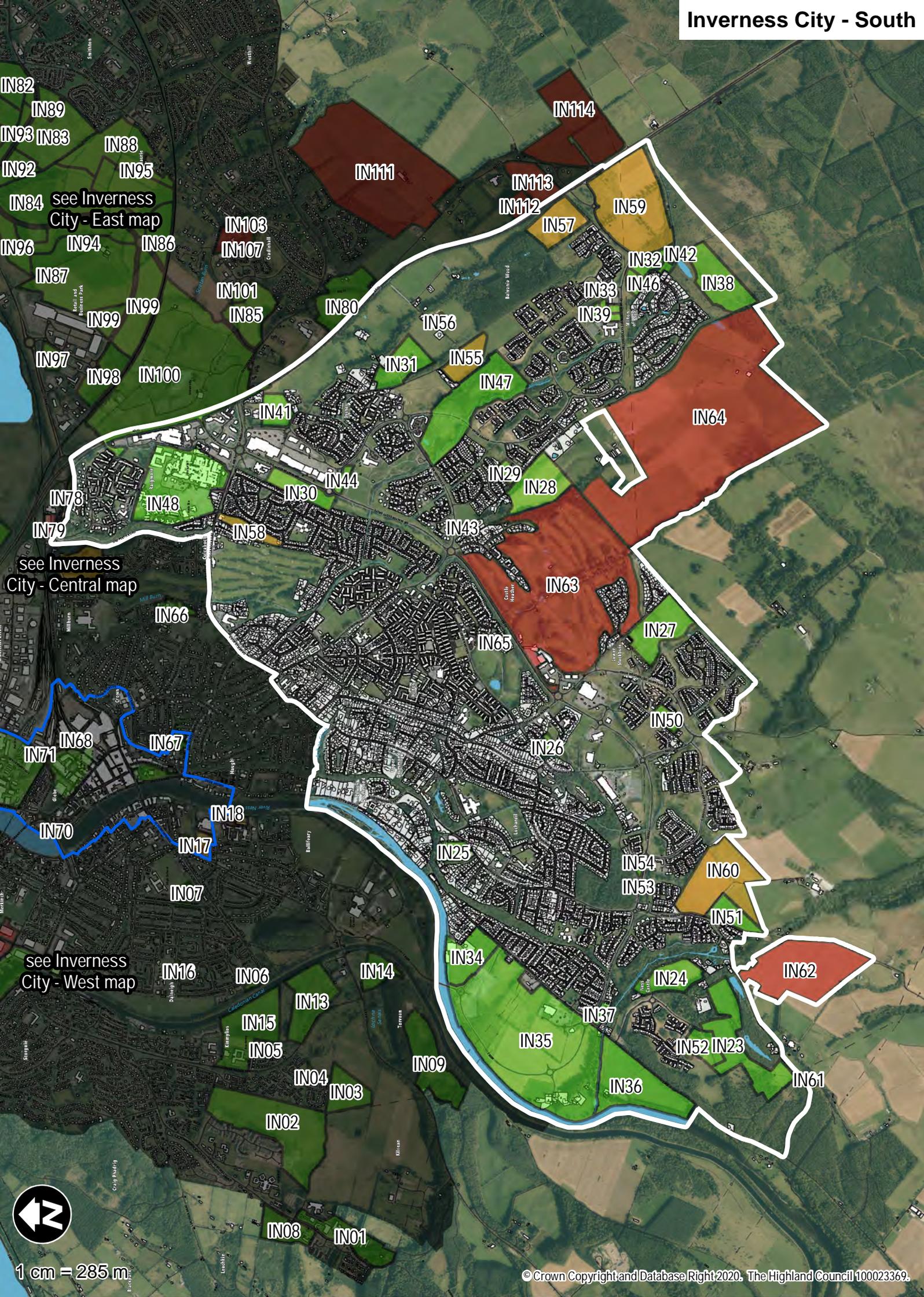
1 cm = 295m

IN71

IN67

IN26

IN50



1 cm = 285 m

Inverness City - West



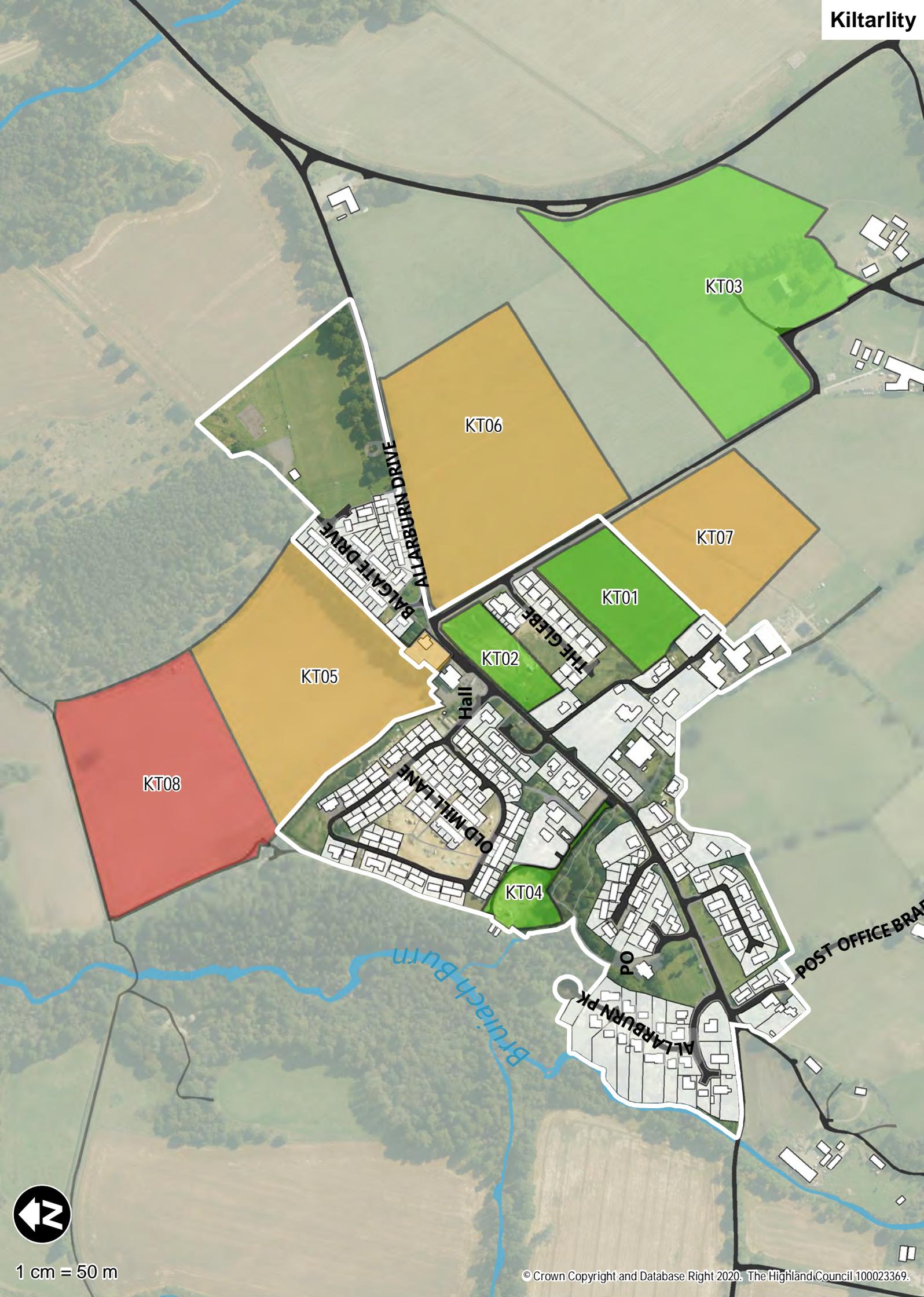
Beauty Firth

see Inverness City - Central map

see Inverness City - South map



1 cm = 175 m



KT03

KT06

KT07

KT01

KT02

KT05

KT08

KT04

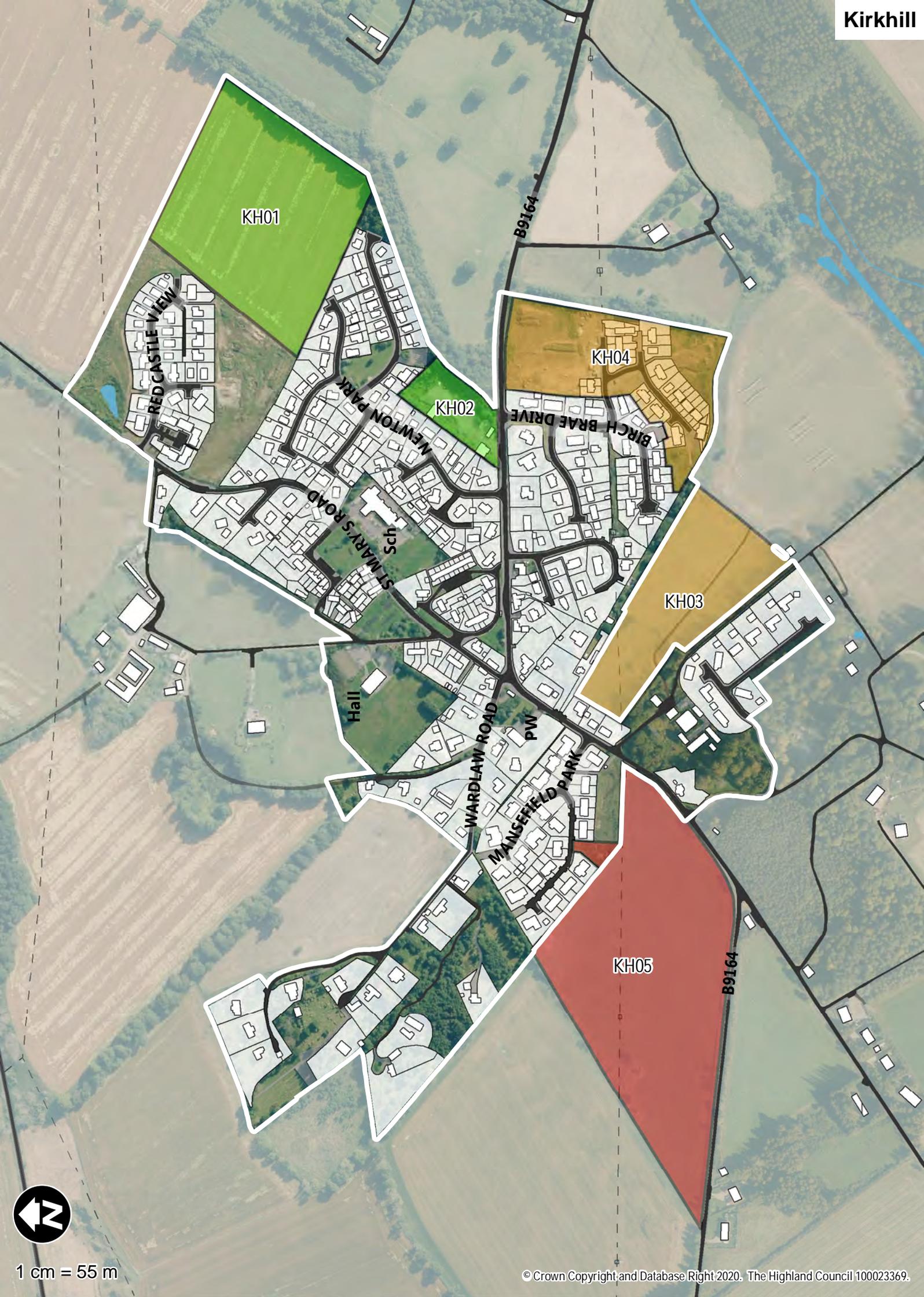
Hall

PO

POST OFFICE BRAN



1 cm = 50 m



KH01

RED CASTLE VIEW

NEWTON PARK

KH02

ST MARY'S ROAD

St Mary's School

Hall

KH04

BIRCH BRAE DRIVE

KH03

WARDLAW ROAD

PW

MANSEFIELD PARK

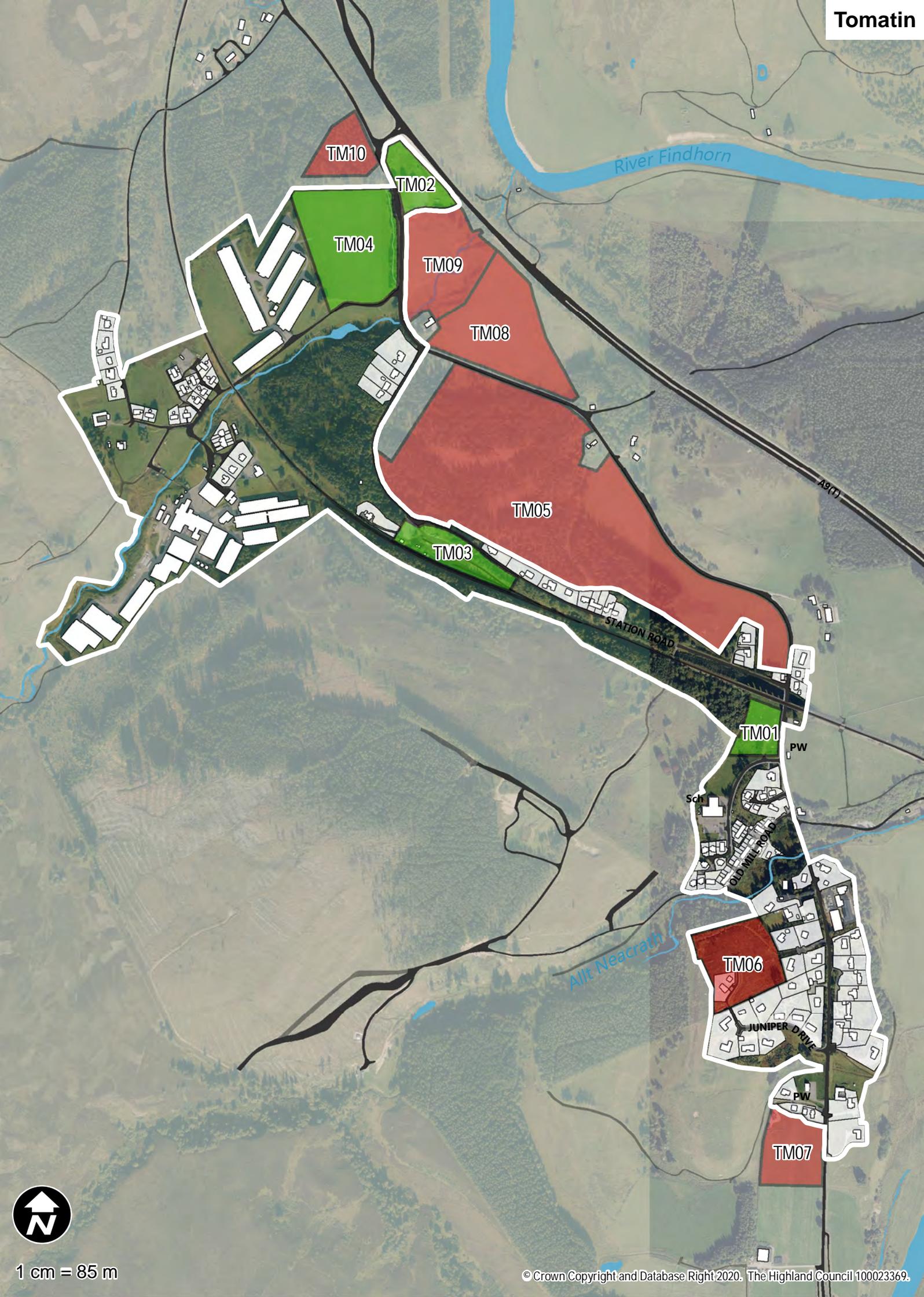
KH05

B9164

B9164



1 cm = 55 m



1 cm = 85 m

Tornagrain

see Croy map

CR01

CR03

Drumline

Lochan Dinty

TG01

Bruaich Na Fuaran

Hillhead

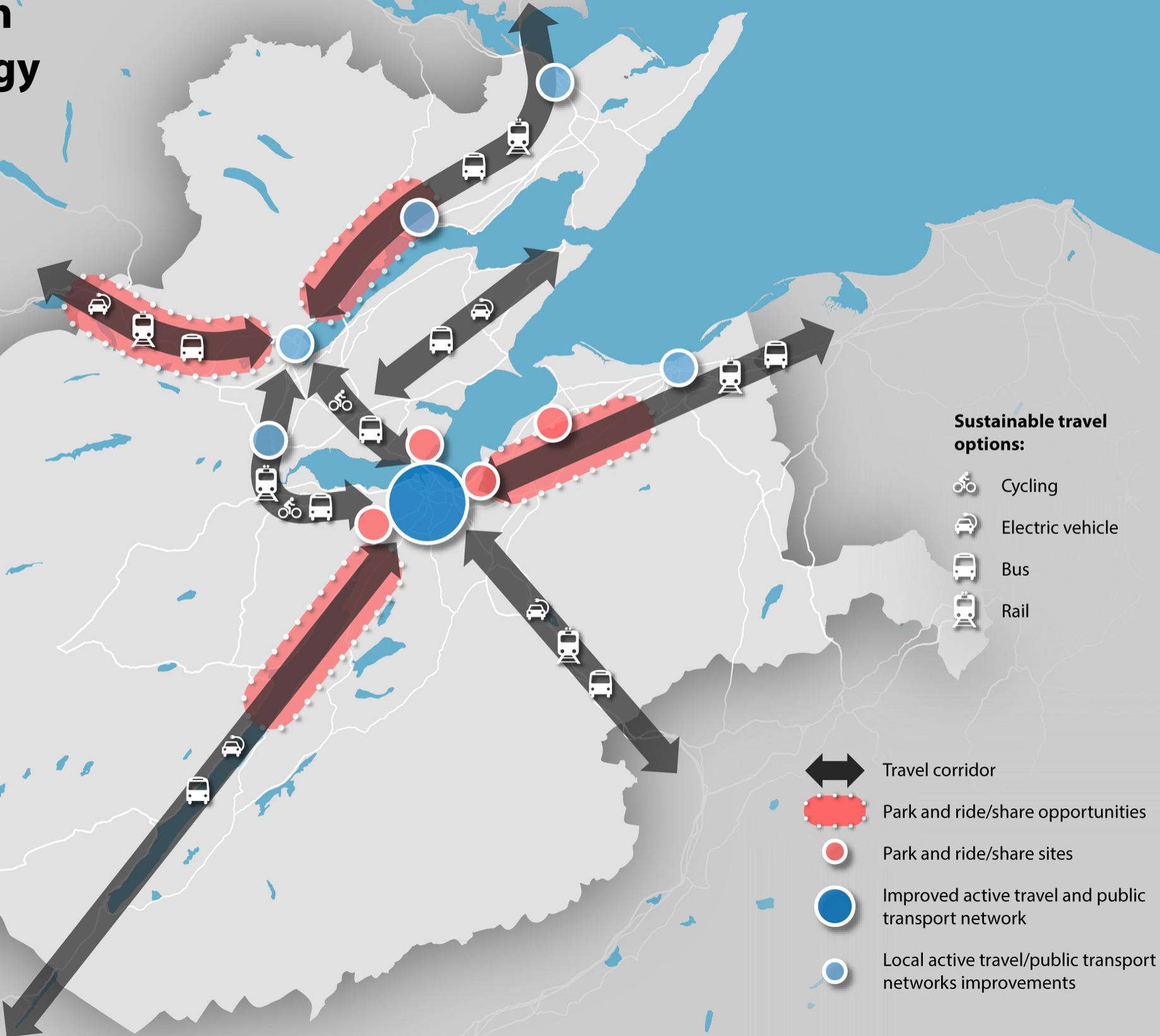
Tornagrain Wood

Kerrowaird



1 cm = 110 m

Inner Moray Firth Transport Strategy



Sustainable travel options:

-  Cycling
-  Electric vehicle
-  Bus
-  Rail

-  Travel corridor
-  Park and ride/share opportunities
-  Park and ride/share sites
-  Improved active travel and public transport network
-  Local active travel/public transport networks improvements