



Building strength in our communities  
to face the challenges of  
peak oil and climate change

IMFLDP Call for Sites  
Director of Planning and Development  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness  
IV3 5NX

Reply to  
Penny Edwards  
Stoneybank  
Culbokie  
Dingwall  
IV7 8JH

Date

Dear Sir,

**Call for Sites – Culbokie**

Transition Black Isle has undertaken a consultation amongst its members in Culbokie in response to this consultation. In this context, the aim of Transition Black Isle is to strengthen the local community, enhance local resilience and promote sustainable development.

In order to prepare this submission we presented some ideas in advance to the Ferintosh Community Council and to our local members, we organised a walk around the village by the group to assess opportunities and we followed up with e-mail discussions to clarify our ideas. We hope to develop the debate, both within the group and with the Community Council over the coming months and to provide additional input during the public consultation. We believe that the general proposals set out here are robust and command considerable support and we hope that they will be fully accommodated into the next stage of the process.

Our group has done an analysis the village and have the following observations on the current village layout and facilities

- The dumbbell shape of the village is getting more pronounced with new housing developments at either end. People at one end have to travel to the school, village hall and recycling centre while those at the other have to travel to the shop, pub and post office. The range of services and facilities available is poor and people generally drive to access services elsewhere.
- The village is long and the walk from one end to the other is along a car-dominated and weather-exposed road. The road verges and pavements are poor and unkempt. Few people choose to walk and use their car instead. As a result, the opportunities for community interactions are extremely low.

Convenor: Wendy Price, Vice Convenor: Vanessa Halhead, Treasurer: Penny Edwards  
c/o Glachbeg, Allanglach Wood, North Kessock, Inverness, IV1 3XD  
[www.transitionblackisle.org](http://www.transitionblackisle.org)

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- On the positive side, the village has some excellent local woodland walks that must be safeguarded. It is also well known for its spectacular views across the Cromarty Firth. The existing facilities (shop/post office, pub, primary school, village hall, recycling centre and recreation ground) are highly valued and must not be lost.
- The addition of a biomass boiler at Findon Hall is an excellent development. However, the widespread adoption of energy efficiency measures and use of renewable forms of heat and electricity is still required both in existing and new developments.

Following this analysis, the following key needs have been identified:

- Improved village design including a proper village centre where people can go to access services and where there are opportunities for relaxed chance encounters leading to an increased sense of community
- More services such as more shops, a café, a nursery, a doctors surgery and provision for the elderly
- Some small business units to promote employment in the village
- A better path network to encourage more walking around the village and less use of the car
- The widespread adoption of energy efficiency and use of renewable sources of energy in all new developments

We have developed some proposals which aim to address the needs identified and we attach three separate site forms as follows. We also attach a copy of the 2007 Plan map marked up to show our proposals.

1. Site marked as Site 13 on 2007 Plan

Site 13 is currently allocated for community uses and we strongly support the maintenance of this allocation. The 2007 plan identifies the need for the village to adjust to high recent high growth rates and to catch up with the provision of community facilities and affordable housing. Site 13 provides the short term opportunity to deliver this aspiration and must not be reallocated for housing.

Site 13 is well placed to provide a wide range of community facilities identified in the list of needs above. Key priorities include some additional shop units, some business units/craft workshops, a café and some outdoor seating and a children's nursery. It is lamentable that even though this site has been allocated for around 5 years, no progress has been made and every opportunity must be sought to bring these facilities to fruition quickly,

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including the possibility of establishing a Culbokie Community Development Trust to take a local lead and bring additional benefits and income streams to the village. Such an approach would provide an opportunity to incorporate the principles of sustainable design into the development.

It must be recognised however that the location of the site, to some extent, reinforces the dumbbell shape of the village. It strengthens the west end, while those in the east will need to travel to access the new services. A village footpath network (see below) will be important in helping to equalise the benefits of such a development.

2. Site marked as Site 7 on 2007 Plan

Site 7 was identified for development in the 2007 plan to help address the dumbbell issue. The site is currently allocated as housing land. We understand that the existing owner has no plans to sell this land at present so any opportunities here will be relevant only in the longer term and should not prejudice short term progress at Site 13.

This site however provides an opportunity to reunite the village by creating a new service hub at its centre. We therefore suggest that around one acre of land at the west end of the site (as shown on the map) is allocated for additional community facilities. The attractive topography of this site, with fabulous views over the Firth and the land sloping gently to the south at the rear of the site make it ideal for a wide range of uses including a village 'green'. There would also be an opportunity to set the community facilities back from the main road, thus creating an area where the car does not dominate. The villages of Strathpeffer and Strontian both provide good examples of this sort of development.

Given uncertain availability of this land, it should be allocated for unspecified future community facilities to address needs at the time.

3. Proposal for village footpath network

Our proposals for a substantially enhanced village footpath and cycle network would bring many benefits to Culbokie. The proposed links are marked on a map and aim to enhance existing routes and utilise key opportunities such as the attractive burn in the village centre that currently fenced off. The paths would also capitalise on the good views that the village enjoys. The routes identified pass through land in a range of ownerships mostly traversing around at the edges of fields, along natural boundaries such as burns or along the edges of existing or new developments. It is proposed that strips at least 5m wide are safeguarded for the installation of footpath/cycle routes as finance



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permits along with tree and shrub planting, seating and amenity areas and improvements for wildlife.

Such a path network would:

- a. reduce the need for car use to get from one end of the village to the other
- b. provide access links to existing community facilities and new ones as they are developed
- c. provide health benefits from more walking and cycling
- d. strengthen and unify the village by providing a local green access network away from the main road linking residential areas and services
- e. enhance the village credentials as a tourism destination
- f. provide an opportunity to improve the landscape setting and amenity of the village and to strengthen the village edge.

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to make this response and we look forward to the next step of the process.

Yours sincerely

Penny Edwards  
Transition Black Isle



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IV7 8JH

May 7<sup>th</sup> 2011

Dear Sir,  
**Call for Sites – Culbokie (clarification letter)**

We are writing to provide important clarification on our previous letter sent on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Please would you ensure that the two letters are read in conjunction with each other.

The clarification relates to our proposal to make provision for a village footpath network in the new Local Plan. What we did not make clear was that the sketch map indicating the location of the various paths was very much **indicative**. The main point we were trying to establish was the need for paths linking the village together and the range of potential opportunities for this that may exist over the course of time. Any new paths established must utilise natural boundaries to minimise the impact on existing land uses. Specifically, the route marked behind Site 7 could not be established until such a point in the future when the development at Site 7 goes ahead. We would very much want to work in cooperation with all our local landowners to ensure that their livelihoods are not being unreasonably affected and we would rule out any compulsory purchase order to achieve the path network. We would prefer to work through discussion and negotiation over the long term as opportunities arise.

Furthermore, in our letter we indicated that a minimum path width of 5m should be considered to provide space for walkers, cyclists and some landscaping although in our site forms we indicated that this could be as little as 2m where constraints exist. Again, these figures were indicative but I would like to clarify that around 2m would be sufficient in certain parts to overcome land-form or landowner constraints.



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We apologise that this letter will arrive after your consultation deadline but hope that you will ensure that it is given consideration alongside our main submission.

Yours faithfully

Penny Edwards  
On behalf of Transition Black Isle

## Site Forms

YOUR DETAILS	
<b>Your Name</b> (and organisation if applicable)	Transition Black Isle Contact: Penny Edwards
<b>Your Address / Contact Details</b>	Stoneybank, Culbokie, Dingwall
	IV7 8JH
	[REDACTED]
<b>Landowner's Name</b> (if known / applicable)	Various including: Dingwall of East Culbokie MacIntyre of Findon Mains Edwards/Sherring of Stoneybank (formerly Seaview) Draper of Cnocmissan Owner of sites 10 and 11 of 2007 Plan List may be incomplete
<b>Agent</b> (if applicable)	None
<b>Agent's Address / Contact Details</b> (if applicable)	N/A

DETAILS OF SITE SUGGESTED	
<b>Site Address</b>	Various
<b>Site/Local Name</b> (if different from above)	Village path network
<b>Site Size</b> (hectares)	Minimum path width at constrained points could be as little as 2m. Normal width of 5 m to include some tree and shrub planting. Extended width around attractive features
<b>Grid Reference</b> (if known)	N/A
<b>Proposed Use</b> (e.g. housing, affordable housing,	Path network around village for walking and cycling

employment, retail, waste, gypsy traveller, utility, community, retained public open space)	
<b>Proposed Non Housing Floorspace / Number of Housing Units</b> (if known/applicable)	N/A
<b>Map</b>	(please attach a map of the site ideally on an Ordnance Survey base).  Attached using 2007 Plan as map base.

<b>If you wish to suggest a site that should <u>not</u> be built on, fill in this form</b>	
REASONS WHY YOUR SITE SHOULD BE SAFEGUARDED FROM BUILDING	
<b>How do the public enjoy the space</b> - e.g. used for dog walking, children's play?	The existing paths around the village are extremely well used. The proposed new paths will link with these and provide better opportunities to access existing and new village facilities by foot and by bike. They will also provide a better range of varied length recreational walks and cycle rides
<b>What makes the site more special</b> than other areas in the village/town?	These routes have been identified to capitalise on their views, their natural features and the opportunities they provide for linking existing routes and facilities. There do not appear to be any other options for new routes.
<b>Does the site have attractive or rare features</b> such as mature trees, historical significance or protected wildlife?	The burn in the centre of the village running to the north and south includes some native woodland and shrubs. At present this is not available as a pathway.  The routes selected to the north east of the village makes use of a significant strip of rough ground and provides valuable habitat for wildlife and for bees.

*Landowners, developers and/or agents wishing to suggest a site should fill in the following form and as much as possible of the strategic environmental assessment form (at the end of this document) which assesses the environmental effects of possible development sites.*

<b>If you wish to suggest a site that should be built on, fill in this form</b>	
REASONS FOR YOUR DEVELOPMENT SITE SUGGESTION	
<b>How can the site be serviced?</b> (give details of proposed access, foul drainage, surface water and water supply arrangements)	We have not filled in this part of the form as we are a community group.  The reasons for our development suggestion have been made in our covering letter. We are happy to provide further information if needed
FORM CONTINUES BELOW	

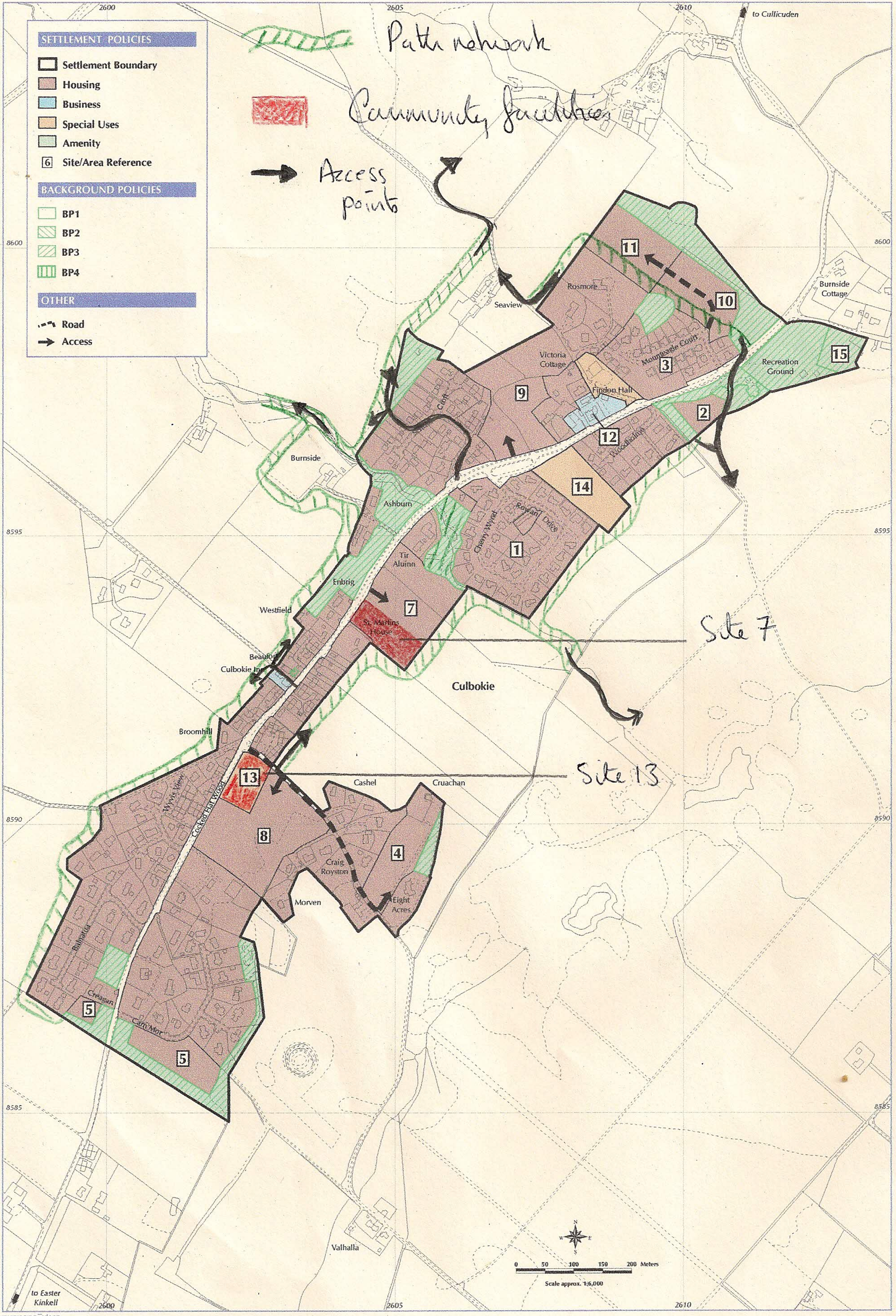


**REASONS FOR YOUR DEVELOPMENT SITE SUGGESTION**

<p><b>What are the site's constraints and how can they be resolved or reduced?</b>          (e.g. does the site flood, are there protected species present, will good farmland be lost, will the local landscape be affected, will valued trees be felled, are any other heritage features likely to be affected?)</p>	
<p><b>What benefits will result to the wider community from the site's development?</b>          (e.g. will there be more or better jobs, will the land be put to a more productive use, will the development increase infrastructure capacity for others, will more affordable houses result, is there an unmet demand for the development?)</p>	
<p><b>What impact will there be on travel patterns from the site's development?</b>          (e.g. will more or less people engage in active and healthy travel (walk / cycle) or go by public transport as a result of the site's development rather than travel by private car?)</p>	
<p><b>Is the site well connected?</b>          (e.g. will the average travel time to community and commercial facilities reduce or increase as a result of the site's development, is the proposed use compatible with existing / proposed surrounding uses?)</p>	
<p><b>Is the site energy efficient?</b>          (e.g. will the site allow for energy efficient siting, layout, building design and local renewable energy source connection?)</p>	
<p><b>What other negative impacts will the development have and how will</b></p>	

**they be resolved or offset?**

(e.g. will the site's development increase any form of pollution or decrease public safety?)



INSET 13: CULBOKIE

All OS base maps are the most up-to-date available to the Highland Council at the time of the production of this Local Plan.