The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Local Development Plan

Ionadail na Gàidhealtachd Plana Leasachaidh



Call for Ideas Guidance Note

www.highland.gov.uk/hldp



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1 Introduction

The Highland Council are in the process of preparing the new Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP). The current stage is the Call for Ideas which invites ideas on how land and buildings within Highland could be used, improved, protected or developed in the future, to be considered as part of the plan.

The Call for Ideas is open from 7 July – 18 September 2026.

This guidance note covers:

- Who can submit an idea;
- What type of ideas can be submitted;
- What type of ideas should not be submitted;
- How to prepare a quality submission;
- How to submit a response.

2 Who can submit an idea?

- Communities;
- Residents;
- Businesses;
- Community Councils and community groups;
- Anyone with an idea regarding long-term land and building use in the Highland Council area.

3 What sort of ideas can be submitted?

We are seeking ideas which relate to the development or use of land long-term in Highland. These can be place or policy ideas.

A place idea could suggest:

- Sites which support climate change adaptation;
- Retaining, improving, and expanding quality open space and green/blue infrastructure and play facilities;
- Reserved sites for specific land use e.g. health and care facilities, education, cemeteries, allotments etc;
- Changes to existing designations such as a Conservation Areas or Special Landscape Areas;
- Improvements in the town, village or neighbourhood centre;
- Walking, cycling and wheeling access routes that we should protect or try to create to support development.

A policy idea could suggest:

- A new policy specific to local circumstances, that builds on a policy in Scotland's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4);
- Amendments or additions to existing Local Development Plan policies in Highland;
- A new policy in response to Highland Council's Evidence Report.

4 What sort of ideas are not relevant?

In general, ideas unrelated to the development and use of land or buildings will not be taken into consideration.

Ideas that aren't relevant include:

- Tree planting or woodland management;
- Self-build proposals;
- Requests for project funding;
- Maintenance or enforcement matters;
- Litter management;
- Public transport routes or timetables;

- Suggested new development sites, to consider for allocation;
- Policy areas considered by other Council services (e.g. Licensing, Gaelic, Education)

Please note: the Highland Council Call for Development Sites invited submissions from January - May 2025. We are no longer inviting submissions for development sites, except under exceptional circumstances.

5 How to prepare a quality submission

To develop your idea ready for submission, we encourage you to:

1. Check the Register of Local Place Plans (LPP) for a registered LPP in your area. Many ideas are already included in LPPs. Local Place Plans also provide good examples of ideas that will be considered in the preparation of the Highland Local Development Plan;
2. Consider which topics in the Highland Local Development Plan Evidence Report may be relevant to your idea and check the implications for the Plan the Evidence Report has identified;
3. Check the Call for Sites suggested development sites which will be considered in the preparation of the Highland Local Development Plan;
4. Check the existing Local Development Plans related to your area and existing NPF4 policies which might inform your idea:

    - Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012)
    - Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (2018)
    - West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (2019)
    - Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) (2024)
    - National Planning Framework 4 (2023)
    - Any planning Supplementary Guidance

A quality idea submission includes sufficient detail about the location or topic it relates to and the purpose and intended outcome of the idea, so that it can be used to inform the Highland Local Development Plan.

Please note submission of an idea does not guarantee it will be included in the next local development plan, only that it will be considered as part of the plan-making process.

6 How to submit a response

The Call for Ideas survey is hosted through our online platform, Highland Engage. You'll be asked to complete a form with a set of structured questions about yourself and your idea.

You may also provide any additional supporting information along with your submission, uploaded within the survey. While we encourage online responses, paper copies of the forms can be provided upon request.

Responses should be submitted through our Call for Ideas Survey.

The call for ideas is open from 7 July 2026 – 18 September 2026.

If you are unable to complete the survey digitally, then a paper copy can be provided.

If you require assistance in making your submission, please contact: HLDP@highland.co.uk

7 About the new Highland Local Development Plan

We ran a call for development sites between 31 January and 2 May 2025 where landowners, developers and others suggested sites to consider including in the new HLDP, but we will not decide these sites until early to mid-2027.

The Evidence report was approved by full council in June 2026 and submitted to Scottish Ministers in July 2026.

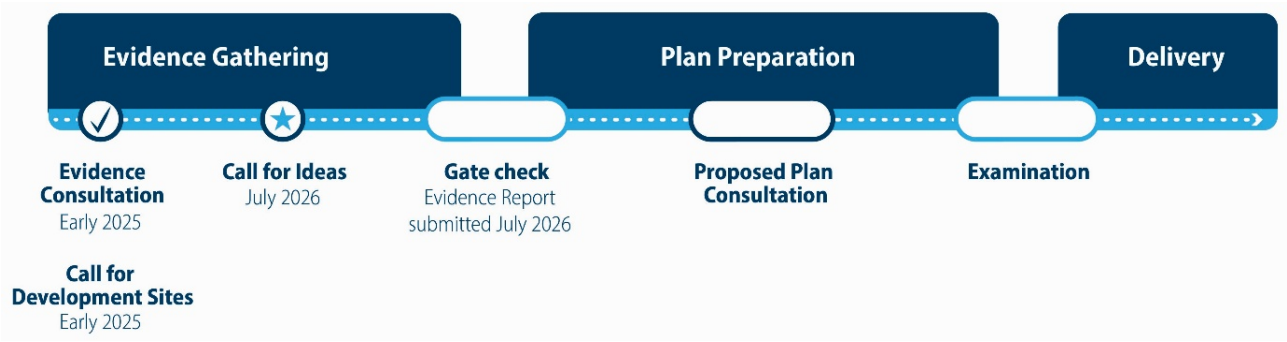


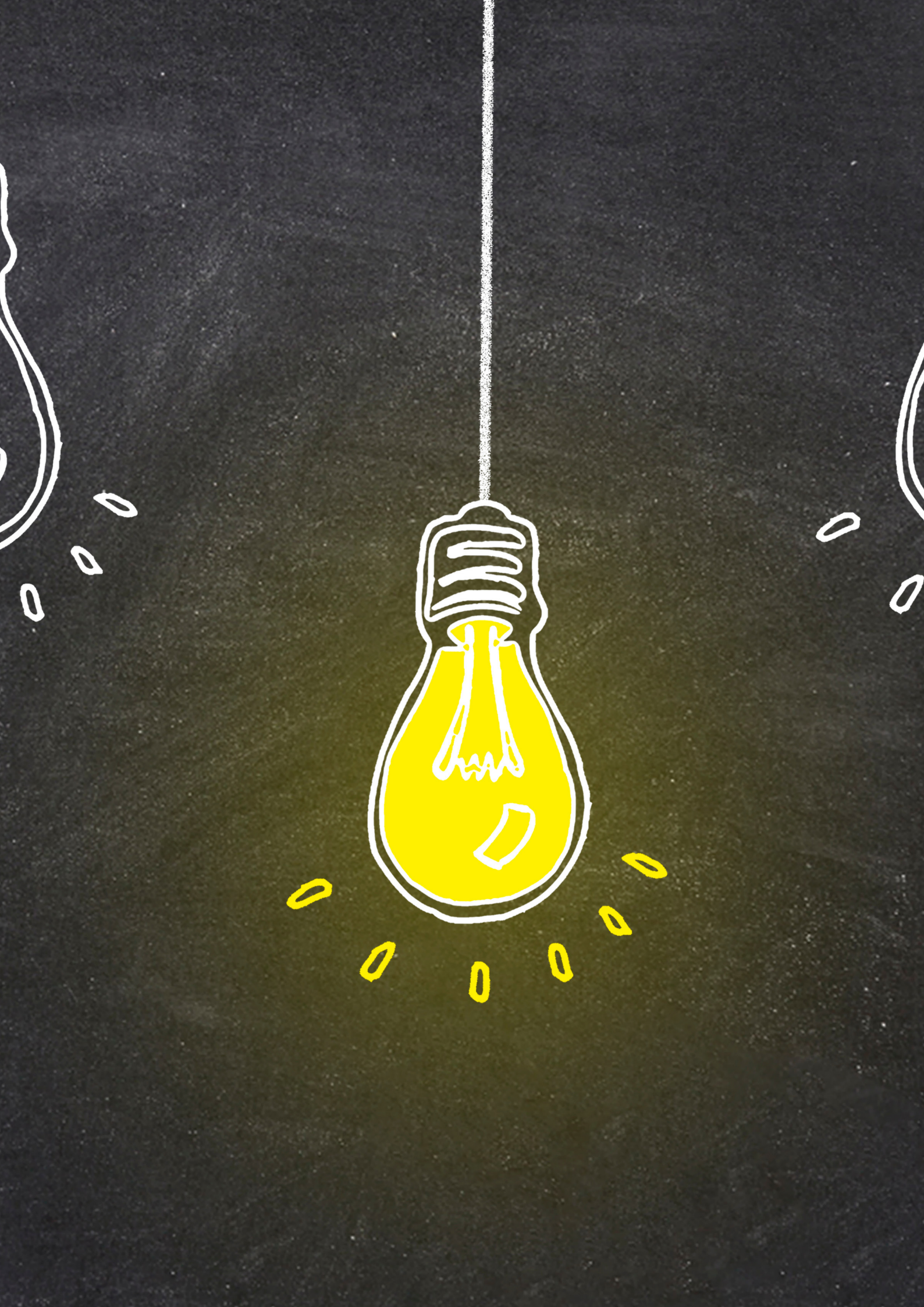
Figure 1 Highland Local Development Plan timeline

The Council's HLDP Evidence Report was approved by The Highland Council on 25 June 2025 and was subsequently submitted to the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) for a "Gate Check" assessment.

This Call for Ideas is underway in parallel to the Gate Check process, and submitted ideas will be considered as part of the Plan Preparation stage.

The indicative programme for the Highland Local Development Plan preparation is outlined in the Development Plans Newsletter.

When adopted, the Plan will represent the Council's spatial strategy over a 10-year period and will set out how land will be used and developed across Highland. It will provide a long-term vision of how our places will change in the future, including where development should and should not happen. It will encourage sustainable growth in the right places.



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