THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee:	**Sutherland County**
Date:	**2 June 2025**
Report Title:	**Sutherland Area Place Plan**
Report By:	**Assistant Chief Executive - Place**

1   Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1   This report invites Members to adopt the Sutherland Area Place Plan.

1.2   The Sutherland Area Place Plan as detailed in **Appendix 2** has been developed using a Place Based approach and does not set out to replace existing plans and policies for the area. Instead, it aims to capture and present what the common themes and priorities are and aims to serve as a comprehensive document that not only reflects the aspirations of the local community but also aligns with existing strategic and localised plans, ensuring that Sutherland thrives as a sustainable, liveable, and prosperous community.

1.3   This report also provides an update on next steps for progressing the plan.

2   Recommendations

2.1   Members are asked to:

    i.   **Conside**r and **adopt** the Sutherland Area Place Plan, using it as a tool to inform and support decision making about Sutherland;

    ii.   **Support** and **promote** the plan where possible in terms of its consideration within other plans, strategies, development and funding opportunities across or impacting the Sutherland area; and

    iii.   **Note** the next steps for progressing the work set out in the plan.

3   Implications

3.1   **Resource** - No additional resource is requested. Highland Council support for initiatives outlined in the Plan may have resource implications in the future which would be subject to appropriate Committee or Service decision making.

Ongoing involvement in Place Planning activity requires input and commitment from services across the Council to ensure Place Plans provide the framework to support targeting resources, service delivery and provide a clear vision for attracting external investment. The Plan will help the Highland Council, partners, and communities secure funding by evidencing the impact of every pound spent and the actions associated will provide clarity and manage expectation around how and where resources are prioritised.

3.2   **Legal** - There are no legal implications rising from the adoption of the Sutherland Area Place Plan.

3.3   **Risk** - The Sutherland Area Place Plan will help to coordinate future activity and investment in the area. Developing a place-based approach is encouraged through the Scottish Government's Place Principle, the Christie Commission recommendations and is required by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for community planning.

3.4   **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – No implications.

3.5   **Gaelic -** A focus on place, and considering the priorities for a local area, has potential to support a focus on Gaelic language and culture if identified by communities and partners.

4   Impacts

4.1   In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2   Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3   An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

The Screening process has concluded that the Plan has a positive impact on promoting equality, addressing inequality (including socio-economic) and targeting the priorities of the people of Sutherland and therefore a full impact assessment is not required. Members are asked to consider the summary below and detailed in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening / Full Assessment
Equality	Positive impact
Socio-economic	Positive impact
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Positive impact
Island and Mainland Rural	Positive impact
Climate Change	No Impact
Data Rights	No impact

5   Background

5.1   In 2021, Highland Council made a commitment to develop Area Place Plans mainly based on Area Committee boundaries. The Plans have been developed and facilitated in various ways across Highland, as each area is different. This Area Place Plan (APP) for Sutherland has been developed using a place-based approach and does not set out to replace existing plans and policies for the area. Instead, it aims to capture and present what the common themes and priorities are and aims to serve as a comprehensive document that not only reflects the aspirations of the local community but also aligns with existing strategic and localised plans, ensuring that the area thrives as a sustainable, liveable, and prosperous community. Clarification on the difference between Area and Local Place Plans is noted below.

5.2   Area Place Plan

The Place Principle is a Scottish Government and CoSLA initiative to encourage better collaboration and community involvement. It is about understanding the issues, opportunities and relationships in a place, to allow effective partnership working to improve the quality of life for communities. Knowing how a community is structured and how it works helps make good decisions on investment, service delivery and how to coordinate change.

In Highland, APPs are being developed to provide an overview of existing strategies and projects. Community engagement builds a shared understanding of how Place underpins development, service delivery and how communities and organisations work together. These plans will be a future guide to maximise the impact for people living in an area, based on shared understanding of local need.

At its simplest, APPs will create a shared vision for an area, outlining priority outcomes and how they will be achieved. The Plans will make clear what activity is happening in each area, the outcomes being sought, when they are intended to be delivered and who is responsible for doing so.

5.3   Local Place Plan

Following recent changes to the national planning system, communities have been invited to consider preparation of their own Local Place Plans – a community's proposals for development of use of land and buildings in their local area. Currently across Highland, many groups are engaging their local community to reflect how to make their place better, agree priorities for the future and how to act on them – often working with others. While Local Place Plans have a particular role in the planning system, they may also highlight other priorities for service delivery and community action.

6   How the Plan was prepared

6.1   The Sutherland Area Place Plan was developed in conjunction with the Sutherland Community Partnership (SCP), with the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust leading the review of existing priorities on behalf of the SCP. The Council's Community Support and Engagement Team carried out face-to-face consultation across the County and with on-line materials at www.engagehighland.co.uk/sutherland-place-plan

6.2   Existing Plans

To remove duplication and identify gaps, existing plans and consultations relevant to the Sutherland area have been collated and the common themes from these have been included within the Area Place Plan. This included SCP priorities and the NW2045 Vision – Our Future Our Choice, adopted by Sutherland County Committee on 16 August 2021, which is widely recognised as one of the earliest strategic place plans.

6.3   **Engagement**

Once existing plans and information had been collated, the Council's Community Support and Engagement Team held a series of engagement sessions to validate the information already gathered and to fill any gaps. There was also an opportunity for people to comment online. The sessions took place in April and May 2025 in the following communities:-

- Bettyhill
- Kinlochbervie
- Golspie
- Lochinver
- Bonar Bridge

The responses received are detailed in the Engagement Report within **Appendix 3**. These responses have informed the Sutherland Area Place Plan and have been shared with relevant partners to help inform their own work.

7   Priorities for Sutherland

7.1   For ease of reference between the Sutherland Area Place Plan and wider statutory and strategic documents, the emerging Priorities for Sutherland have been aligned to the three pillars of People, Place and Prosperity.

7.1 **People**
- Access to healthcare
- Health and wellbeing
- Addressing depopulation
- Community capacity and resilience

7.2 **Place**
- Environment and Climate
- Housing
- Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Roads and Pavements
- Public Transport
- Digital Connectivity

7.3 **Prosperity**
- Employment and economic opportunities
- Support for local business
- Education and childcare
- Tourism and seasonal work
- Young people's priorities

7.4 **How the Plan Will be Used**

This Plan will provide all those with an interest in or those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in Sutherland with a helpful tool to:-

- establish a shared understanding of local needs and opportunities;
- inform decisions on service design and delivery;
- provide evidence to support funding bids for projects;
- encourage public, private, and community collaboration for long-term sustainable growth;
- make best use of available resources and forward plan for when funding and investment becomes available; and
- link with local and national decision-making processes, influencing public services, budgeting, and planning policies to reflect the needs and aspirations of the Sutherland community.

7.5 **Development and Delivery of the Sutherland Area Place Plan**

A bespoke action plan will be created to set out the route for delivery of the priorities within the Sutherland Area Place Plan. The action plan will seek to:-

- further understand and develop each priority, in discussion across all sectors;
- set out to identify the best mechanism for delivery and the range of partners to be involved;
- assess potential barriers;
- assess potential funding opportunities; and
- provide estimates of timescales

Not all priorities will be achievable in the short to medium term, however, priorities within this plan have the widest community support and this plan, along with appendices, can be used to evidence and inform developments and funding decisions.

Designation:	Assistant Chief Executive
Date:	12 May 2025
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Background Papers:	None
Appendices	Appendix 1 - Integrated Impact Assessment Appendix 2 - Sutherland Area Place Plan Appendix 3 - Engagement Report

SUTHERLAND AREA PLACE PLAN - INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening / Full Assessment
Equality	SAPP identifies the issues of the whole community; however, it does aim to support improvements to services targeted at young, elderly, disabled people and/or improve their access to services. SAPP has no specific impact on other protected groups.
Socio-economic	SAPP identifies a range of socio-economic issues relating to opportunity including access to education, training and apprenticeships, employability support and removing barriers to work such as childcare and transport. It highlights the issues faced by the remote rural communities in Sutherland including transport and housing, and how initiatives can help to improve household income through support and services such as social care and other public sector and voluntary support.
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights and Wellbeing	The main impact of SAPP is highlighting issues identified by children and young people so that they can be prioritised and addressed by service providers and community partners. The issues and challenges identified by children and young people are highlighted in SAPP including funding for youth groups and spaces, after-school clubs, and sports activities, outdoor learning opportunities, local opportunities for young people post-high school.
Island and Mainland Rural	The plan highlights issues faced by communities living in remote rural areas.
Climate Change	No impact
Data Rights	No impact

Sutherland Area Place Plan

Plana Àite Sgìre

Executive Summary
Geàrr-chunntas Gnìomhach

The Sutherland Area Place Plan (APP) has been developed in partnership with the Sutherland Community Partnership (SCP) and in conjunction with various services, organisations and most importantly the communities within the area. It aims to capture priorities, strengths, challenges, opportunities and community aspirations within one overarching Plan which should be used or referred to by services, groups and organisations operating in Sutherland. This will help to ensure service provision, funding and developments reflect collective community wants, needs and priorities.

Through the process of producing the APP, it became clear that many community priorities and aspirations reflect those which have been voiced for some time, but also that new upcoming ideas and opportunities were being identified.

In order to make the APP easier to utilise, the aspirations have been categorised under the primary headings of People, Place and Prosperity to reflect the groupings being used by many of the major organisations such as Highland Council, NHS Highland and the Highland Community Planning Partnership (HCPP). These are summarised as follows:

PEOPLE	PLACE	PROSPERITY
Access to Healthcare	Environment and Climate	Employment and Economic Opportunities
Health and Wellbeing	Housing	Support for Local Business
Addressing Depopulation	Infrastructure and Connectivity	Education and Childcare
Community Capacity and Resilience	Roads and Pavements	Tourism and Seasonal Work
	Public Transport	Young People's Priorities
	Digital Connectivity	

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1 Introduction
Ro-ràdh

In 2021, Highland Council made a commitment to develop Area Place Plans (APPs) mainly based on Area Committee boundaries. The Plans are being developed and facilitated in various ways across Highland, as each area is different. In Sutherland, the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust carried out much of the work on behalf of the Sutherland Community Partnership.

Area Place Plans set out the vision, ambition and priorities for people and place in that particular area. This will support targeting resources, service delivery and provide a clear vision for attracting external investment.

The APPs inter-relate with a number of other plans, including Local Place Plans (LPPs), the Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP), the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP), the Highland Investment Plan (HIP), the Highland Delivery Plan (HDP) and the Community Partnership Plans.

This Area Place Plan focuses on Sutherland, and will help the Highland Council, partners and communities secure funding for the Area by evidencing the impact of every pound spent here. The associated actions will provide clarity and manage expectations around how and where resources are prioritised. The APP will also provide a stronger framework for communities within the area to prepare more local plans (should they wish to) empowering them to drive and deliver change in our towns, villages, communities and settlements.

The Sutherland Place Plan is realistic, covering the aspirations within communities and focusing on outcomes for the whole area. It is also ambitious, recognising the wealth of talent and opportunity which lies within the County. The Plan will help inform local and regional decision making about public services, budgeting and policy areas, as well as informing those wider statutory plans. It recognises the good work already taking place in Sutherland and supports community action to make the most of opportunities.

2   How The Plan Was Developed
Mar a Chaidh am Plana a Leasachadh

This plan was produced in partnership with Sutherland Community Partnership (facilitated by the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust), drawing on information from, and engagement with, a wide group of stakeholders including Elected Members (Councillors) as well as Council services; Community Councils; Community Development Trusts, High Life Highland; Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE); Voluntary Groups Sutherland (VGS) /Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI); Whole Family Wellbeing Programme and NHS Highland.

Initially, the focus was on gathering existing plans, strategies and documentation together, finding the common themes through these and their accompanying consultations and undertaking desktop analysis. Findings from the Council's Place Standard Survey, carried out in 2024, were also referenced as was Northwest 2045 Vision – Our Future Our Choice, itself a Place Plan covering north west Sutherland. This 'desktop' stage was then 'tested' with partners at a series of workshops to ensure continuing relevance and validity and to provide a 'refresh' as required. The opportunity was also taken to identify duplication or overlap and any gaps in provision.

Following this, Highland Council's Community Support & Engagement Team carried out direct engagement with drop-in sessions held across Sutherland in Bettyhill, Kinlochbervie, Golspie, Lochinver and Bonar Bridge. In addition, surveys and ideas boards were available electronically and hosted on the Council's Engagement HQ portal.   The findings from these have been built into the Area Place Plan, as well as fed across (where appropriate) to relevant partners for consideration in their plans and action where possible.

3   Sutherland at a Glance

Sutherland is a historic county in the northern Highlands of Scotland. The county extends to over 2,800 square miles and with only 13,500 inhabitants is one of the most sparsely populated areas in the UK. The county is generally rural, with a few main settlements largely around the coastal borders. Sutherland was particularly affected by the Highland Clearances of the 18th and 19th centuries, and the population has been in decline since the mid-19th century. The current population is around half of the peak of 25,793 which was recorded in 1851. Much of the population are situated in small coastal communities, such as Helmsdale and Lochinver, which until very recently made much of their living from fishing. The main employers are public sector, land-based and tourism businesses. Higher and Further Education is provided by UHI North, West, Hebrides, part of the University of the Highlands and Islands, which has a campuses in Dornoch, Thurso (serving north Sutherland) and Ullapool (serving west Sutherland). Seasonal tourism plays an important part of the local economy with much of Sutherland being part of the North Coast 500 (NC500).

Around 40% of the households in Sutherland are said to be in fuel poverty and the perception of remoteness, shortages of affordable housing and the declining and aging populations present significant challenges in attracting new people to the area.   Sutherland's main transport links are via road and rail with the railway and A9 trunk road linking east Sutherland to the south and north, and A roads (which include sections of single track) serving the north and west linking Sutherland to Caithness and Wester Ross. Closest airports are either Wick John o'Groats Airport or Inverness. Broadband connectivity and mobile reception are variable, particularly outwith the main settlements.

However, Sutherland offers a stunning environment for those who choose to live and visit there. The Flow Country is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and 10% of Scotland's National Scenic Areas are in Sutherland, recognising the diversity and fragility of the outstanding landscape, which includes stunning beaches, hills and lochs. Numerous small businesses survive and thrive from small craft workshops to construction, graphics to energy.

4   Challenges and Opportunities
Dùbhlain is Cothroman

Sutherland Engagement Summary

Engagement findings highlighted several overarching themes which focus on a community striving for **improved housing, transport, and healthcare; more educational and economic opportunities; and environmental sustainability** while maintaining **strong community support and resilience.**

The priorities are set out under three headings of **People | Place | Prosperity**

People

Setting the context – issues, challenges and opportunities

Male and female life expectancy is higher in the County than the overall Highland area or Scottish average. Health inequalities in Sutherland exist and are influenced by various factors including socio-economic status, geography, and access to services. Particular concerns include; lack of affordable and quality housing; travel required for some health services; fuel poverty; and income and employment. Rurality impacts on cost of living, with costs being 15-30% higher in rural communities.

Access to Health and Care Services - Primary care is delivered through a network of nine GP practices and Midwifery, Health Visiting, Community Nursing, Community Psychiatry, Social Care and Care at Home teams. There are two hospitals; Lawson Memorial Hospital in Golspie which also provides a GP led minor injury unit and mental health drop-in; and Migdale Hospital in Bonar Bridge which provides a range of inpatient and outpatient services. Accessing dentistry is a challenge for some communities involving travel to Dornoch, Golspie or practices in Caithness or Ross-Shire. Delivering healthcare to an ageing and sparse rural population and the recruitment and retention of health professionals and carers are all known challenges.

What people told us

Access to Healthcare

- Local medical services: a significant lack of local healthcare services, requiring trips to Inverness, with day return trips on public transport difficult from more remote parts of Sutherland.
- Home care: insufficient care at home for the elderly and vulnerable, with a reliance on friends and neighbours.
- Specialised care: need for more locally based NHS staff, dentists, and end-of-life care.
- Pharmacy services: desire for local pharmacies in rural parts of the County.
- Ambulance service – in particular patient transport to clinics/appointments at hospital
- Elderly care: the need for more carers and better support for the elderly population.

Health and Wellbeing

- Mental health services: more support needed for mental health and substance dependency services, especially for young people.
- Sport and fitness: suggestions for more sport and healthy activities, including outdoor gym circuits and use of swimming pools for rehabilitation.

Addressing Depopulation

Setting the context – issues, challenges and opportunities

Sutherland has experienced a decline in population, particularly working age people. This trend impacts local economies, reduces community vibrancy, and creates challenges in maintaining essential services. There is a projected decrease in the population of Sutherland of 15% to 2040. There is a particular concern over the declining population in relation to North West & Central Sutherland.

What people told us

- The declining and ageing population is seen as the outcome of other issues identified by communities and highlighted in the Area Place Plan including lack of availability of housing, access to services, work and the need to study outwith the County.
- Service levels are determined by demand, so there is concern that as services start to diminish as the population falls, (for example falling school rolls lead to fewer teachers reduced subject choices at secondary, and ultimately fewer schools), communities become less viable. The same concerns apply to healthcare, childcare, transport, shops, private business etc.
- Many young people choose not to return after studying or working elsewhere. This alongside the challenges associated with relocating to Sutherland for work both contribute to the declining and ageing population Career options become limited and there are fewer people to fill the vacancies that do exist leading to the current recruitment difficulties in sectors such as care at home and hospitality.
- There are fears that the County will become a holiday-only destination with no real community life, where homes are bought up for holiday/ second homes rather than lived in by people who will contribute to the community year-round.
- Suggested remedies include promoting Sutherland as a great place to live and work, providing long term funding for development officers to develop projects that strengthen communities, and ensuring that policy decisions are assessed for any depopulation impacts.

Community Capacity and Resilience

Setting the context - issues, challenges and opportunities

Sutherland is a vibrant community with many third sector and community initiatives aimed at improving wellbeing and reversing depopulation. Development Trusts and community groups play an important role in the County supporting engagement with communities and sustainable development through activities which range from community owned housing, seaweed farming, community energy projects tackling fuel poverty, growing projects, learning centres, community led tourism, family support, community transport and so much more.

The Sutherland Community Partnership (SCP) brings together public sector, third sector and communities to tackle identified inequalities. Northwest 2045 is a partnership of communities, trusts, landowners and public sector focussing on particular issues faced by remote rural north west Sutherland. Both are working on a range of priority issues including:

- Demographic challenges – depopulation, ageing population, declining school rolls
- Resilience - emergency, environmental, economic
- Economic Decline – strengthen business infrastructure
- Homes and Infrastructure – making sure affordable homes to buy and rent
- Connectivity – transport, digital communications, access to services
- Employment opportunities – making sure no one is left behind, more apprenticeships
- Poverty – reducing costs for families, improving access to services, developing community-based solutions
- Mental Health and Wellbeing – tackling isolation, access to services and support
- Transport – making sure communities have access to public and community transport options

What people told us

- Community centres and hubs: calls for more funding and support for community centres and the network of hubs which provide services such as day care, lunch clubs and activities
- Completion of the proposed health and social care hub in Tongue.
- Social activities: more support for community-led groups and activities to enhance social wellbeing.
- Assistance needed for heating and fuel costs in specific areas.
- Support for voluntary groups: recognition of the high engagement in the voluntary sector and the need for more support and long-term funding stability for development trusts and community organisations.
- Feeling neglected: people have expressed feelings of being overlooked and not listened to by public sector organisations
- Need for local democracy: there is a call for more opportunities to ensure that the voices of the community are heard and considered in decision making processes.
- Community facilities: suggestions for more facilities and activities, such as sports clubs, social clubs, and community support officers.
- Support for crofting and cultural activities: importance of supporting the crofting community as part of the area's culture and economy.

Place

Setting the context – issues, challenges and opportunities

Sutherland is home to vast peatlands, which are globally significant for carbon storage and biodiversity and were recognised in 2024 with the inscription of the Flow Country as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Efforts to restore and manage these peatlands aim to enhance their ecological value and mitigate climate change. The County also boasts stunning landscapes, including rugged coastlines and mountainous terrain, which are protected under various natural heritage designations and recognised through its status as the UNESCO North West Highland Geopark. The landscape also provides cultural identity for communities and the basis for significant economic activity through fishing and fish farming, crofting, forestry, estate management and tourism providing vital employment to rural communities.

What people told us

Environment and Climate

Comments on the environment covered a wide range of topics, both large and small-scale. Issues raised included:

- The importance of the landscape for local communities and for tourism, and the need to protect the environment from the impact of tourism in hotspots.
- Historical sites need to be respected, in particular on the NC500 where visitors have held parties, camped, lit fires and otherwise damaged historic sites.
- Biodiversity and conservation: emphasis on the need for biodiversity assessments, education on improving biodiversity, and protecting natural habitats like peatlands from renewable developments.
- Coastal and sand dune erosion.
- Marine pollution.
- The impact of wildfires on wildlife
- Support for peatland restoration, and where appropriate, tree planting.
- Opportunities for environment friendly community-led developments included micro-hydro and seaweed farming.
- Encouragement for sustainability and reusable goods, not just small-scale recycling efforts.

- The bulky uplift scheme is too expensive for some households
- People also spoke about the immediate environment in which they live – in particular grass cutting (and the fact that clippings are not removed) dog mess and rats / vermin.

- Windfarm and pylons: this was the environmental issue that generated the majority of comments. Windfarms, and more recently proposals for a new transmission line through east and central Sutherland, have been significant and polarising issues, particularly in east and central Sutherland where much of the onshore windfarm development in Sutherland has taken place. Comments related to the impact on the landscape, the impact on communities and tourism and the environmental impacts during and after construction. Others questioned the need for onshore development when offshore windfarms are more productive, and why the transmission line could not run under the sea.
- There were also concerns raised about proposed battery facilities and the risk of fire.
- Need for ongoing discussions between developers, communities and SSEN (who are responsible for the new transmission line).

Housing

Setting the context – issues, challenges and opportunities

Many rural communities in Sutherland face significant housing challenges including limited housing stock, high property prices, prevalence of second homes, and a lack of rental options. Combined with a lack of affordable homes to buy and rent, housing has become a key focus in Sutherland. In a recent Highland Council survey – Have Your Say Highland, affordable housing came up as the highest priority for people in terms of 'place'. The number of social rented houses in the county was 1,136, with just 109 of these becoming available for re-let in that year.

What people told us

- There is a need for more houses of all tenures. Housing is needed in particular for young families and workers, including those wanting to move to the area to take up employment. It was noted that there are people on the housing list with fewer points who do not get prioritised but still need housing.
- There has been some development of social housing, for example, in Dornoch and Golspie, and local people have benefitted.

- Development Trusts in some communities (for example in north west Sutherland) are trying to take forward community housing projects, but the costs, time and expertise required present significant challenges for community groups, who usually need paid project officers to lead developments as well as funding for feasibility work, planning etc.
- It was felt that the impact a few houses can have in a small community appears not to be recognised by decision-makers in comparison to bigger schemes, particularly in and around Inverness.
- Housing needs to be affordable. Private rents are much higher than social housing rents and are not affordable for all households. Mixed tenure/ ownership schemes were also mentioned, including the First Time Buyers (LIFT) scheme as good ways to get people on the housing ladder.
- The link between housing and work was clearly made – there are vacancies in Sutherland yet people willing to take jobs are unable to find somewhere to live – this affects everyone: teachers, health professionals, hospitality workers, carers.
- Housing maintenance was not raised as an issue, and there was satisfaction that adaptations to facilitate disabled access are carried out.
- Empty homes, second homes and homes used for short term lets were all identified as additional sources of pressure on housing. The increase in this type of tourism business has not positively impacted population figures. People suggested solutions such as housing burdens, control of short term lets and purchase of empty homes as possible solutions, although others recognised the economic benefit that tourism brings.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

Setting the context – issues, challenges and opportunities

Sutherland is a large county with an extensive road network, approximately 1350km in length, serving scattered communities over a large sparsely populated area. Investment in road maintenance has increased in the past 4 years, but previously a backlog had built up which is still being addressed. The road network is vital for Sutherland communities to access services, work and education, with the car being the main mode of travel. For those without access to a car public transport is vital but given the sparse and scattered nature of the population, regular public transport is challenging to provide. Community transport fills some of the gaps.

Digital connectivity also varies across Sutherland. While most communities have reasonable mobile coverage in settlement centres and along some main roads, outwith those areas coverage is very patchy. Likewise broadband connectivity is poor in some communities, particularly in the north west, where the R100 Broadband rollout has not yet arrived and where the Scottish Broadband Voucher scheme

does not cover the costs of installing broadband to small settlements, forcing some communities to rely on wireless networks with limited capacity.

What people told us

Roads and pavements

- Comments included complaints about potholes and the general poor levels of maintenance in some areas. The pressure caused by HGVs and motorhomes and tourist traffic on the NC500 were highlighted as causes. While improvements to the roads are now being recognised, the number of comments about the roads indicate the levels of concern in communities.
- Other roads issues included signage, particularly on single track roads and frustration with tourist drivers often in motorhomes who are less experienced driving on single track roads.
- Winter maintenance was raised in relation to some rural routes.
- Parking and overnight camping – highlighted as an issue, with people suggesting bans on overnight parking in some locations alongside better enforcement. Yellow lines and parking charges were also mentioned for specific locations in Bonar Bridge and Lochinver.

Public Transport

- People were concerned with the lack of public transport across Sutherland, specifically trips to Ullapool, Inverness and Tain for shopping, with the difficulty of day return trips from some places also mentioned.
- Also highlighted were later (after school and evening buses) for social activities especially for young people, and availability of transport to access the countryside.
- Young carers were identified as a group reliant on public transport whose needs are not met.
- Transport connections, particularly to early services south from Inverness, were highlighted.
- More support for community transport was suggested as a possible solution.

- Broadband and mobile were highlighted as vital for remote working which enables people to remain or move to rural Sutherland to work. However, the connectivity is variable with slow broadband speeds/ poor mobile connections in parts of rural Sutherland, and limited choice of suppliers
- Concerns about the digital switchover of landlines, which will not work during power cuts, isolating those without mobile coverage.

Prosperity

Setting the context - issues, challenges and opportunities

Education in Sutherland is shaped by its rural nature, with schools serving small, dispersed communities. School rolls across the County are falling which could in the longer term mean schools being mothballed and/or closed causing disruption and concern in communities. The low school population evidences the challenges of job opportunities making it difficult for families to stay or settle in the County. Sutherland's work economy is shaped by its rural and remote nature with people employed in key sectors like tourism, fishing, renewable energy and agriculture. The public sector is also a big employer in the area.

Sutherland's landscapes, history and wildlife offer a world class visitor experience including NC500. Tourism significantly contributes to the economy, supporting jobs and businesses. Balancing this opportunity with preserving natural beauty and community wellbeing takes careful planning. People across the area say that they wish to welcome tourists and manage 'hot spots' to maximise enjoyment for all.

What people told us

Employment and Economic Opportunities

- Lack of jobs: there's a strong emphasis on the need for more diverse and year-round job opportunities, especially for young people and teenagers.
- Investment in apprenticeships: suggestions for more apprenticeships and schemes to plan for the future and support local businesses and in particular trades.

- Economic focus: need to make the most of Sutherland's areas of competitive advantage for example developing expertise in peatland restoration.

Support for Local Business

- Better broadband and digital connectivity to attract businesses and support remote working.
- Support local businesses to stay open year-round, benefiting both locals and visitors.
- Impact of large retailers: concerns about large retailers affecting the variety and success of local businesses.
- Work with small businesses to promote employment and economic stability.

Education and Childcare

- Secure teaching jobs: concerns about the stability and availability of teaching positions.
- School roll and subjects: issues with decreasing school enrolment and the need for schools to offer a wide range of subjects.
- Childcare availability: the need for more childcare facilities to support working parents including new, rural, flexible childcare models
- Educational opportunities: calls for more apprenticeships, further education opportunities, and support for school activities.

Tourism and Seasonal Work

- Seasonal nature of tourism: the need for initiatives to support year-round tourism and reduce reliance on seasonal work.
- Impact of tourism on local services: over-tourism affecting local services.
- Policing and safety: calls for more policing and cameras in overnight hotspots.
- Visitor levy: mixed opinions on the visitor levy, with some suggesting it would be an unreasonable burden on small businesses and should be axed or applied differently.

Young People's priorities

- Youth activities and support: calls for more funding for youth groups, after-school clubs, and sports activities.
- Outdoor learning opportunities: utilising the area's natural resources for educational and job opportunities.

- Opportunities for young people: lack of local opportunities for young people post-high school.
- Entrepreneurship education: suggestions for teaching entrepreneurship in high schools.
- Youth space funding: calls for funding for youth spaces and activities.
- Job opportunities: the importance of creating jobs and training opportunities to retain young people.

5 How the Plan Will be Used

The Plan will provide all those with an interest in or those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in Sutherland with a helpful tool to:

- Establish a shared understanding of local needs and opportunities.
- Inform decisions on service design and delivery.
- Provide evidence to support funding bids for projects.
- Encourage public, private, and community collaboration for long-term sustainable growth.
- Make best use of available resources and forward plan for when funding and investment becomes available.
- Link with local and national decision-making processes, influencing public services, budgeting, and planning policies to reflect the needs and aspirations of the Sutherland community.

The intention is that this should be an evolving plan, In the first instance an action plan will be created to set out the route for delivery of the priorities within the Sutherland Area Place Plan. The action plan will seek to:

- Further understand and develop each priority, in discussion across all sectors
- Set out to identify the best mechanism for delivery and the range of partners to be involved
- Assess potential barriers
- Assess potential funding opportunities
- Provide estimates of timescales.

Not all priorities will be achievable in the short to medium term, however, priorities within this plan have the widest community support and this plan, along with appendices, can be used to evidence and inform developments and funding decisions.

Appendices
Eàrr-ràdhan

Appendix A   Wider Plan Landscape

Area Place Plans sit within the wider strategic context and also exert some influence on both strategic and operational plans on a Highland-wide and locality planning arena. This appendix situates the plans as well as signposting to those wider documents.

Highland Wide Plans, Programmes & Documents:

Highland Delivery Plan (HDP) – Our Future Highland:
Sets out the programme of Highland Council for the five-year period up to 2027. It makes commitments to secure social and economic transformation on behalf of Highland communities. The operational delivery plan shows how Highland Council will deliver on these commitments through a major programme of transformation for our people and places, working in collaboration with others to create a vibrant and sustainable Highland area. It has a range of workstreams, programmes and projects measured by the Performance Plan or by specific service plans and is also the means by which the Council will deliver on its three-year budget strategy (2024-2027). It also shows

how the Council will work with others to implement commitments expressed in the Community Planning Partnership's Highland Outcome Improvement Plan. The Plan is available here - Our priorities | Delivery Plan 2024-2027

Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP):

The new Local Development Plan for Highland is currently being prepared. Local Development Plans show how local places will change in the future, including where development should and should not happen. The new plan will be place-based, people-centred and delivery-focused and sit within the national context as set out in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The aim is for the HLDP to be place based (so that it is relevant, accessible and useful to people with an interest in their place), developed in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders and based on robust evidence so that it is deliverable. Evidence gathering is in progress and related engagement including consultation events being held from late January to early May 2025. The work programme includes preparation and Council approval of the formal Evidence Report between mid and end of 2025 and a subsequent Gate Check, with the Proposed Plan stage towards the end of 2026. Information on the HLDP is available here - Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP) | Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP) | The Highland Council

Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP):

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires each Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to prepare and publish a Local Outcome Improvement Plan which sets out the local outcomes which the CPP will prioritise for improvement. Tackling inequalities will be a specific focus. The HCPP works towards the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP), which outlines aspirations for Highland and the outcomes community planning partners aim to achieve. The HOIP's vision is to maximise opportunities and tackle inequality, building a thriving Highlands for all. The vision is driven by three strategic priorities: People; Place; Prosperity. The revised 2024 -2027 HOIP is available to download here. Further information on the HCPP can be found on the About HCPP page.

Highland Investment Plan (HIP):

The Highland Investment Plan (HIP) commits £2.1 billion of capital funding over a twenty-year period, based on the ring fencing of 2% council tax per annum, or an equivalent revenue stream. These funds will be capitalised to create an investment fund that will be used to tackle the major capital challenges that Highland Council faces: transport and roads; schools and community facilities; depots and offices –

as part of work towards a single public estate and integrated community operating model. Thurso is one of the priority areas targeted to benefit from this funding - [Highland Investment Plan | Highland Investment Plan | The Highland Council](#)

Local Housing Strategy (LHS):

Housing is one of life's basic needs. Everyone should have a good quality home that they can afford to live in and heat, which will in turn help them to enjoy better health and achieve their full potential. Good housing also contributes to stronger communities that benefit everyone living in them. The Council's current Local Housing Strategy, co-produced with delivery partners, stakeholders and local residents sets out aims for housing over the next five years and what will be done to increase the supply of homes so there are enough houses in the right places to meet housing needs; support people to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes and communities; prevent and respond to homelessness and make sure people have the right help to let them make decisions on their housing options; and improve the condition of housing and minimise fuel poverty to improve the quality, comfort and affordability of homes.

The vision for Highland is that *"Everyone in Highland has access to a quality home which is attainable, affordable and supports the local economy in a sustainable, connected community where people wish to live, work and study."* The Strategy can be accessed here - [Housing strategy | Housing strategy | The Highland Council](#)

Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP):

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan sits alongside the Local Housing Strategy (LHS), with the current SHIP setting out how investment in affordable housing will be directed over the five-year period 2024/25 to 2028/29 to achieve the priorities identified in the LHS. It contributes to the national Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP), assisting in fulfilling the Scottish Government's commitment to deliver new affordable homes both during this Parliament as well as to extend delivery beyond that period.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/84033/10_strategic_housing_investment_plan_2025%E2%80%932030

'Blue Light' Services

Operational delivery plans for local policing, fire and rescue services:
- [Local Fire & Rescue Plan, Highland 2021-2024](#)
- [Highland Local Policing Plan, 2023-2026](#)

- [North Highland Area Command Priorities (Police)](#)

Highlands & Islands Enterprise Strategy:

Sets out priorities for economic development to ensure a greener, fairer and more resilient region.

https://www.hie.co.uk/media/vczc0zca/hie-strategy-2023-28-final-031023.pdf

Local Plans, Programmes & Documents:

Caithness & Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan)

The current strategic plan for land use, development and place making across the area; including allocations for housing, community facilities, leisure, open space, business, retail, tourism and industry. In due course, the CaSPlan will be replaced by the forthcoming Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP).

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

The associated **Delivery Programme** outlines priorities for development and investment for each settlement area:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/28972/highland_delivery_programme

Specific opportunities for regeneration of Brora, Dornoch and Golspie town centres are identified in the **Caithness & Sutherland Town Centre Strategy**: https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1225069/caithness_and_sutherland_town_centre_strategy

Local Place Planning:
Local Place Plans (LPPs) are community-led documents that aim to easily convey a community's proposals for the development or use of land and buildings in their local area. Introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, LPPs are a way for Community Councils or Community-controlled bodies to engage with their local community, to think about how to make their place better, to agree priorities, and to take action (often working with others). Local Place Plans | Local Place Plans | The Highland Council

The following Community Councils are considering preparation and submission of LPPs:

- Assynt
- Bettyhill, Altnaharra and Strathnaver
- Brora
- Dornoch
- Edderton
- Golspie
- Helmsdale & District
- Kinlochbervie
- Kyle of Sutherland
- Lairg
- Melvich
- Rogart
- Tongue, Melness and Skerray

Other community-led plans:

North West 2045: a vision for North West Highland, to achieve six priority goals identified through community engagement:

- Affordable housing for young people and families
- High speed broadband access for all
- Rural hubs to support businesses, homeworking and delivery of services
- A healthy food scheme based on local produce
- A new Regional Land Use Partnership to support green economic recovery
- New forms of local democracy to give communities a greater role in decision-making.

https://www.northwest2045.scot/

Ardgay, Creich & Lairg Community Action Plan: http://ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Ardgay-Creich-Lairg-Community-Action-Plan-2022-final1.pdf

Sutherland Community Partnership

The Sutherland Community Partnership (SCP) is one of nine Community Partnerships across Highland dedicated to tackling inequalities. Bringing together public sector partners, third sector organisations, and local agencies, SCP serves as a collaborative forum to identify shared local priorities and coordinated actions. Through shared resources, joint initiatives, and collaborative working, the SCP aims to improve service delivery and address community needs. This collective effort reflects a commitment to community engagement and making meaningful, positive changes that benefit everyone in the Sutherland area.

The Partnership works across identified priorities:

- Transport
- Employability
- Poverty: Fuel Poverty Report; Food Strategy
- Sutherland Cares: Sutherland Pathfinder Reports
- Homes for People and Infrastructure

Click on the links below to view available locality and community plans:

- Ardgay and District
- Assynt
- Brora
- Dornoch
- Durness
- Edderton
- Golspie
- Helmsdale

- [Kinlochbervie](#)
- [Lairg](#)
- [Melness-Tongue-Skerray](#)
- [North Sutherland](#)
- [Rogart](#)
- [Scourie](#)

Additional reports available from Sutherland Community Partnership:
- [Adult Health Sutherland 2023](#)
- [Demography – Sutherland 2022](#)
- [My Life in the Highlands and Islands Caithness and Sutherland Report](#)
- [Area Profile Sutherland](#)
- [Sutherland Survey Responses](#)
- [Children & Young People's Health & Wellbeing Profile Sutherland 2023](#)

Envisioning the Future of Public Transport for the North of Mainland Scotland in 2030

Focus North commissioned a detailed local transport study from innovation consultancy Urban Foresight. Their research included a survey of local residents and stakeholders that captured more than 350 responses. The responses identified four main desires from public transport users:
- increased bus and train services
- affordable fares
- better connections between transport modes
- a shift towards sustainable transport

The main challenges were:
- infrequent and unreliable services

- long journeys
- poor infrastructure for active travel

Urban Foresight's report did not aim to completely move away from private car usage, which it recognises as unavoidable due to the remote communities in the region. Instead, it focuses on reducing reliance on private cars by providing enhanced public transport options. Urban Foresight proposed the following solutions:

- a network of electric, community-owned vehicles offering flexible routes
- mini-mobility hubs with bike sharing
- consolidated booking and payment platforms
- oversight by a community-led organisation

Under the most ambitious modelling scenario, the above changes would reduce private car journeys, by 15% and create a three-fold increase in bus transport. However, the solution requires a significant inward investment (running a fleet of 18 electric minivans over 10 years would cost upwards of £8m). The full Urban Foresight report is now available at:

https://focusnorth.scot/wpcontent/uploads/2024/04/Future_Transport_NScotland_Final.pdf

Forestry & Land Scotland: Sutherland Land Management Plans:
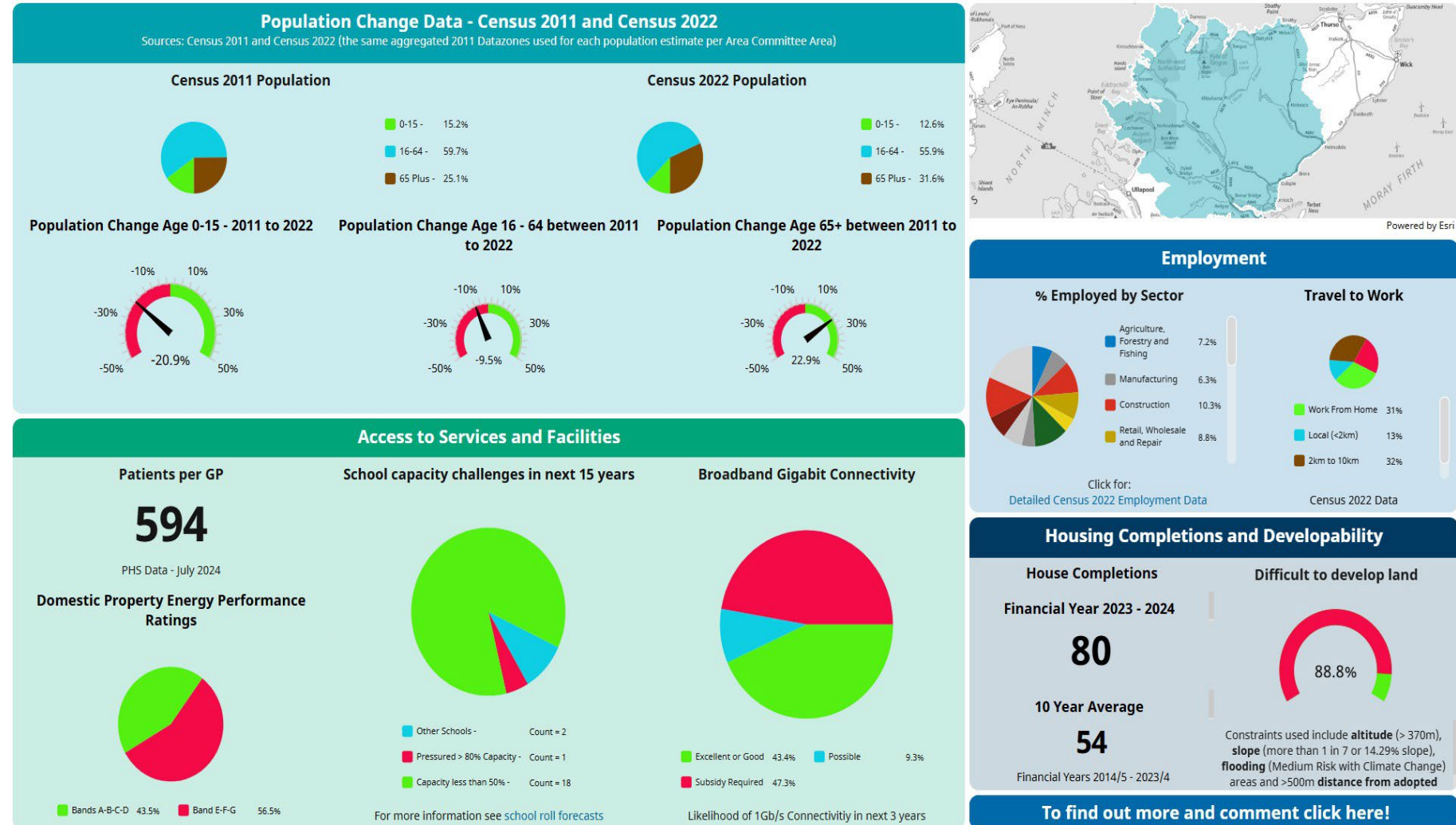
https://forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/planning/active/

Flow Country Management Plan

https://theflowcountry.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2023-02-20-The-Flow-Country-Proposed-World-Heritage-Site-Management-Plan-Nomination-Draft-final-proofed.pdf

Appendix B Population Statistics and Area Information

Introduction

Highland Local Development Plan Area Profile Summary

Select Area
Sutherland County

Population Change Data - Census 2011 and Census 2022
Sources: Census 2011 and Census 2022 (the same aggregated 2011 Datazones used for each population estimate per Area Committee Area)

Census 2011 Population

0-15 -	15.2%
16-64 -	59.7%
65 Plus -	25.1%

Census 2022 Population

0-15 -	12.6%
16-64 -	55.9%
65 Plus -	31.6%

Population Change Age 0-15 - 2011 to 2022

-20.9%

Population Change Age 16 - 64 between 2011 to 2022

-9.5%

Population Change Age 65+ between 2011 to 2022

22.9%

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Employment

% Employed by Sector

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	7.2%
Manufacturing	6.3%
Construction	10.3%
Retail, Wholesale and Repair	8.8%

Click for:
Detailed Census 2022 Employment Data

Travel to Work

Work From Home	31%
Local (<2km)	13%
2km to 10km	32%

Census 2022 Data

Access to Services and Facilities

Patients per GP

594

PHS Data - July 2024

Domestic Property Energy Performance Ratings

Bands A-B-C-D	43.5%	
Band E-F-G	56.5%	

School capacity challenges in next 15 years

Other Schools -	Count = 2
Pressured > 80% Capacity -	Count = 1
Capacity less than 50% -	Count = 18

For more information see school roll forecasts

Broadband Gigabit Connectivity

Excellent or Good	43.4%	Possible	9.3%
Subsidy Required	47.3%		

Likelihood of 1Gb/s Connectivitiy in next 3 years

Housing Completions and Developability

House Completions

Financial Year 2023 - 2024

80

10 Year Average

54

Financial Years 2014/5 - 2023/4

Difficult to develop land

88.8%

Constraints used include **altitude** (> 370m), **slope** (more than 1 in 7 or 14.29% slope), **flooding** (Medium Risk with Climate Change) areas and >500m **distance from adopted**

To find out more and comment click here!

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Figure 20 Dashboard summary for Sutherland The full dashboard is available [online]   .
The principal settlements are (main settlements defined within the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan) Ardgay, Bonar Bridge, Brora, Dornoch, Edderton, Golspie, Helmsdale, Lairg, Lochinver and Tongue.

Sutherland covers a large part of north Highland and is distinctly a county of two halves. Most settlement is concentrated within mid and east Sutherland closer to the more productive agricultural land, with a drier climate and more sheltered coastal ports. This east coast also has better transport connections along the A9 and Far North (rail) Line. North and west Sutherland is more remote, less settled, less connected

and contains land less capable of productive cultivation. However, it does contain exceptional natural and cultural heritage and therefore can sustain significant tourism-based employment. Aquaculture, crofting and deeper sea fishing from the ports at Lochinver and Kinlochbervie provide some economic diversification. The lack of a critical mass local population means that higher order facilities and services require a long and often unreliable journey particularly if made by public transport. More positively, this fragility promotes better community and individual self-reliance and resilience.

How well does the area function?

As stated above, north, west and parts of mid Sutherland have socio-economic fragility issues. There is no practicable solution to geographic realities such as physical constraints and remoteness and therefore bolstering the principal settlements within the area and their digital and transport connectivity to other larger centres appears the best way forward. Innovative public transport solutions have been trialled already. Resettlement of previously cleared glens has been suggested but will require a high level of public subsidy to make these areas suitable in employment and public service provision terms.

South and east Sutherland functions better because of its more benign and productive natural resources and better connectivity. However, challenges still remain whether that's revitalising the town centres of Brora, Dornoch and Golspie, addressing the coastal and fluvial flood risk that affects all three settlements or tackling water and sewerage capacity issues.

Facts and figures

Infrastructure Capacities

Digital Connectivity – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (1Gb/s) (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) digital connectivity. Within Sutherland there are 9,775 premises 4,251 (44%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 4,625 (47%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 899 (9%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.

School Capacities – there are no current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints at any school within Sutherland. See school roll forecasts for more information.

Water and Sewerage Capacities – there is spare water treatment works capacity at all main settlements apart from Lochinver but water and sewerage network capacity issues affect all main settlements. In terms of sewage works capacity then Dornoch, Brora, Golspie, Lairg and Tongue can accommodate further growth but Ardgay, Bonar Bridge, Edderton, Helmsdale and Lochinver have major constraints.

Significant Road Capacity Constraints and Investments – vehicle numbers and congestion aren't a year-round capacity issue. However, road safety and maintenance issues predominate with limited investment targeted to address these matters.

Health Facility Capacity – during 2022/23 the Lawson Memorial Hospital in Golspie had a 99.8% record of seeing A&E patients within 4 hours. Other community healthcare provision is available via the Migdale Hospital at Bonar Bridge and will be via the new Tongue Health and Social Care Hub. GP practice provision is spread across 9 practices with all but the Golspie Medical Practice having a patients per GP ratio of below the Highland average.

Other Key Facts and Figures

A summary of this information is available in the HDLP dashboard.
- Population Total - (Census 2022) 13,487 (5.7% of Highland population)
- Population Change - (Census 2011-2022) -3.1% drop compared to Scotland and Highland growth (Scotland +2.7%, HLDP +1.8%) – north, west and central Sutherland showed the largest fall
- Age profile (Census 2022) 0-16 (12.5%) 65+ (28%) (a far older profile than that for Highland and Scotland) – falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend across Highland with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023
- Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements (Council Tax Data 2023) 54.4% Households – (Census 2022) 6,074 occupied households
- House Completions - long term average 51 per year which is 6% of Highland long term average

- completions – full details in the [housing completions dashboard](#)   .
- Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has a lower (6%) proportion than Highland (10%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating and a far higher (28%) proportion than Highland (13%) with worst EPC rating of F or G.
- Poverty – the most recent [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020)](#)   highlights that
- most settlements have average deprivation scores close to the Scotland average – only Helmsdale and Lochinver are worse than that average across the whole settlement but not to a significant degree.
- Visitors to Highland – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK, most (75%) were older or retired, the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape, half stayed in serviced accommodation, and hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities. The Caithness and Sutherland Tourism Destination Recovery Strategy 2021-2024 reported that a significant portion) but 48.5% commute more than 10km to work (much higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- Earnings – within the Golspie and Lairg Travel to Work Area, in 2023, the gross average full time weekly pay was £683.20
- Working from Home and Commuting – (Ward data from Census 2022) – 38% of the workforce work mainly from home in North, West and Central Sutherland (higher than the Highland and Scotland averages) and 45% commute more than 10km to work (higher than the Highland and Scotland averages). Within the East Sutherland and Edderton Ward, 30% (similar to the Highland and Scotland averages) and 42% commute more than 10km to work (higher than the Highland and Scotland averages)
- Unemployment – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active
- Employment sectors – (2020 HIE data for Caithness and Sutherland) the top 3 employment sectors are human health and social work (18.8%), wholesale and retail (12.5%) and accommodation and food services (15.6%)
- Environmental and other constraints - 89% of the Sutherland area is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 and 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).

Place Plans and Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area. Where one of these plans falls partly within a number of our HLDP Area Profiles, we have referenced it only under the profile for the area in which it is mainly located.

Local Place Plans

Local Place Plans in The Highland Council area can be found via the Council's Local Place Plan Register, which comprises:

[Directory of Local Place Plans](#)

[LPP online map](#) .

Completed and Registered

None to date.

In Preparation

- Bettyhill, Altnaharra and Strathnaver Local Place Plan
- Dornoch Area Local Place Plan
- Durness Local Place Plan#
- Edderton Going Forward" Plan
- Golspie Village Plan
- Helmsdale and District Local Place Plan
- Kinlochbervie Local Place Plan
- Kyle of Sutherland Local Place Plan
- Lairg Local Place Plan
- Melvich Local Place Plan
- Rogart Local Place Plan
- Tongue, Melness and Skerray Local Place Plan

Area Place Plan

In collaboration with Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust and Sutherland Community Partnership, The Highland Council has prepared this Area Place Plan (APP) which collates an overview of local priorities development, investment and service delivery across the area. Anticipated to be adopted in June 2025, priorities will be identified through stakeholder and public engagement in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. The APP will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

NorthWest 2045 Place Plan

NorthWest 2045 is a Place Plan that represents the North West Sutherland area and has been prepared across a number of community groups. It focuses on three visionary aims: to make the North West Highlands an attractive place to live and work; to build towards a diverse and sustainable local economy; and to empower communities to shape their own future. Practically this equates to six shared goals:

- Affordable housing for young people and families;
- High speed broadband access for all
- Rural hubs to support businesses, homeworking and delivery of services
- A healthy food scheme based on local produce
- A new Regional Land Use Partnership to support green economic recovery
- New forms of local democracy to give communities a greater role in decision-making.

Regional Land Use Partnership Pilot project

A Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) Pilot project is being pursued in North West Sutherland. This RLUP Pilot will enable natural capital-led consideration of how to maximise the contribution that our land can make to addressing the twin climate and biodiversity crises. This RLUP Pilot will also help to optimise land use in a fair and inclusive way – meeting local and national objectives and supporting Scotland's just transition to net-zero.
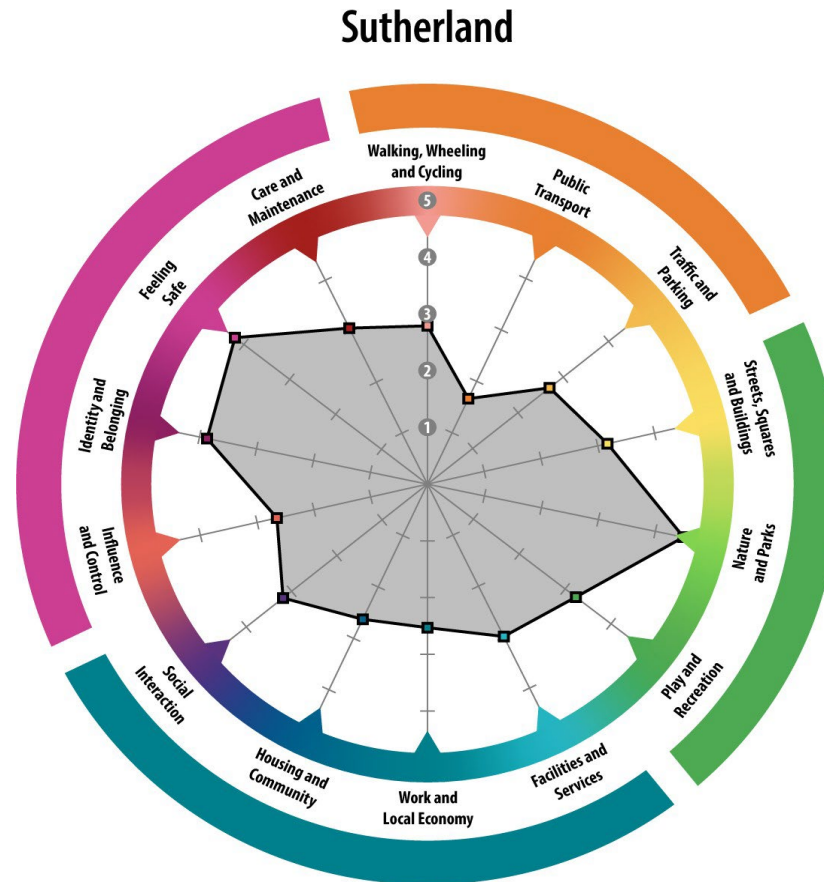
Community Partnership Plan

Sutherland Community Partnership (SCP) has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other

key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the SCP area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive. SCP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area. The key themes and priorities that Sutherland Community Partnership are working towards are: Transport; Employability; Poverty; Sutherland Cares Sutherland Pathfinder Reports; and, Homes for People and Infrastructure. Several community plans have also been developed. The information can be accessed online

Appendix C   Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).

Figure 21 Sutherland Place Standard results

Sutherland Average Score (3.0) is joint second highest among sub-regional areas in Highland.
Response rate for the Place Standard Survey: 113 online responses, plus four HLH facilitated workshops with local young people.

Highest scores for area
- Nature and Parks (4.5); Feeling Safe (4.2); Pride in Place (3.9); Streets, Squares and Buildings (3.3); Play and Recreation (3.2).

Lowest scores for area
- Public Transport (1.7); Work and Local Economy (2.5); Housing and Community (2.6) **Domains for which Sutherland scores low compared with rest of Highland:** Work and Local Economy (2.5) scored joint lowest in Highland.
- Public Transport (1.7) scored joint third lowest in Highland.

Domains for which Sutherland compares well with rest of Highland:
- Spaces grouping (3.6) scored highest in Highland; within which:
- Streets, Squares and Buildings (3.2) and Nature and Parks (4.5) both scored highest in Highland. Play and Recreation (3.2) scored second highest in Highland.
- Civic and Stewardship grouping (3.4) scored highest in Highland; within which, Influence and Control (2.7), Identify and Belonging (3.9), Feeling Safe (4.2), Care and Maintenance (3.0) all scored highest in Highland.

Themes arising from public feedback
- Appreciation for local community facilities, village halls and outdoor spaces, such as playgrounds – particularly local post offices and medical services. While community efforts to maintain public spaces are appreciated, concerns raised over general maintenance; including, roads, streets, buildings, green spaces. Access to a wider range of services and facilities is a significant concern, particularly in more remote areas – including greengrocers, bakeries, limited opening hours of libraries and lack of dining options in some settlements as a difficulty for both residents and visitors. This difficulty is compounded by lack of public transport options to access services at a distance.
- Narrow footpaths and lack of dedicated cycle paths, particularly along the A9 make cycling dangerous.
- Demand for more connected and safer routes for walking, especially to schools and shops. Poor road conditions (potholes, uneven surfaces) pose safety risks for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Calls for more frequent, reliable and affordable public transport, with improved links to shopping areas, medical facilities, schools

and integration with rail services.

- Concerns over the seasonal pressures arising from NC500 tourism: demand for increased motorhome parking, parking enforcement, traffic management,
- Concerns about the poor condition of some existing housing stock, as well as demand for investment in a variety of housing types; including new, energy efficient and affordable housing for social rent, long-term mid-market rental and purchase, particularly for first time buyers.

Concerns arising for Children and Young People:
- Difficulty getting to schools, shops and facilities by walking or cycling. Concerns about safe routes to school due to high-speed traffic, lack / poor condition of pavements and lack of street lighting in some areas.
- Desire for improved morning bus services for young people accessing further education and employment, including links to Inverness.
- Concern that valued outdoor spaces often depend upon maintenance by elderly volunteers.

Appendix D   Local Living Outcomes

In the city of Inverness and Highland's towns and villages, the local living concept aims to reinforce and create new neighbourhoods that are attractive, safe, walkable places where people of all ages and abilities can access services, greenspace, learning and leisure within a walk of around 20 minutes (ten minutes to any destination(s) and 20 minute return journey).

The Highland Council are developing a tool to help assess how well our places meet the principles of local living. A review of approaches taken elsewhere in the UK was carried out to inform an appropriate methodology for the Highland Council area. Thereafter, a map-based tool was developed using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to plot the location of a variety of services including shops, greenspace, leisure and learning within over 100 of Highland's largest settlements. GIS was then used to measure the accessibility to these services within a ten minute walking distance (800m) and presented the findings on an easy to use interactive map.

Scottish Government Guidance and the Council recognise that communities and businesses have an important role to play in informing local living. As such the Council held a public consultation on the map based local living tool. Views were sought on the tool in terms of the services included, the level of importance given to each service, accuracy and what approaches we could take to rural areas.

The consultation ran for a nine week period from the 17 June to 16 August 2024. The consultation was publicised in a number of ways:

- issuing two Council Press Releases;
- through social media (Council's Facebook page, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn);
- by email to all Community Councils, those on the Development Plans consultation database and other interest groups;
- requesting libraries to display posters, provide weblinks and assistance; and
- officers took a stall at the Highland Youth Parliament 2024 at Inverness Leisure.

Feedback was sought using an online form. The comments were received from a range of parties, including individuals, community council's and community development organisations. A summary of comments and responses is provided below.

Once finalised, the tool will then form an important part of the evidence base for our new Highland Local Development Plan. It will help us prepare a settlement hierarchy for Highland, consider which areas may be suitable for new development, and the kinds of services and

infrastructure needed to support them. It can also help assess new development proposals against the principles of local living and may be used by other Council services to inform future infrastructure investment decisions.

The mapped Local Living results are available in the Council's [online mapping tool](#).

In the Sutherland County Committee Area we surveyed **52160 Hex Cell** Of these
- **17920** - fall within SDAs or the area of Growing Settlements
- **2115** Cells contain the **4455** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells) Within these Residential Cells:
- **76.5% of residential properties** are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (1886)** or
- **Highly Walkable (1523)**
- **6.7% of residential properties (296)** have Few or No Walkable services
- The **Average Local Living Total score for a Residential Property** in one of these Residential Cells in the Sutherland County Committee Area Is **10.3** (out of a maximum possible of 16)
- **Brora SDA** has the highest average residential score (at **12.8** per property)

Appendix 3 Sutherland Engagement Comments

Location	THEMES/ISSUES - Population
Bettyhill	Desperately need housing and childcare to allow folk to move here as jobs available
Bettyhill	Affordable housing and lack of childcare
Bettyhill	Properly resource schools. The pupil teacher ratio is not good enough in small communities. People need subject choices
Bettyhill	State of the roads, especially NC 500
Golspie	People leave
Golspie	Depopulation is a problem in very remote areas
Golspie	A good place to live and hopefully attract people to live here
Golspie	Golspie is great
Golspie	Depopulation issues should drive more focus on the provision of homes
Bonar Bridge	Industrialisation of Kyle of Sutherland by "Renewable Energy Develop" will further population and wellbeing of existing residents
Bonar Bridge	For the Highland Council to get a people pusher to let people know what the area holds - tourist shops, bus, cruise, businesses, estate agents north of Inverness. Push the area.
Bonar Bridge	Training skills for young people to stay in the area
Bonar Bridge	Require families to support the local rural Bonar Bridge-Ardgay golf club
Bonar Bridge	Falling population in Sutherland is a huge problem - also the population balance young/older - Ensure that all the policies are audited to make sure that they do not add to their problems and preferable being improvements
KLB	Housing & jobs together
KLB	Keep working people in area so as not to become a complete holiday home village
KLB	Housing is a problem - holiday homes? Too expensive and not fair on young people
Lochinver	More carers for elderly
Lochinver	Work with small businesses to promote employment
Lochinver	Lower rent for non-working people
Lochinver	Qs: 1 Investment 2: Build Houses
Lochinver	Sustainable School Roll
Lochinver	Long term funding for development officers

Location	ISSUES/THEMES - Housing
Bettyhill	Houses should be for local people who will live and work here, not second homes
Bettyhill	Desperate need for family homes – new builds and affordable to run
Bettyhill	More housing! More support for community housing initiatives – including paid staff time
Bettyhill	Major developments in Tongue area, but no housing available
Bettyhill	Need a balance between tourism and need for houses to live in
Bettyhill	Second homes council tax like in Wales will lead to reduced house prices
Bettyhill	Need for affordable housing
Golspie	Housing for families and young people affordable
Golspie	No teachers' houses
Golspie	Private rents very high
Golspie	Private rents are high; not enough public sector housing
Golspie	Council houses have been improved including remove the steps to improve access at my house
Golspie	People with lower housing points still need to be housed
Golspie	More affordable housing a moral imperative; estate properties falling down
Golspie	Affordable housing in Golspie but new houses have been built, and local people have moved in
Golspie	There is a huge distinction between a second home and a holiday let in terms of economic benefit to the community and economy
Golspie	The housing LIFT scheme was good but no use if you are just on the list
Golspie	Bulky uplift is too expensive – used to be regular pickup that was free every six weeks
KLB	Stop holiday homes and build more housing
KLB	We need more housing, spread over local area & not just in KLB
KLB	Shortage of crofts
Lochinver	More housing for families
Lochinver	Income support for families or disabled people
Lochinver	Homes being improved without costing so much
Lochinver	More council houses
Lochinver	Compulsory purchase of empty property
Lochinver	Housing burdens
Lochinver	Affordable energy efficient variety of houses
Lochinver	Short-term let control

Lochinver	Need housing for Locals Affordable - Not 2nd homes Air B&B Glamping etc
Lochinver	Income support for elderly people
Lochinver	ADT are building 10 affordable homes...
Lochinver	Bettyhill 10 homes in each of the 100 townships
Lochinver	Affordable housing
Lochinver	1000 affordable homes built between renewables

Location	ISSUES/THEMES – Learning, Work & The Economy
KLB	Secure teaching jobs
KLB	School suffering from decreasing roll caused perhaps by over tourism.
KLB	Level of investment?
KLB	Lack of jobs?
KLB	What happened to the space port?
KLB	Improving the school roll by having accessibility to houses, child care and employment
KLB	People need jobs and somewhere to live - they need to be available at the same time
KLB	Tourism is fairly seasonable - more year round jobs needed
KLB	Not a bank in Sutherland
KLB	More broader range of jobs to keep locals and others in the area! Too many houses are just holiday homes
Bettyhill	More support for school transport- mini buses with good drivers
Bettyhill	People need to be confident that schools offer all subjects to pupils
Bettyhill	No childcare at all in area. Affects employment opportunities
Bettyhill	Childcare!!
Bettyhill	Lack of childcare
Golspie	Youngsters move away for study or work and then don't come back
Golspie	Help support out of season tourism initiatives to reduce seasonal work
Golspie	Economic focus on area's industry where we have real competitive advantage
Golspie	More things to do in winter - jobs
Golspie	Need more apprenticeships and schemes to replace older tradesmen
Golspie	School should ban mobile phones for health and well-being
Golspie	More opportunities for further education in Highland and more flexibility for example part time courses
Golspie	Investment in apprenticeships in all sectors to support people to stay in the area People in Rogart need help with heating and fuel costs
Golspie	Need plans for local people and places for small businesses
Golspie	No bank - now hard for the older people or if not online
Golspie	Golspie has proper shops
Golspie	Need places to eat
Golspie	Junior orienteering would be good – volunteers could support if we had more youth workers
Golspie	Mini triathlon would be great

Golspie	Lots of outdoor learning opportunities - need to exploit that and introduce children to it as it can lead to jobs
Lochinver	Jobs that don't only run in summer for teenagers
Lochinver	Wages getting risen for part time workers
Lochinver	Continue funding for youth room because without it there is nothing for kids to do...
Lochinver	More teachers in schools (getting paid more)
Lochinver	Use distance learning in all high schools e.g. Modern Studies
Lochinver	More long-term jobs
Lochinver	(Funding) youth group keep going as it's the only thing we have
Lochinver	More variety of jobs up here
Lochinver	More jobs for teenagers
Lochinver	More publicity of jobs
Lochinver	To make Sutherland attractive - housing - childcare - connectivity - transport - care
Lochinver	The loss of schools leads to the loss of population and the transformation of the NW to a care home
Lochinver	More sport clubs after school here
Lochinver	More school subjects
Lochinver	More resources for after school clubs & youth work
Bonar Bridge	We have a good bus service - Lairg & Ross-shire + to Inverness
Bonar Bridge	We need more housing and work locally
Bonar Bridge	Need jobs for young people
Bonar Bridge	Rosehall & Kyle of Sutherland economy largely dependent on salmon fishing, tourism & wildlife tourism all at threat from gradual industrialisation of whole area by renewable developments - threatening to destroy rivers, biodiversity & scenic beauty
Bonar Bridge	Give people a reason to want to bring up their families here & work for the community
Bonar Bridge	Gaps in service, facilities & activities. Not gaps, chasms. We do exist north of Inverness. We do matter.
Bonar Bridge	Give businesses a reason to expand up here.
Bonar Bridge	Rethink the tourist industry. Provide facilities for cyclists & walkers there are lots of long distance routes being used by folks of all ages.

Location	ISSUES/THEMES – Health & Wellbeing
KLB	Lack of local availability for medical issues. Inverness is too far and inconvenient to get to
KLB	More sporty and healthy activities needed.
KLB	Trips to Inverness for appointments can involve overnights trips
KLB	Good coverage of GPs in Scourie, Kinlochbervie and Durness
KLB	More funding for community centre it is being neglected for 10 plus years
KLB	An outdoor gym circuit
KLB	Wonderful local care but this doesn't extend to the far north centralised provision in Raigmore
KLB	Care in the home needs attention
KLB	Consider a village square for KLB a good meeting place socially and mindfully
Bettyhill	Transport is essential for accessing services and events. It needs to be small scale and flexible- community transport
Bettyhill	NHSH care at home almost non-existent here- depends on friends and neighbours
Bettyhill	Dismay at Caladh Sona closing as staff lost
Bettyhill	Wellbeing – support local self-help women's groups, men's groups etc
Bettyhill	Need more locally based NHS staff with proper contracts and long term career prospects
Bettyhill	Health and well-being- isolation, people need affordable transport options – community transport
Bettyhill	More hubs with doctors coming out of Inverness to see people
Bettyhill	Need the Hub in Tongue as soon as possible
Bettyhill	Due to our amount of elderly residents, we need care home soon!
Bettyhill	Not enough end-of-life care in our own home. People have to be cared for in places that are too far away
Bettyhill	Not enough support for elderly in their own homes no local units.
Bettyhill	Need for hub in Tongue
Bettyhill	Lack of NHS care at home for elderly and vulnerable
Bettyhill	Need NHS dentist
Bettyhill	Concern over diminishing services offered by local hospitals
Golspie	Swimming pool is great – more people could use it for rehab
Golspie	Youngsters move away for study or work and then don't come back
Golspie	Help support out of season tourism initiatives to reduce seasonal work
Golspie	Hubs need more support and funding for example Rogart Hall.
Golspie	Poor dental facilities in Sutherland

Golspie	Economic focus on area's industry where we have real competitive advantage
Golspie	Pool is great resource for young carers
Golspie	Cost and availability of childcare
Golspie	Childcare to support people who are working
Golspie	Care at home done enough don't have enough time to visit patients
Golspie	Childcare regulation puts people off
Golspie	More things to do in winter - jobs
Golspie	Need more apprenticeships and schemes to replace older tradesmen
Golspie	School should ban mobile phones for health and wellbeing
Golspie	More opportunities for further education in Highland and more flexibility for example part time courses
Golspie	Swimming pool is appreciated
Golspie	Investment in apprenticeships in all sectors to support people to stay in the area People in Rogart need help with heating and fuel costs
Golspie	Need plans for local people and places for small businesses
Golspie	Golspie pool is great, but the hoist isn't working
Golspie	Great swimming pool
Golspie	Swimming pool is great – wish it was open on a Sunday
Lochinver	What has happened to the ambulance?
Lochinver	Separation of data between Northwest Sutherland & East needed to drill down to NW Sutherland data
Lochinver	More support for disabled people e.g. deaf people, autistic people, etc.
Lochinver	Childcare & adult social care need to be valued & supported
Lochinver	More support for teenagers in smaller areas
Lochinver	Need mental health & substance dependency services
Lochinver	More support at school
Lochinver	Pressure NHS into community driver
Bonar Bridge	Provide a minibus for people that can't travel independently or by public transport to pick up people so they are all seen on same day at hospital.
Bonar Bridge	More help is needed for the mental health of young people (teenager & primary pupils)
Bonar Bridge	Get consultants/doctors specialised in a group to come to Golspie, Migdale Bonar Hospitals & see several patients all on same day. Nice trip out for doctors as well.
Bonar Bridge	See recent human rights report Nov 24 - basic human rights of people here not being met

Bonar Bridge	Support for young people needs to be more co-ordinated between GPs, schools & other mental health specialists, e.g. with anorexia - support in the home is needed for some conditions
Bonar Bridge	H&W of Rosehall & Kyle of Sutherland area being v. badly affected by deluge of inappropriate renewables. We need more true local democracy - feelings of being neglected not listed to.

Location	ISSUES/THEMES – Infrastructure & Digital
Bettyhill	Very poor mobile phone connections in places
Bettyhill	Roads are awful especially on NC 500 single track – dangerous
Bettyhill	Community transport
Bettyhill	More local transport needed for all age groups
Bettyhill	BT broadband connectivity for all especially with the switch off the landlines
Bettyhill	Disgraceful state of roads
Bettyhill	Problems in many areas of poor connectivity
Golspie	Golspie has expanded but the streets have not
KLB	Very variable access to broadband with no real choice of supplier
KLB	Roads clogged due to NC500
KLB	Energy costs far too much - we in the Highlands should be cheap
KLB	Roads not suitable for the amount of tourists traffic esp. MH's. Should have cycle lanes/roads for cyclists
KLB	Better Broadband would attract business's to work from home.
KLB	Cyclists are a _danger_ to themselves on single track roads
KLB	Big problem - no digital connectivity where we are. Copper only. What to do?
Lochinver	Community operated transport
Lochinver	Need more funds for road maintenance
Lochinver	Digital switchover leaves no contact in a power cut
Lochinver	More chances for people to get to places like Inverness & Ullapool
Lochinver	More chances for people to get to places like the woods
Bonar Bridge	Funding for more apprenticeships
Bonar Bridge	No bank in Bonar
Bonar Bridge	Banking Hubs - Bonar & other towns Sutherland
Bonar Bridge	Spittal-Beauly line & Giant pylons should not go ahead - put off shore undersea like other lines- not wanted here
Bonar Bridge	No further windfarms/battery energy storage/ industrial scale "renewables" where majority of population against this and negative environmental effects
Bonar Bridge	Rats: During high tide and spring tides rats come up pipes & are seen on roads, in houses gardens etc. Can a grill not be put over pipes to stop?

Bonar Bridge	Fix the roads for a start - not just a bunch of tar & a shovel. The mouth is the best publicity so what are all the people passing through Highland telling their friends about roads/infrastructure, Council could stop paying out for damage to cars if potholes were fixed
Bonar Bridge	More proper repair, resurfacing roads as Altass, Badfluich. Rural Sutherland in general.
Bonar Bridge	Yellow lines needed at the Spar shop. Bonar Bridge at corner
Bonar Bridge	No internet/bad connections Rogart (rural). Fibre broadband wider roll out - Rosehall, Rogart, etc
Bonar Bridge	Road structures are being destroyed by HGVs which these roads were not designed for
Bonar Bridge	Cars parked outside of chemist Cherry Grove & main road Bonar Bridge
Bonar Bridge	Digital Connectivity very important for "remote workers" (e.g. consultancy) - jobs promoting population growth.
Bonar Bridge	Carbisdale Castle = potential tourist attraction - should be preserved & supported
Bonar Bridge	If the 1st train got to Inverness by 8 it would catch a connection south
Bonar Bridge	Stop discrimination re: any protected characteristic
Bonar Bridge	Key & significant buildings can support employment
Bonar Bridge	Absent/missing for too many homes in Sutherland: A good indoor mobile signal; mains water; a good fast broadband; mains gas; a bus service that is frequent enough...; all these missing 21st century essential. But any amount of pylons, turbines and BESS "necessary" infrastructure
Bonar Bridge	Require a bank to provide a service to the people of Sutherland
Bonar Bridge	Threat of massive pylon structures are adverse to destroying the unique landscape and tourist industry
Bonar Bridge	Pylons can put off tourists & investment is we do have them around historic/cultural buildings
Bonar Bridge	We need access to mobile phone signals, better broadband & smart electric meter. Please help.

Location	ISSUE/THEMES – Environment & Climate
KLB	Due to be totally overwhelmed by a windfarm far too big and in the wrong place
KLB	Encourage a sensible and respectful attitude to the environment. Encourage to explore and deviate from the main road through
KLB	The environment here is a major part of what makes the region a place to visit and stay. It's important we don't desecrate it in our efforts to bring jobs.
KLB	Environment was great! But NC500 tourists and dirty campers with no respect for the environment and locals! has screwed it
KLB	Beaches - dune erosion - permanent steps needed
Bettyhill	Baseline of biodiversity needs to be done
Bettyhill	Education for people to understand how to improve biodiversity
Bettyhill	Assessment of impacts of projects, business setups, house building on biodiversity
Golspie	Climate change damage has been done – what can we do?
Golspie	Too many wind farms and turbines often not turning or generating power
Golspie	Pylons – environmental impact. Are they necessary?
Golspie	Pollution in the sea especially off Golspie
Golspie	Fires causing problems with wildlife
Lochinver	Ban overnights at certain sites use clearways
Lochinver	No camper vans!!! Block the roads and are rude
Lochinver	Peatland nature restoration tree planting seaweed farming
Lochinver	No parties on historic sites!!!
Lochinver	No ruining historic sites for example some people were moving stones at Ardvreck Castle even though it is a historic site
Lochinver	Push for sustainability and reusable goods but not just wee bins
Lochinver	Balance between tourism & conservation & safeguarding residents day-to-day life
Lochinver	Promote micro-hydro
Lochinver	More shops
Lochinver	More support for historic sites and clearer signs about right to roam
Lochinver	Pick dog poo up and human poo
Bonar Bridge	Highland Council needs to put a stop to the monstrosity of the pylons. Fight for the young people not against them. Say no to the wind farms. Ask yourselves are your children, grandchildren going to be proud of how our homes are going to look in future.
Bonar Bridge	Kyle of Sutherland natural environment under serious threat from industrialisation by deluge of massive turbines, BESS, Pylons etc
Bonar Bridge	K of S & Highlands generally already doing more than fair share re renewable developments

| Bonar Bridge | Our peatlands are at risk due to renewable developments sited & at risk of these causing serious wildfires |
| Bonar Bridge | Don't let overseas companies & businesses south of Inverness who don't give a "rats" build more windfarms we don't benefit we only suffer |

Location	ISSUE/THEMES – Community Capacity & Resilience
KLB	Support Local Business Better! Make more Facilities & Activities Available
KLB	N.W. Sutherland has quite different requirements from East
KLB	Encourage & assist local business allowing all year opening locals (will support & visitors) through winter months
KLB	Community rather over run by NC500 - not good. They give nothing.
KLB	Good local businesses - hard working. Tesco has taken advantage of lack of variety
Bettyhill	Local voluntary groups need more support
Bettyhill	Development trusts need core funding
Bettyhill	Our voluntary sector is amazing per capita. The rate of engagement is phenomenal but this places a very heavy burden on a few- they need more support
Bettyhill	Long term funding stability for our development trusts and voluntary groups
Bettyhill	Shortage of housing for key workers
Golspie	Lots of community groups in Golspie – Sutherland Care Forum, Go Golspie, Tykes, Community Council, Golspie in Bloom, British Legion, sports clubs
Golspie	Support for the crafting community as an important part of the area's culture and economy
Golspie	Lots of good sports and social clubs and things to do
Golspie	Golspie Youth Action Project is great
Golspie	More resilient since COVID – more able to support each other
Golspie	Neighbours help each other with transport and shopping
Lochinver	Community organisations need regular funding
Lochinver	At risk: childcare, nurseries, school
Lochinver	At risk: elderly care
Lochinver	Opportunities: nature & peatland restoration seaweed farming
Lochinver	Long-term funding for Community Dev. Officers etc is vital
Lochinver	Men's shed - but also open to women - wants old bakery to be made available
Lochinver	Flexible models of care will help with resilience
Lochinver	Police the STL
Lochinver	Hire a community support officer for general maintenance
Lochinver	Employ Rangers 12 months
Bonar Bridge	Review needed of Community Councils

Bonar Bridge	Community resilience in Rosehall & Kyle of Sutherland area being worn down by a constant deluge of inappropriate. Renewable applications