

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2

Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Linne Mhoireibh A-Staigh 2

Adopted Plan

July 2024

highland.gov.uk/imf



This is the second Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan which sets out the Council's view on how the Plan area should develop over the next 10 years and beyond.

This Plan seeks to deliver defined outcomes for communities, employment, connectivity and the environment but with particular emphasis on post pandemic economic recovery and addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency. The Plan makes policy, placemaking priority and development site choices that best balance both environmental sustainability and economic viability for both the public and private sector. These choices will mean that the Plan will be practicable and positive for the area.

The Plan was prepared and refined by considering comments submitted during three public consultation phases. On behalf of the Council we thank all those who contributed.

Is e seo an dàrna Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Molta Linne Mhoireibh a-staigh a tha a' cur an cèill beachd na Comhairle air mar a bu chòir do raon a' Phlana leasachadh thairis air an ath 10 bliadhna agus às a dhèidh.

Tha am Plana seo ag amas air builean comharraichte a libhrigeadh do choimhearsnachdan, cosnadh, ceanglaichean agus an àrainneachd ach le cuideam sònraichte air ath-bheothachadh eaconamach às dèidh galar lèir-sgaoilte agus dèiligeadh ri Èiginn Gnàth-shìde agus Eag-eòlais. Tha am Plana a' dèanamh poileasaidh, prìomhachas dèanamh àite agus roghainnean làraich leasachaidh a tha a' cothromachadh seasmachd àrainneachdail agus comasachd eaconamach airson an dà chuid poblach agus prìobhaideach. Bidh na roghainnean sin a' ciallachadh gum bi am Plana obrachail agus deimhinneach don sgìre.

Chaidh am Plana ullachadh is a ghleusadh le bhith a' breithneachadh air beachdan a chaidh a chur a-steach rè trì co-chomhairlean poblach. Às leth na Comhairle, tha sinn a' toirt taing dhan a h-uile duine a chuir ris.



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What is the Plan? | Dè th' anns a' Phlana?

Purpose | Adhbhar

This is the second iteration of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (abbreviated to IMFLDP2) which along with the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), Supplementary Guidance and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), form the statutory development plan that guides future development across the Inner Moray Firth area. It aims to enable the delivery of an ambitious vision and strategy for Highland's most populous area, and to continue its vital role at the regional and national level. It sets out the Council's view on where development should and should not occur over the next 10 - 20 years and how growth should be encouraged, managed and delivered.

Status | Inbhe

This Plan will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Alongside it, the main documents for making planning decisions will be the HwLDP, Supplementary Guidance and NPF4. For a very limited number of sites and developments the IMFLDP2, HwLDP and Supplementary Guidance say different things about the Council's attitude to development. In the event of any incompatibility between provisions of these documents then the most up to date document (almost always the IMFLDP2) will prevail as the Council's policy for that site/issue.

Previous and next steps | Ceumannan roimhe agus an ath cheum

In preparing this Plan, the Council held various consultations firstly with a Call for Sites in 2019, followed by a Main Issues Report in 2021, and a Proposed Plan in 2022. The comments submitted during these stages helped us prepare, refine and finalise the Plan.

During 2023 and early 2024, the Plan was subject to independent examination by Scottish Government appointed Reporters, who recommended final changes to its content. These have been incorporated and the Council on 27 June 2024 adopted this document as the second Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

Reading the Plan | A' leughadh a' Phlana

In order to get the best experience, we recommend that you read the Plan through the consultation portal. This version of the Plan provides the most detailed and engaging information in a single, easy to navigate webpage. We also recommend that you read the online version in Chrome (other internet browsers are available) on a laptop or computer. The webpage resizes to fit tablet and mobile devices but features such as interactive maps and consultation points may be harder to use because of the small screen size.

Section 1 - 'Vision and outcomes | Lèirsinn agus builean', Section 2 - 'Spatial strategy | Ro-innleachd spàsail' and Section 3 - 'General policies | Poileasaidhean coitcheann' set out the overarching framework for planning decisions and underpin the Council's choices of particular local priorities and development sites in each main community. That is why it is important to read the front part of the Plan alongside any parts that are of specific interest to you. There are other accompanying and related documents ('Accompanying and related documents | Sgrìobhainnean co-cheangailte agus na chois' and Appendix 1 - 'Accompanying and related documents | Sgrìobhainnean co-cheangailte agus na chois') which may also be relevant.

Navigating the plan

If you are viewing the plan as a .pdf, you can navigate by scrolling or advancing through the document page by page. The contents page provides links to all of the Main sections and subsections with a separate section detailing the Plan's policies.

While you are reading the Plan you may notice blue-highlighted text - these are hyperlinks we have provided where we thought it would be useful to direct you to other information and will either direct you to a source of information on a different website (external hyperlinks) or take you to another part of the Plan (internal hyperlinks).

External hyperlinks have a footnote reference showing the web address should you screenshot or print the Plan you can still see where the link refers to. By default, hyperlinks will open in the same browser tab that you are in - you may choose to open external links in a new tab or window if you

How best to access the Plan | An dòigh as fheàrr air faighinn chun a' Phlana

want to. Internal hyperlinks show you the type of content (in the case of boxes it shows the box title) and the name of the content. In either case you may return to the point where you left by clicking the "back" button in your browser.

Interactive content

The .pdf of the Plan contains no interactive elements other than internal and external hyperlinks previously described. For the best experience, we strongly recommend that you view the Plan on our online portal.

Find out more | Faigh a-mach tuilleadh

The Plan's appendices contain further, supporting information. We've tried to minimise the use of technical terms but if needed, Appendix 3 - 'Glossary | Beag-fhaclair' contains a list of abbreviations, acronyms and terms used in this Plan and in the related background documents and an explanation of their origin and/or meaning. Supporting assessments are available via the Consultation Portal and the Council's website. Our website provides details of the Plan's consultation phases. If you have a query about the Plan then [email](#)⁽¹⁾ or call 01349 886608 and ask to speak to a member of the Development Plans Team.

Accompanying and related documents | Sgrìobhainnean co-cheangailte agus na chois

The Plan takes account of a wide range of other factors which can also influence the outcome of planning decisions, including:

- National planning legislation, policy and guidance;
- The HwLDP, Supplementary Guidance and non-statutory planning guidance; and
- Other plans, programmes and strategies of The Highland Council and other public agencies.

1 imfldp@highland.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - 'Accompanying and related documents | Sgrìobhainnean co-cheangailte agus na chois' contains a list of and links to the most relevant other documents that affect planning decisions within the Inner Moray Firth area.

This Plan does not contain policies with a direct impact on proposals in the marine environment - i.e. the Plan's direct influence ends at mean low water springs. The [National Marine Plan](#)⁽²⁾ and the Moray Firth Regional Marine Plan (when prepared) are/will be the primary policy documents for assessing marine proposals.

2 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-marine-plan/>

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Section 1 - Vision and outcomes | Lèirsinn agus builean

- 1 This Local Development Plan aims to deliver defined, positive outcomes for the environment, employment, communities and connectivity. To achieve this the Plan must target and coordinate where and how growth occurs. The Plan's Vision is expressed through four proposed, inter-related headline outcomes listed in Table 1 'Topics and Outcomes'. The two overarching aims of the Plan are to tackle the climate and ecological emergency and enable post pandemic economic recovery. These aims are threaded through the Plan and embedded within each of its Outcomes, Spatial Strategy, General Policies, Placemaking Priorities and development site choices.
- 2 The four Outcomes provide an ambitious and appropriate framework for the future which take account of national and Highland outcomes, priorities and investment and tailor them for the Inner Moray Firth area. They also reflect the Council's vision and strategy for Highland submitted for inclusion in the Scottish Government's new National Planning Framework 4, which was published in early 2023.

Table 1 Topics and Outcomes

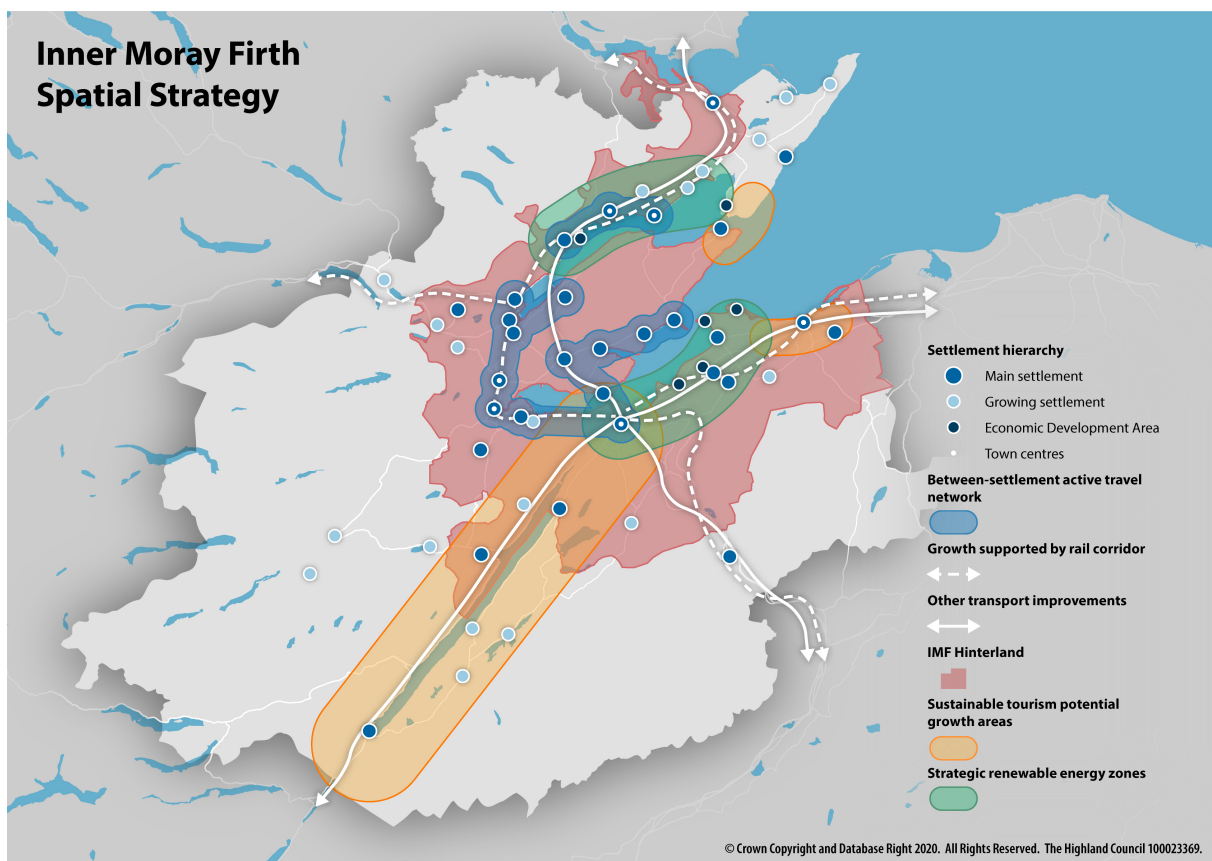
Environment	The Inner Moray Firth's built, cultural and natural assets will be safeguarded and appropriately managed. Water, waste, heat, land and buildings will be used, re-used, located and designed in a carbon clever way. The environmental quality of all places will be safeguarded and enhanced.
Employment	The Inner Moray Firth economy will be growing, greener, circular and diverse. Local enterprises will be national leaders in the life sciences, sustainable tourism and renewable energy sectors. More traditional sectors such as construction, food and drink and smaller scale general industry will have continued to thrive and provide jobs close to where people live reducing the need to travel.
Growing Communities	Our communities will be sustainable, well-designed places with homes which meet people's needs. More people will want to live in Inverness and the larger towns and villages as they are attractive, safe, socially inclusive and healthy,

	<p>with thriving centres and better access to services and facilities. Inner Moray Firth communities will function as networks of locally resilient and self-supporting places with equality of access to local resources.</p>
Connectivity	<p>It will be easy to move around and between settlements in the Inner Moray Firth area. Walking and cycling will be the logical choice for most day to day trips, with longer journeys made using an efficient, reliable public transport system and, in rural areas, shared transport and electric vehicles. Sustainable regional, national and global connections will be available from modern bus and rail stations, harbours and Inverness Airport. Improved digital connectivity throughout the Plan area will enable home working for most people, helping to reduce the need to travel.</p>

Section 2 - Spatial strategy | Ro-innleachd spàsail

- 3 Achieving the Plan's outcomes requires a strategy for how these broad aims and principles will be applied across the Inner Moray Firth Plan area. Map 1 'Spatial strategy' shows the spatial priorities for delivering the outcomes and where future development should be directed. This Plan reinforces the [Highland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy to 2050 \(September 2020\)](#) ⁽³⁾ priority to focus on making best use of existing places and infrastructure, especially in our City and town centres, and creating networks of resilient communities that are better connected and have great access to the services and facilities they need.

Map 1 Spatial strategy



- 4 Existing settlements and town centres will also be the prime locations for employment, alongside a number of Economic Development Areas and strategic renewable energy zones where major new employment is expected to enable the transition to net zero. Similarly,

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

the Plan supports established tourism destinations such as Loch Ness and Nairn, and this includes emerging and future projects to develop sustainable tourism initiatives. All these matters are covered in greater detail in the following parts of the Plan.

Settlement hierarchy | Rangachd tuineachaidh

- 5** The Plan's Spatial Strategy and in particular its Settlement Hierarchy sets out a strategic view on where future growth should occur. Previous Highland development plans have taken a view that all communities should develop organically - i.e. at a rate proportionate to their existing size and in line with past trends. However, this Plan proposes a more focused approach. To address climate change and post pandemic economic recovery we wish better to target future growth at locations: with environmentally sustainable transport choices; where infrastructure network/community facility capacity either exists or can be created at least cost to the public and private sector; and where existing commercial and environmental assets can best be protected and enhanced whether this is safeguarding and improving the viability and vitality of our town and city centres or our natural, built and cultural heritage. Put simply, the Plan proposes to direct development to the most economically viable and environmentally sustainable places.
- 6** In practice, this means classifying the places within the Inner Moray Firth into a hierarchy according to their existing and likely future sustainability and viability. This is shown in Table 2 'Settlement Hierarchy'. In summary, the Plan intends to direct most future growth to the settlements with the best existing, committed or likely viable future access (via sustainable travel choices) to the community facilities, infrastructure, employment and other commercial opportunities, and environmental capacity necessary to support that growth.
- 7** Tier 1 settlements include Inverness City, existing towns with good active travel and public transport links such as Beaully and Tain, and the committed new town at Tornagrain. In contrast, Tier 4 settlements offer very limited employment, transport options and services. As these settlements will be almost exclusively dependent on car based transport, we don't think that they are appropriate locations for any significant development. Because of these

Section 2 - Spatial strategy | Ro-innleachd spàsail

and environmental capacity considerations Cawdor, Contin, and Inchmore have been classified as Growing rather than Main Settlements (as they were in the IMFLDP1). However, within all these settlements, we will still support the principle of infill development, refurbishment of existing properties and redevelopment of brownfield (previously developed) sites. This hierarchy has influenced the number and size (e.g. indicative housing capacity) of sites in this Plan.

Table 2 Settlement Hierarchy

Scale of Growth	Sustainability	Hierarchy	Tier	Settlements/Locations
Strategic	Most sustainable	Main Settlements	1	Alness, Beaully, Dingwall, Invergordon, Inverness City, Muir of Ord, Nairn, Tain, Tornagrain.
Modest	Sustainable		2	Ardersier, Conon Bridge, Drumnadrochit, Evanton, Fort Augustus, North Kessock.
Local	Partially sustainable		3	Auldearn, Avoch, Croy, Fortrose and Rosemarkie, Kiltarlity, Maryburgh, Seaboard Villages, Strathpeffer, Tomatin.
Limited	Least sustainable		4	Cromarty, Culbokie, Dores, Kirkhill, Munlochy, Tore.
"Infill" only	Bolstering the smallest established rural communities	Growing Settlements	5	Abriachan, Balnain, Barbaraville, Cannich, Cawdor, Contin, Farr/Inverarnie, Foyers, Garve, Gorthleck, Inchmore, Hill of Fearn, Inver, Milton of Kildary, Marybank, Portmahomack, Rhicullen/Newmore, Tomich, Whitebridge.

Typically single unit development	Generally poor sustainability unless connection with rural land use / business	Countryside	6	All housing groups not otherwise classified as part of a settlement. Wider open countryside (no general restriction). "Hinterland" open countryside (general restriction on housing).
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Housing requirements | Riatanasan taigheadais

- 8 NPF4 sets a minimum all tenure housing land requirement (MATHLR) for the whole of the Highland Council Area (apart from Cairngorms National Park) of 9,500 housing units. Based on the 2020 Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), on which the MATHLR figure is also based, a proportionate figure of 6,790 is identified for the Inner Moray Firth area.
- 9 The latest forecasts for the Inner Moray Firth's future population and households indicate stability rather than rapid growth. However, there is considerable uncertainty as to whether past trends will continue. In particular, the assumed level of net migration into the Plan area is critical to future household and housing requirement forecasting but will be influenced by the unpredictable medium term effects of the pandemic, Brexit and the possibility of employment led growth in Highland.
- 10 Using the baseline of the 2020 HNDA, a requirement for housing land in excess of the MATHLR is set to promote an ambitious and plan led approach. The Plan's housing land requirement of 8,463 takes account of economic growth connected to the renewables industry. An additional margin is included to account for ineffective housing stock and there is a further flexibility allowance of 30% to account for uncertainty. This housing land requirement applies to all tenures and to the whole Plan area.

- 11** Work is underway on the preparation of a new Highland Local Development Plan, which will be expected to identify a local housing land requirement for its area. This will provide an early opportunity to review the adjustments which have informed the housing land requirement in this Plan.
- 12** Table 3 'Meeting the Local Housing Land Requirement' sets out how the Plan expects to meet its housing land requirement over the 10 year period from mid 2024. This shows a total figure in excess of the NPF4 minimum housing land requirement and deliverable land capacity in excess of the Council's locally adjusted housing land requirement (which already includes additional flexibility). The Council will work with developers, service providers and other partners to maintain a sufficient pipeline of deliverable housing land.

Table 3 Meeting the Local Housing Land Requirement

	Anticipated Contribution Towards Meeting the Plan's Housing Land Requirement
a. Existing sites (from Housing Land Audit 2022)	6,640
b. New allocations	872
c. Windfall development	1,083
Total (a + b + c)	8,595

- 13** Some of the sites allocated in the Plan are expected to deliver homes beyond the 10 year plan period. Each allocated site with a housing component has a stated indicative housing capacity. The main capacity figure is the number of residential units expected to be delivered within 10 years and for the larger sites there is second, bracketed figure which is the expected

total for the entirety of the allocation; i.e., also includes units expected to be delivered beyond year 10 of the plan period. Table 3 'Meeting the Local Housing Land Requirement' above includes only the proportion of sites currently anticipated to deliver in the 10 year period.

Affordable Housing

- 14** Based on figures in the 2020 Housing Need and Demand Assessment, the Council identifies the need for 4,673 affordable homes across the Inner Moray Firth area in the 10 year plan period. Affordable housing is included in the all-tenure local housing land requirement. Allocations across the Plan area provide land for housing which can be used for the provision of affordable housing in conjunction with open market housing (such as that required by Policy 10) or for affordable housing only.
- 15** Highland's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022–2027 sets out a planned investment programme for affordable housing and explains the various ways that the Council contributes to the delivery of affordable housing. The Council's Local Housing Strategy 2023–2028 was published too late to inform this plan. It will be taken into account in the preparation of the forthcoming new Highland Local Development Plan.

Rural housing - Hinterland area | Taigheadas dùthchail - sgìre Dhùthchail

- 16** Outwith the Plan's listed Main and Growing Settlements, our Spatial Strategy for housing is better to manage pressure for new building because of its adverse environmental and economic effects. We have termed the area of open countryside closest to the major employment settlements and most at risk of these adverse effects as Hinterland. Specifically, uncontrolled, sporadic housing development in the Hinterland, other things being equal:
 - increases car-based trips to work and most other activities resulting in higher carbon and other harmful emissions than otherwise need occur;
 - suburbanises the open (or dispersed pattern of settlement) landscape character of the existing countryside; and,

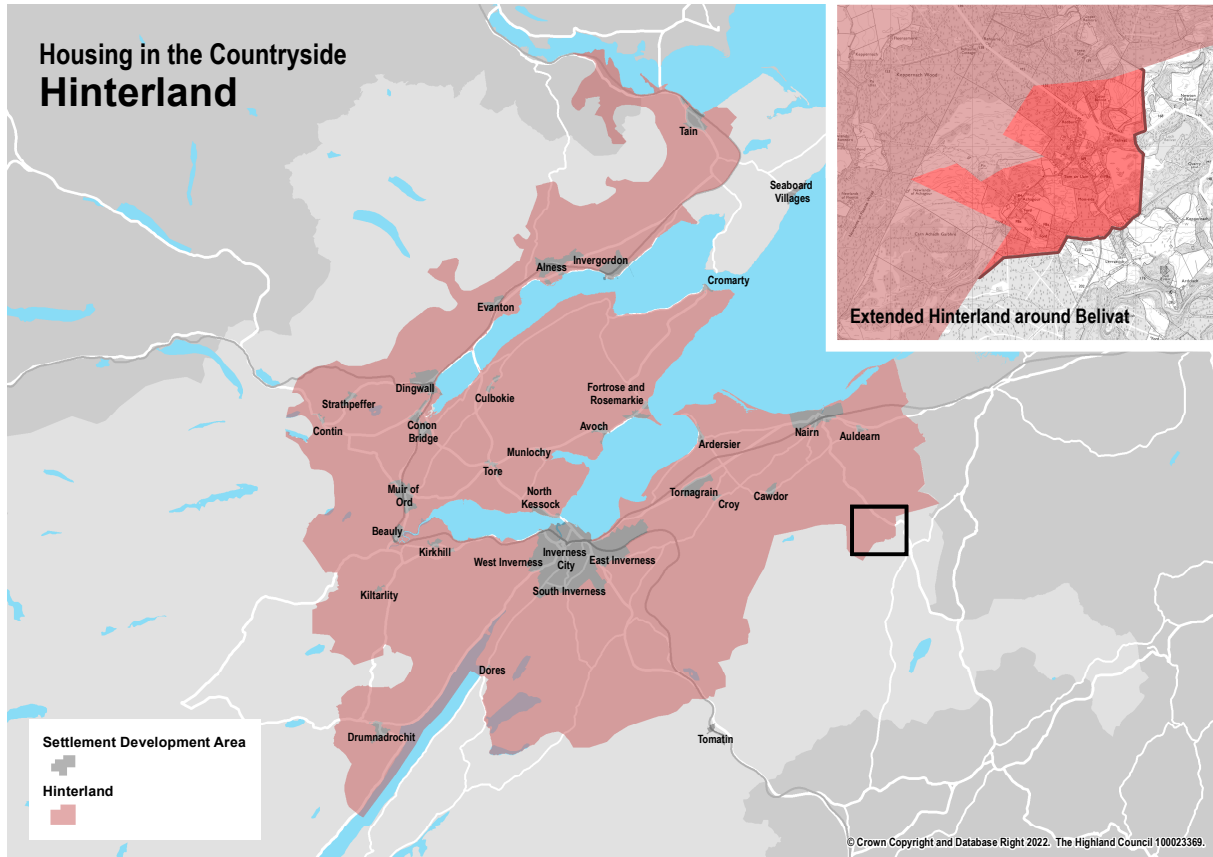
- increases the cost of public (and private) service provision such as a wired internet connection, a postal service, a private parcel delivery, a water main connection, waste collection, a public sewer connection, a mobile library van service or a school transport service.
- can result in adverse impacts on the natural environment, including breaking up ecological connectivity and fragmenting habitats.

17 Therefore, we believe that new development in the open countryside should be controlled to favour those with good reason to be there. Housing in connection with a business already in a countryside area or a new enterprise particularly suited to a rural area are existing, sensible exceptions. This includes farmers, crofters and others with a genuine, frequent need to manage their rural land use activity but also managers of kennels, catteries and other "bad neighbour" uses that are not suited to a traditional industrial estate. To allow some flexibility given that Highland has a long tradition of dispersed parish based settlement and that many indigenous people have been born and raised in rural areas, the Council's Hinterland policy and related [Rural Housing](#)⁽⁴⁾ guidance supports proportionate growth of existing housing groups without the need for a land or business management justification.

18 Following an analysis of recent house completion data, demographic trends, and likely changes in future travel to work patterns combined with this Plan's aim of reducing unnecessary car borne travel, we believe that the geographic area of open countryside currently identified as the Hinterland is still fit for purpose with one minor exception at Belivat, Nairnshire, where sporadic development has occurred causing cumulative adverse environmental and servicing effects. Our revised boundary shown in Map 2 'Hinterland' now encloses this area.

4 https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/683410/rural_housing

Map 2 Hinterland



Strategic renewable energy zones | Sònachan lùth ath-nuadhachail ro-innleachdail

- 19** As set out in 'Employment | Ag obair', ScotWind puts Scotland at the forefront of the global development of offshore wind, representing a major step forward in the transition to net zero. The Inner Moray Firth Plan area is located in close proximity to several of the offshore wind sites and the Spatial Strategy identifies two specific areas which have been shown to be best placed to form a world leading renewable energy cluster, utilising the natural deep water accesses, dockside space, and existing skills.

Sustainable tourism | Turasachd seasmhach

- 20** Tourism is an increasingly important part of the Inner Moray Firth economy and helping to sustain employment and economic activity in both urban and rural communities. The Plan supports the continued growth of the industry and the [National Tourism Strategy's](#)⁽⁵⁾ aim of creating a "responsible tourism for a sustainable future". To achieve this, we need to make the most of our existing assets and ensure that they deliver high quality, sustainable and authentic visitor experiences. The Plan therefore supports development which increases the length of people's stay, visitor spending, a wider geographic spread of attractions but also which maximise opportunities for sustainable travel and protection of the environment.
- 21** The Spatial Strategy shows three specific areas that have been identified as offering significant potential to grow in this way because of their locational and sustainable connectivity advantages. These include the Loch Ness corridor and area around Nairn, both of which are existing major tourism destinations, and an area around the Sutors of Cromarty. The Council will continue to work with partners including Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID and HIE to promote sustainable tourism for Loch Ness, and to consider its connections with the City. Similarly, partners are working together in Nairn, hosted by the local Community Planning Partnership, to capitalise on Nairn's role as a recognised visitor destination.

5 <https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-overview/>

22 In addition to Section 2 - 'Spatial strategy | Ro-innleachd spàsail', we also believe that achieving the Plan's outcomes requires up to date policies that will have general and consistent application across the Inner Moray Firth Plan area. The approved Highland wide and Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plans (HwLDP and IMFLDP1) contain general policies but many of these require updating to reflect changing circumstances such as the recognition of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies, new trends and opportunities in the development industry and wider economy, and the evolution of national planning policy through National Planning Framework 4. The following parts of the Plan set out and justify our 14 new/updated general policies, grouped by each of the 4 Plan outcomes they are intended to help achieve. They also reflect the main issues stated in the Main Issues Report published in 2021. These new/amended policies will update (not supersede) those in the HwLDP and will, when the Plan is adopted, be given primacy by the Council in making planning decisions.

Environment | Àrainneachd

23 Safeguarding and enhancing the natural, built, and cultural environment of the Inner Moray Firth is vital to the prosperity of the area, the health of its residents and the quality of its places. Protecting, managing and enhancing this environment also plays a part in tackling the climate and ecological emergency. This is one of the two overarching aims of the Plan and has shaped its content. We hope to make the Plan area more resilient to the environmental impacts of climate change and help contribute to Scotland's ambitious carbon reduction targets of a 75% reduction in all greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2045. For example, the Plan incorporates policies and proposals to protect, enhance and even create habitats such as riparian green networks that will both adapt to and mitigate adverse climate and ecological change. Adaptation to climate change is also important for the historic built environment and the Plan's (and Historic Environment Scotland's) policies will play a role in this respect.

Section 3 - General policies | Poileasaidhean coitcheann

24 The Environmental Report which accompanies the Plan, documents how we've assessed the possible environmental effects of the Plan and sought to avoid or if necessary then mitigate adverse effects but also maximise positive effects. This has included a new imperative that water, waste, heat, land and buildings are used, re-used, located and designed in a carbon clever way. Local built and cultural assets are also important environmental resources that are critical to a community's identity, distinctiveness and sense of place. The following sections and policies set out our proposed ways of influencing this outcome.

Low and zero carbon development | Leasachadh carboin ìosal agus neoni

25 Reducing emissions from our homes and other buildings is one of the most important things we can do to help Scotland's contribution to carbon reductions and address climate change. The planning system therefore has a crucial role to play in delivering effective action on climate change - it regulates how our built environment is designed and the decisions we make today will be with us for decades to come.

26 The new Low and Zero Carbon Development Policy seeks to ensure that each new build development minimises carbon emissions. The Policy has two main elements, the first relates specifically to the components which need to be addressed through the submission of a supporting statement alongside an application to ensure that applicants have taken all the steps available to them to reduce their carbon emissions. This is essentially a "gate check" at the planning application stage.

27 The second element of the Policy is to make sure that developments connect to or create a heat network where evidence shows that they are potentially technically and economically viable. Initial, high level analysis has identified the following settlements as areas where heat networks are potentially most viable and could present the best pathway to decarbonising space heating needs: Inverness, Nairn, Dingwall, Alness, Strathpeffer, Invergordon, Beauly. To inform the Low and Zero Carbon Development Guidance, further analysis will be undertaken to identify heat zones in Highland in accordance with the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021.

- 28** To support the delivery of the Policy, a Low and Zero Carbon Development Guidance document will be prepared which provides greater detail on the Council's expectations of applicants in meeting Policy 1 'Low and Zero Carbon Development'. Only when the Plan is adopted do we propose to apply Policy 1 and for the Low and Zero Carbon Development Guidance to become a material consideration in planning decisions.

Policy 1

Low and Zero Carbon Development

Each new build development proposal must minimise carbon emissions. A Low and Zero Carbon Development Section must be included within the Supporting Statement submitted as part of a planning application to demonstrate how this has been achieved. The information provided should be commensurate with the nature and scale of the proposed development.

The Council's Low and Zero Carbon Development Guidance document should be used to inform the statement and it is expected that the following components will need to be addressed (as appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposal):

1. "Fabric first" approach to maximise the thermal efficiency of the building.
2. Siting and design to maximise and manage solar gain.
3. On-site renewable energy generation.
4. On-site energy storage.
5. Zero direct emissions at source - heating/cooling low carbon heat source.
6. Future proofed electricity load capacity.
7. Other methods and innovations to decarbonise development (including the potential for nature-based solutions).

For proposals with space heating needs which are located within areas identified by the Council as a Heat Network Zone (included within the Low and Zero Carbon Development Guidance):

- All developments will be required to connect to an existing heat network where available. Where one does not already exist, Major Developments will be encouraged to create a new heat network.
- Where applications can demonstrate that connection to a heat network is not viable as part of the development, the proposal will need to be future proofed to allow connections to heat networks when one becomes available. In such cases an agreed network design will be required.
- Where the applicant can demonstrate that connection to a heat network is neither viable nor the most appropriate heating solution, both as part of the development and likely in the future, alternative low and zero carbon emitting heat arrangements will be required.

Outwith Heat Network Zones, developers are encouraged to consider the creation of or connection to existing heat networks as a means of heating system.

Whilst the following development proposals are exempt from this policy, the Council would encourage developers to consider the broad issues and opportunities to deliver low and zero carbon development:

- Buildings which will not be heated or cooled other than by heating provided solely for the purpose of frost protection.
- Buildings which have an intended life of less than two years.
- Any other buildings exempt from Building Standards.

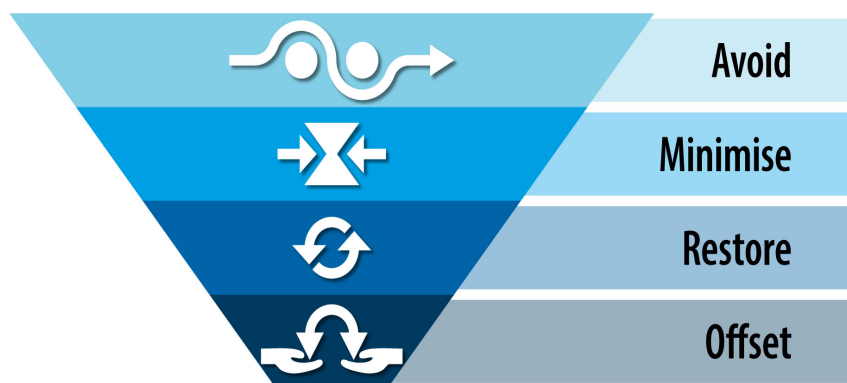
Nature protection, restoration and enhancement | Dìon, ath-leasachadh agus meudachadh nàdair

- 29** The Inner Moray Firth is home to some of the most biodiverse habitats and species across Scotland. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and emerging National Planning Framework 4 all place duties on the Council, to address

biodiversity loss through the planning system, by developing mechanisms that not only prevent biodiversity loss, but deliver biodiversity enhancement over the short, medium and long term.

- 30** Figure 1 'Mitigation hierarchy' has been developed to assess and address biodiversity loss and achieve net gain when considering development proposals, with schemes designed to achieve net gain through seeking opportunities for enhancement at every level of the hierarchy. The use of suitable ecological surveys will be required to inform site layouts and designs to avoid and reduce negative impacts to biodiversity and inform selection of the most appropriate measures to compensate any biodiversity loss and deliver enhancement.

Figure 1 Mitigation hierarchy



- 31** All development sites may have some value for biodiversity, and some may have a protected site within and/or adjacent to them. These may be protected at International, UK, Scottish or local level, as statutory or non-statutory protected sites. These sites will be assessed with regard to the Highland wide Local Development Plan Policy 57 (Natural Built and Cultural Heritage).

- 32** Additionally, all wild birds, certain wild animals and plants are afforded differing levels of protection under European and/or UK law, including legal protection from deliberate or reckless damage, disturbance or obstruction to their habitats and/or place of shelter. The impact of a development on these natural assets will be assessed with regards to the Highland wide Local Development Plan Policy 58 (Protected Species).

Policy 2

Nature Protection, Restoration and Enhancement

All developments must enhance biodiversity, including, where relevant, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks and the connections between them. Any potential adverse impacts of development proposals on biodiversity, nature networks and the natural environment must be minimised through careful planning and design and following the mitigation hierarchy. Design and layouts must show how they have considered enhancing biodiversity, safeguarding the services that the natural environment provides and building the resilience of nature by enhancing nature networks and maximising the potential for restoration.

Local Developments

Local developments will only be supported if they include appropriate measures to integrate nature-based solutions and enhance biodiversity, in proportion to the nature and scale of the proposed development. All new local housing development, excluding householder alterations and extensions, and all other local development will be expected to deliver demonstrable net biodiversity enhancements above an agreed baseline. These enhancements can be provided onsite, or on other land within the applicant's ownership or control, and secured through planning conditions. Alternatively, a biodiversity enhancement developer contribution may be paid to facilitate collective biodiversity enhancements within the catchment of the closest main settlement of the proposed development.

National, Major and EIA Developments

Developments proposals for national, major and EIA development will only be supported where it is demonstrated that the proposal will conserve and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks within and adjacent to the site, so that they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention, including through future management.

To inform this, proposals should:

- be based on an understanding of the existing characteristics of the site and its local, regional and national ecological context prior to development, including the presence of any irreplaceable habitats or species;
- wherever feasible, integrate and make best use of nature-based solutions, demonstrating how this has been achieved;
- be supported by an assessment of potential negative effects which should be fully mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy prior to identifying enhancements;
- provide significant biodiversity enhancements, in addition to any proposed mitigation.
- take into account the community benefit of biodiversity and nature networks.

Biodiversity enhancements proposed through development will require to be delivered within an agreed timescale and should include supporting nature networks, linking to and strengthening habitat connectivity within and beyond the development, where appropriate.

Any submission should include management arrangements for long-term retention and monitoring of the approved biodiversity enhancements, wherever appropriate.

Planning Guidance

Non-statutory planning guidance on the provision of nature-based solutions and biodiversity enhancements, including developer contributions where appropriate, will be prepared by the Council. This guidance will be used to inform development proposals.

- 33** The provision of water supply and waste water infrastructure to support the level of development promoted in this Plan has potential for adverse impacts on the Moray Firth SAC, River Moriston SAC, Urquhart Bay Woods SAC and Loch Ashie SPA. The effect of development on the water quality of Loch Flemington SPA is a specific risk that requires attention. Due to water quality issues in the loch there must be no increase in phosphorous discharge as a result of development in the water catchment. Policy 3 'Water and Waste Water Infrastructure Impacts in the Nairn and Inverness Areas' outlines measures required to ensure no adverse impacts on the integrity of these European sites.

Policy 3

Water and Waste Water Infrastructure Impacts in the Nairn and Inverness Areas

In line with Policy 65 of the Highland wide Local Development Plan, all allocated developments in the Nairn and Inverness areas are required to connect to the public sewer (as defined in the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1986). Improvements to the strategic wastewater infrastructure in the area will be required to accommodate the level of development supported in this Plan. Such improvements must ensure that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the bottlenose dolphin qualifying interest of the Moray Firth SAC in terms of the level of waste water treatment, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

In considering the need to increase the level of abstraction from existing sources, or the need for other sources of abstraction to accommodate the level of development supported by this Plan, there must be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Morison SAC, Urquhart Bay Woods SAC and/or Loch Ashie SPA as a result of reduced water levels/flows on the relative qualifying features either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. Developers are required to submit Construction Environmental Management Plans and Operational Environmental Management Plans for controlling water quality and sedimentation and water flows, plus mitigating against disturbance when abstracting water and mitigating impacts of reduced or increased water levels.

All development within the water catchment of Loch Flemington SPA must facilitate the ecological recovery of the loch by using appropriate foul drainage arrangements. It must be ensured that there is no overall increase in phosphorous discharge to the catchment.

Appropriate solutions include connection to public sewer, diversion of waste water outwith the catchment or upgrading an existing septic tank within the catchment to a higher standard of treatment.

Safeguarding greenspace | Dìon raointean uaine

34 Greenspaces are shown in the Main Settlement maps and are protected from development by Policy 4 'Greenspace'. These are the discrete and easily identifiable green and blue (waterside or waterbody) spaces that form an important part of the wider green network, and contribute to the character and setting of a place and provide amenity, biodiversity and/or recreation benefits as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation opportunities. Greenspaces may overlap with areas designated for other purposes such as Conservation Areas or environmentally protected places such as Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The greenspaces shown in the Proposed Plan were identified through an [audit](#)⁽⁶⁾ undertaken in 2021.

Policy 4

Greenspace

Greenspace identified in the maps within this document and any other greenspace which meets the glossary definition (of greenspace) is safeguarded from development.

Development proposals which result in the loss of outdoor sports facilities will only be supported where the proposal:

6 <https://arcg.is/8zSTy>

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- i. is ancillary to the principal use of the site as an outdoor sports facility; or
- ii. involves only a minor part of the facility and would not affect its use; or
- iii. meets a requirement to replace the facility which would be lost, either by a new facility or by upgrading an existing facility to provide a better quality facility. The location will be convenient for users and the overall playing capacity of the area will be maintained; or
- iv. can demonstrate that there is a clear excess of provision to meet current and anticipated demand in the area, and that the site would be developed without detriment to the overall quality of provision.

Green networks | Lionraidhean uaine

- 35** Green networks provide the physical, visual and habitat connections for greenspaces and therefore ensure accessibility for both wildlife and people. Development can be more flexibly accommodated within or adjacent to a green network as long as the network's connectivity and integrity is maintained and it is incorporated into a development as a positive landscape and design feature.
- 36** We believe Green Networks should be identified, safeguarded and enhanced because they make up the natural infrastructure that is important to the physical, visual and habitat connectivity of green spaces and therefore their accessibility to people and wildlife. Green Networks are identified in the Main Settlement maps and are referred to through Placemaking Priorities for settlements and in site developer requirements.

Policy 5

Green Networks

Development proposals within or close to an identified Green Network will be assessed as to the extent to which they:

- safeguard, enhance or extend that Green Network;
- affect the physical, visual and habitat connectivity⁽⁷⁾ (either adversely or positively) of that Network; and
- offer any mitigation which assists the safeguarding, enhancement or extension of that Green Network, including the physical, visual or habitat connectivity effects.

Employment | Ag obair

37 The other overarching aim of the Plan is to support the transition to a green circular economy - one that is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. The transformations needed to tackle climate change and assist the area to recover from the pandemic and adjust to Brexit, mean that green investment is a priority. Measures are set out throughout the Plan which will help deliver this, including:

- reinforcing the role of town centres as the prime destinations for people and business by helping our centres adapt to current economic challenges and ensuring they continue to function as sustainable cores of our communities;

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

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- directing development to the places which are well connected and where it is most economic to utilise spare or create expanded capacity in local infrastructure and community facilities;
- responding to the supply and demand pressures within the commercial property market by allocating a range of business and industrial land, both in terms of scale and location;
- the introduction of a new policy that better safeguards existing industrial land from competing uses and promotes new sites to come forward for development;
- delivering a strategy which utilises our natural and cultural resources and supports the prosperity of key growth sectors for the region's future, particularly sustainable tourism and renewable energy.

Town centre first | Meadhan a' bhaile an toiseach

38 The Plan seeks to reinforce the role of town centres as the heart of our communities.

The experiences during and since the pandemic have demonstrated the need for our town centres to continue to be the prime destinations where people and businesses invest their time and money. Fundamental to their success will be proactive and coordinated resources from both the public and private sectors.

39 The Town Centre First Policy, which directs all significant footfall generating development to the main town centres of the Plan area, has been strengthened to tighten up on out of town retail, provide greater support for town centre living and increase flexibility for repurposing existing buildings. The aim is to help attract a wide range of uses which are active throughout the day and evening.

40 The policy applies to the town centres which play a particularly important economic, social and cultural role within their respective settlement and hinterland. The boundaries for each are set out within the relevant Main Settlement maps for Alness, Beauly, Dingwall, Invergordon, Inverness, Muir of Ord, Nairn and Tain.

Policy 6

Town Centre First

Only in exceptional circumstances will development which generates significant footfall be acceptable outside of town centres. Developments outwith the designated town centres must provide a sequential approach which clearly demonstrates that there are no suitable sites available in the nearby town centre(s) and that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the vitality or viability of that town centre(s). This must consider all opportunities for regeneration through reuse or redevelopment of existing sites or buildings. Should the scale, type and viability of the proposal be shown not to be suitable for that town centre, then edge of town centre locations are favoured second. Out-of-centre locations will only be considered where they are easily accessible by a choice of sustainable transport modes and there is an overriding economic or community benefit deriving from the development.

Developers need to consider how appropriate the nature of their proposal is to the scale and function of the centre within which it is proposed. Exceptions may be made for any ancillary uses that support existing and proposed developments.

This sequential approach does not apply to proposals which meet the specified uses and developer requirements of site allocations located within designated town centres.

Significant footfall developments include:

- retail;
- restaurants;
- commercial;
- leisure uses;
- offices;
- hotels;

- community and cultural heritage facilities; and
- public buildings including libraries, education and healthcare facilities.

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

To encourage a mix of housing types and tenures within town centres, the Council will consider a reduction/removal of the standard affordable housing contribution rate of 25% for developments of four or more housing units. This would only apply to developments within designated town centres. A clear justification must be provided and early engagement with the Council is necessary to agree any renegotiated affordable housing contribution rate.

Proposals for conversion of buildings to other footfall generating uses, including to residential use, in town centres will be supported, providing there is no loss of existing or potential viable footfall generating use(s). Proposals for conversion to residential use must demonstrate that the development will not adversely affect the town centre's prime retail area and that the property has been marketed for its existing use at a reasonable market price/rent without success for a minimum period of 6 months. For upper floor conversions (excluding hotels) support will be given without the requirement for marketing where it can be demonstrated that the proposals would contribute towards a balanced mix of uses.

Development must be considered against the Agent of Change principle and ensure that established noise and other nuisance-generating uses (such as live music venues) remain viable and can continue or grow without unreasonable restrictions being placed on them.

Renewable energy sector | Roinn cumhachd ath-nuadhachail

- 41** This Plan supports the area to maximise local and Scotland-wide benefits from investment in renewable energy and place the Highlands at the heart of the drive towards net-zero. The area's legacy of strategically important oil and gas fabrication sites and abundance of renewable energy resources off its coast mean it is ideally placed to be at the forefront of the fast moving green energy revolution. The [ScotWind](#)⁽⁸⁾ alone is a multi-billion pound, 50 year pipeline of offshore wind projects planned for the Outer Moray Firth and offers a unique chance build a green, sustainable economy which places our natural assets at its centre. The Council's [Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#)⁽⁹⁾ and NPF4 highlight the importance which this industry can bring to both Highland and wider Scotland, and for supporting local and national outcomes relating to a just transition and decarbonisation. To ensure that these economic and regeneration opportunities are delivered alongside the protection of the environment, ongoing engagement will be necessary with key agencies, particularly in relation to safeguarding the integrity of the internationally and nationally important natural heritage of the Cromarty and Moray Firths.
- 42** The area's nationally important status has been further recognised through the Scottish Government and UK Government jointly identifying the Inverness and Cromarty Firth as one of the two new Green Freeports in Scotland. A cross-sector partnership is developing a series of proposals which includes the main ports in the Cromarty Firth and the Moray Firth; Port of Cromarty Firth, Port of Nigg, Port of Inverness, Ardersier and Highland Deephaven. These proposals aim to transform Highland's economy and help to regenerate communities. The ambitions of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport go beyond being the prime location for assembly, operation and maintenance services and extend to becoming

8 <https://www.crownstatescotland.com/our-projects/scotwindprogramme>

9 <https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=3028e38a2bc848cfba0db39d7fbda29b>

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an international base for fabrication and manufacturing of renewable energy components and a leading research and educational hub. Together these components would establish the Inner Moray Firth as a global centre of excellence in renewable energy.

- 43** The transition to alternative fuels, such as hydrogen, is accelerating and within the timescales of this Plan will likely become an integral part of our everyday lives. A number of proposals are emerging across the region, including the "North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme", which forms a core part of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport Vision. It aims to develop a state-of-the-art hydrogen hub in the Inner Moray Firth and would produce, store and distribute "green" hydrogen to Highland, Scotland, other parts of the UK and Europe.
- 44** In recognition of the Council's support for the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport project, and to maximise the benefits it can bring, this Plan seeks to enable its delivery. As part of the Council's contribution to the partnership leading the Green Freeport project, advice is being provided on how prospective Green Freeport developments can address national and local planning policies. The Council is also supporting and facilitating work with communities and partners as part of its place based approach in the parts of the Inner Moray Firth most directly linked with the Green Freeport. It is recognised that a degree of flexibility will be required to maximise the opportunities which may arise during the Plan period.
- 45** The Plan supports the growth of the sector by identifying a range of business and industrial sites, including each of the main ports in the region. The Council will also consider creating Masterplan Consent Areas (MCAs) for key ports and other strategically important sites, including for housing, to help assist the industry by streamlining the planning process.

Industrial land | Fearann gnìomhachais

- 46** The Council's Business and Industrial Land Audit 2018 provides a strategic overview of the supply and availability of land allocated for use classes 4, 5 and 6. The Audit has been used to inform the local development plan strategy, Policy 7 and relevant site allocations for business and industrial use. This Plan review reintegrates the fundamental shortfall in

industrial land in and around Inverness and highlights that without investment, it is likely to pose a major risk to the Plan area's future competitiveness and restrict economic growth.

Despite demand remaining high, the existing stock of industrial property relatively old and no new supply is in the pipeline. Work is currently underway to redevelop the former Longman landfill site for business and industrial uses, however, this alone will not meet all future needs.

There is also strong demand for, and significant under investment in, small scale industrial units which serve local businesses and communities. These units form an important part of the commercial property market providing incubator and start up opportunities.

- 47** To address this imbalance in the supply and demand for industrial land, the Plan introduces a new Industrial Land Policy which aims to better protect the current supply of industrial sites, including the industrial allocations which are set out in the Plan for such uses, and to encourage new sites to come forward.

Policy 7

Industrial Land

All **sites allocated** for Industry only in this Plan are safeguarded for Classes 4, 5 and 6.

All **existing industrial sites** will be safeguarded for such uses and proposals to redevelop them to uses other than class 4, 5 and 6 will not be supported.

Proposals for new industrial development on **land not allocated** in this Plan, including land outwith settlement development areas, will be supported if it can be demonstrated that it is a sustainable location and accords with relevant policies set out in the development plan. Key policy issues will be whether the site:

- in a location which supports or has the potential to support sustainable travel;
- does not adversely impact the amenity of neighbouring properties; and
- does not adversely impact the environment.

Small scale industrial units (Class 4, 5 and 6) between 40 to 100m² will be encouraged as part of suitable major developments (50+ housing units or 2 hectares+) as part of providing **mixed communities** with local employment/enterprise opportunities. Council support is dependent on the applicant demonstrating that there is no adverse impact on the proposed or existing residents of the area and the transport network and suitable waste management arrangements can be established. Siting and design and landscaping will likely be important mitigation measures for addressing potential amenity impacts. In areas of high industrial demand and where a public body has the resources to take forward the development, a gifted transfer of serviced land with suitable road access would be welcomed.

Proposals which seek to change the use of an industrial site will only be allowed in **exceptional cases**. Applications must be supported by an Industrial Land Impact Statement which provides a clear justification for the change of use. Where an applicant is seeking to demonstrate that the retention of a site is not economically viable, the Council will require the applicant to provide detailed development appraisals. Consideration should be given to the viability of retaining the site:

- in its current format;
- following selective demolition;
- following clearance and complete redevelopment for new employment uses; and
- following clearance and redevelopment for mixed-use development incorporating an element of employment uses within it.

Change of use will only be permitted where there is no alternative site in the local area which can accommodate the proposed development.

Applicants will be expected to clearly demonstrate that the site has been actively marketed at a reasonable price that reflects the employment use for a minimum of 12 months.

This policy does not apply to any of the designated **town centres** listed in Policy 6 'Town Centre First'. Proposals to redevelop industrial sites to other uses will be supported in town centres.

All development proposals must be considered against the Agent of Change principle and ensure that established noise and other nuisance-generating uses (including industrial sites) remain viable and can continue or grow without unreasonable restrictions being placed on them.

Growing communities | Coimhearsnachdan a tha a' fàs

- 48** Our desired outcome is a future network of Inner Moray Firth communities that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. This means they must be well-designed, safe, socially inclusive, healthy, vibrant, easy to move around places with adequate supporting infrastructure and facilities.
- 49** Past and current trends suggest that this ideal future Inner Moray Firth won't happen without policy intervention. Our likely future population will be stable but ageing. Our communities will continue to grow but often in locations that are environmentally unsustainable and where public infrastructure networks will struggle to cope. In terms of housing provision, waiting lists will not be cleared by the number of houses presently being built and there will be a shortfall in accommodation fully adapted to the needs of the ageing population. The following sections and policies set out how we propose to make positive changes.

Placemaking | Dèanamh àite

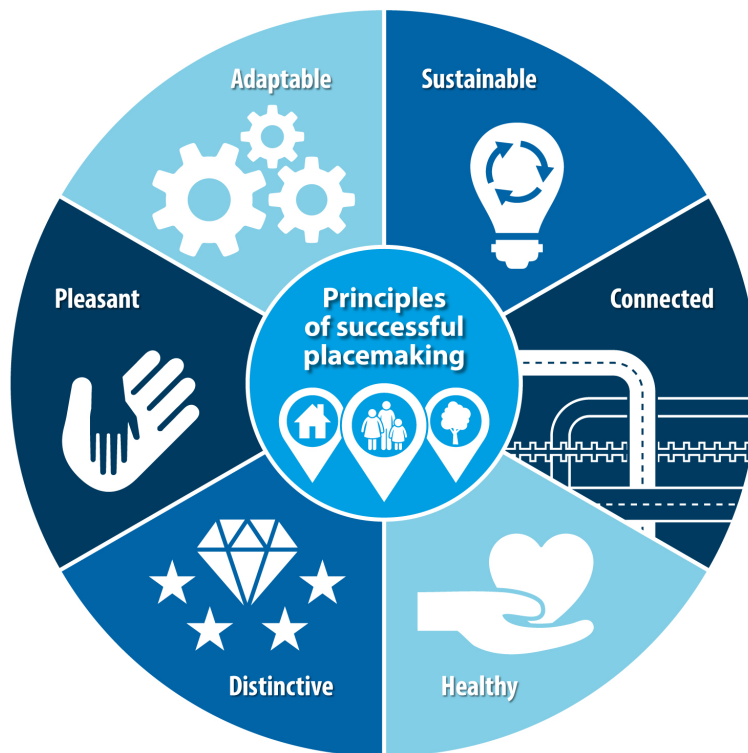
- 50** In recent years, across Highland, lifestyles and social attitudes have been changing, with more residents wishing to live in a friendly and welcoming community which has quick and easy access to shops, work places, community facilities and local services, allowing them to spend less time commuting and more time with family and friends. This coupled with the

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Council Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration in May 2019, requiring the Council to prioritise the protection of our finite resources is prompting our desire to move away from suburban low density, edge of town living. Instead, it is the Council's ambition to create sustainable, good quality, well-designed and connected communities built at the right density in the right location, all of which combine to achieve good placemaking whilst at the same time protecting our finite natural and biodiversity resources.

- 51** To achieve this, the Council is embedding the 6 fundamentals of placemaking into every stage of the design, planning and development process, through the use of various "Design Tools".

Figure 2 Placemaking principles



- 52** These individual Design Tools are designed to be used independently of each other at differing stages and for differing purposes of the development process, but should come together to attain a single cohesive and comprehensive scheme. The Design Tools are split between the initial design phase and the regulation process as shown in Table 4 'Placemaking design tools'.

Table 4 Placemaking design tools

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

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Local Place Plans.	A plan developed by the community which gives them the opportunity to develop proposals for the development and use of land in the place where they live.
Placemaking Audit.	New Highland Council tool introduce for developers and Council to use to guide, inform and assess new developments.
Regulation Process Tools to describe, illustrate and support the development during assessment:	
Design and Access Statements ⁽¹⁾ .	Design and Access Statements must be submitted to accompany all planning applications for permission for Major or National developments as defined for Development Management purposes.
Design Statements ⁽¹⁾ .	Design Statements must be submitted for those applications defined as "local developments" for Development Management purposes within the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Areas; • National Scenic Areas; • Site of a Scheduled Monument; • Historic Battlefields; • Curtilage of a Category A Listed Building; and • Historic Garden/Designed Landscape.

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

53 Few schemes will require every Design Tool to be used, but each tool is designed to involve a creative and collaborative process which engages all interested parties. The aim and function of each is to create and deliver sustainable, distinctive and connected developments and wider communities, which respects and enhances the site, wider location and natural resources. Details of each Design Tool are contained in Appendix 3 - 'Glossary | Beag-fhaclair'

and further information can be found within numerous [Planning Advice Notes and Guidance available on-line](#)⁽¹⁰⁾. Unless a need for such is identified in exceptional circumstances through preapplication discussions, these design tools are not expected to apply to householder applications and applications for minor engineering works.

- 54** To bring together the good advice and policy which exists and ensure it is consistently applied, the Council will prepare non-statutory planning guidance in the context of the provisions of NPF4 Policy 14 – Design, quality and place, and Annex D – Six Qualities of Successful Places. This guidance is expected to set out detailed provisions relevant to each of the placemaking principles in Figure 2 above to assist in the detailed implementation of Policy 8 Placemaking, including information to be provided in placemaking audits.

Policy 8

Placemaking

The Council's ambition is for all future developments to create high quality successful places to live, work and relax which are energy, infrastructure and land-take efficient, whilst at the same time being rich in natural and cultural heritage through protection and enhancement.

Therefore all proposals must follow a site design-led approach, which must be demonstrated by outlining which Design Tool(s) have been utilised and why; how the scheme has evolved and the changes adopted as a result of using the Design Tool and feedback from the public consultation and/or consultees (if appropriate) within the Supporting Statement submitted as part of an application.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/collections/planning-advice-notes-pans/>

Development proposals of 4 or more dwellings and major non housing applications will be expected to submit a placemaking audit. The Council will prepare non-statutory planning guidance to support and deliver a tailored approach to the Six Qualities of Successful Places (NPF4 Annex D) and advise on information to be included in placemaking audits.

Delivering development | A' libhrigeadh leasachadh

- 55** If future development is to be economically viable and environmentally sustainable then it must be capable of being supported by adequate capacity in local infrastructure networks and community facilities. Ideally, all development would simply be directed to places where this capacity already exists. However, this is not possible because few if any places have spare capacity in all networks and facilities and even if they did then people may not wish to live, work or send their children to school in these places. Conversely, many people wish to live, work or send their children to school in a limited number of popular places which results in the networks and facilities of these settlements becoming overburdened. The most obvious current example is school capacity within the City of Inverness where most schools have existing or projected capacity issues. In locations where there are particular challenges for the alignment of infrastructure and development the site specific Developer Requirements include the preparation of a Delivery Plan to describe the timing, funding and delivery of each element of infrastructure relative to each part of a development.
- 56** Previous Highland development plans have taken a view that all communities should grow organically - i.e. at a rate proportionate to their existing size and/or in line with past trends. The public and private sector costs of upgrading networks and facilities haven't been seen as a primary factor in deciding the Spatial Strategy. However, this Plan proposes a more focused approach. To address climate change and post pandemic economic recovery we wish to better target future growth at locations with environmentally sustainable transport choices and where network/facility capacity either exists or can be created at least cost to the public and private sector. Put simply, the Plan allocates fewer development sites than

in the IMFLDP1 but in more viable and sustainable places. We have been more precise in listing what network/facility capacity deficiencies we believe exist and how, when and by whom they should be remedied. We believe that this transparency should offer more certainty to developers and public agencies in setting their investment programmes and also to communities in knowing that capacity will be provided in parallel with new development.

- 57** National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) seeks to encourage, promote and facilitate an infrastructure first approach to land use planning, which puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking. This requires local development plans and delivery programmes to be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. This Plan was prepared under transitional arrangements and its approach to delivering development and infrastructure set out in Policy 9 does not fully align with the “infrastructure first” intentions of NPF4. Until such time as the provisions of NPF4 and the Local Development Planning Guidance 2023 can be addressed through the new Highland Local Development Plan, the Council’s Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance and Delivery Programme will play an important role in implementing Policy 9 to ensure that the infrastructure and facilities necessary to support development are identified and delivered.

Policy 9

Delivering Development and Infrastructure

The Council will assess each development proposal in terms of its impact on each relevant infrastructure network⁽¹¹⁾ and community facility⁽¹²⁾ capacity. Developers will be required to demonstrate that adequate capacity to serve each proposal exists or can be created via a programmed improvement and/or by direct developer provision or funding. In doing so, developers should take account of the following.

- the Council's [Delivery Programme](#)⁽¹³⁾ which sets out further detail of current programmed capacity improvements and requirements.
- the Council's [Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance](#)⁽¹⁴⁾ which specifies required financial contributions and standards in terms of network and facility improvements.
- settlement-specific Placemaking Priorities set out in this Plan.
- the site-specific Developer Requirements listed in this Plan for each main settlement allocation.

Developments on allocated sites and larger (4 or more homes or non residential equivalent) windfall proposals must be appropriately masterplanned. Timely provision of adequate infrastructure network and community facility capacity must be demonstrated through the

11 Infrastructure network includes digital, water, green, sewerage, active travel, bus, road, rail, surface water drainage, electric vehicle charging and waste management networks.

12 Community facility include education, public sports, public greenspace, allotments/community growing, community meeting space, and health facilities.

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

14 https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712087/developer_contributions

developer's masterplan and be secured by condition and/or legal agreement. Proposals that don't demonstrate that adequate capacity exists or can be created will not comply with this policy.

Increasing affordable housing | A' dèanamh barrachd thaighean aig prìs reusanta

- 58** Many current and future residents of the Inner Moray Firth Plan area cannot and will not be able to afford to own or rent an adequate home. Highland's latest [Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#) ⁽¹⁵⁾ (HNDA) evidences that despite recent high levels of affordable housing completions that there has been little impact on the backlog of unmet housing need. The reasons and remedies for this are complex but one solution is to alter planning policy to encourage more affordable housing units. Policy 10 'Increasing Affordable Housing' seeks to achieve this.
- 59** The HNDA, the Highland Housing Register and house completions data record that almost two thirds of Inner Moray Firth housing need and market demand is for properties within the Inverness Housing Market Area and in particular within the City of Inverness. Apart from the issues of school and strategic road capacity, Inverness City is also the most environmentally sustainable and economically viable place to accommodate future growth. Accordingly, we believe it is reasonable to seek a higher proportion of affordable housing from larger developments within the City boundary.
- 60** The largest development sites may take many years to build out and most current planning permissions and associated legal agreements don't insist that affordable housing units are delivered in a timeous manner. For example, it is quite common for 25% of units to be delivered in each phase as affordable but with no guarantee for when each phase will commence. The Highland private housing market is relatively closed in that it has a limited

15 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/205/planning_-_policies_advice_and_service_levels/556/housing_land_information

number of volume builders who each control several large sites and therefore have a financial self interest in regulating the availability of new properties. This rationing of supply can stymie the commencement of later phases and the affordable units that could be built within them. We wish to encourage the owners and developers of the larger sites to see how the phasing and servicing of these sites can bring forward the provision of affordable units.

- 61** Supporting higher net housing densities should, other things being equal, improve the viability of a development on a given site. For private housing development this would be less acceptable because it may compromise internal space standards, site layout quality, marketability and even development value. However, for economically marginal affordable unit development sites, a planning policy that endorses a higher net density than that prevailing in the immediate locality may allow development to happen that otherwise would not attract public subsidy. Existing Highland planning policies presume in favour of a scale, character and density of new development in keeping with that existing and adjoining. Policy 10 'Increasing Affordable Housing' proposes to remove that presumption for wholly affordable schemes where a proposal is also compliant with Policy 8 'Placemaking'. For example, an increase in net density reasonably could result from more flatted accommodation, taller buildings and/or more use of terraced blocks but not from foregoing adequate and useable public greenspace provision.

Policy 10

Increasing Affordable Housing

In accordance with Highland wide Local Development Plan Policy 32, Affordable Housing and its related Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance, the Council will expect developers to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing within the Inner Moray Firth area.

For all proposals that create 4 or more additional residential units, the Council will expect either to negotiate a Section 75 Agreement with the landowner(s) and other interested parties, or utilise other mechanisms to provide for a contribution towards affordable housing (as defined in Chapter 4 of the Guidance), such contribution being generally no less than 25% and within the City of Inverness Settlement Development Area (excepting land within the defined City Centre) no less than 35%. Negotiations will be subject to market and site conditions, and the final percentage contribution will reflect this, taking into account the financial viability of the proposal and other financial obligations.

For allocated sites with a total capacity of 50 or more homes and where public subsidy is available, the Council will expect an application to include details of servicing and phasing arrangements that prioritise the delivery of affordable units ahead of or if necessary then in parallel with market units. The Council will consider the early gifted transfer of a later phase landholding as one way of achieving this aim provided it can be serviced at a reasonable cost and in a timeous manner. Exceptions will only be permitted where the developer can demonstrate that giving priority to affordable units will unduly affect the overall viability of the site or compromise the aim of tenure diversity within a large part of it.

Subject to this Plan's Placemaking Policy and within its Main Settlements, the Council will support affordable housing development at a higher net housing density than that existing on or adjoining a proposal site.

Self and custom build housing | Taigheadas fèin-thogte agus neo-àbhaisteach

- 62** Self and custom build housing is defined as homes built or commissioned by individuals or groups of individuals for their own use. Homes built this way, offer a unique alternative to standard market housing and offer the opportunity to create innovative, greener and more affordable homes than currently offered through standard housing options. The ability for

self-builders to make their homes more energy efficient, adopt more sustainable construction methods and materials, will also help the Council achieve its Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration.

- 63** Highland rural areas have historically seen the greatest demand for and delivery of self build plots. However, in our City, towns and villages few self build plots become available and those that do, are often sold quickly and at a high price.
- 64** There is priority at a national level to increase self-build activity, with the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requiring each council to "prepare and maintain" a list of people interested in self-build across its area. Highland Council recently opened its Self Build Register, which can be completed [online](#)⁽¹⁶⁾ and we would ask anyone interested in this form of development to complete the online form.
- 65** The Council, like the Scottish Government is keen to increase the supply of self and custom build plots in sustainable locations and is therefore adopting a proactive and positive policy approach to encourage and grow urban self and custom build housing.

Policy 11

Self and Custom Build Housing

To accommodate demand and grow support for self and custom build homes, whilst offering flexibility in the housing market within the urban area, the provision of at least 5% of the total residential units for sale as serviced plots on all sites delivering 100 or more housing units is encouraged.

16 <https://www.highland.gov.uk/selfbuild>

To offer flexibility in the delivery of this policy, the site developer can market all or some of the serviced plots as "custom build sites" requiring the purchaser to use the main developer for the design and build phase. Alternatively, all serviced plots can be sold as a single entity to a formally enacted co-housing or community-led housing scheme (with the agreement of the Council, as planning authority) or sold off individually to self-builders.

The delivery of serviced plots will be controlled by the following means:

1. The site owner/developer can attach appropriate conditions regarding the finish and layout of individual plots or establish a Design Codes to cover all the serviced plots, in agreement with the Planning Authority. Any conditions or Design Codes should not render the plots unfeasible or cost prohibitive to develop and prevent innovative and environmentally friendly designs or MMC being utilised.
2. All plots should be marketed through recognised channels for a period of 12 consecutive calendar months and at the prevailing market value. If open market plots remain unsold after the initial 12 months, they will revert to the site developer for their own build out. A marketing and pricing strategy should be submitted as part of the planning application submission for approval.
3. The site planning approval will include conditions requiring the serviced plots to be completed within 3 years of a self-builder purchasing a plot and prevent the self-builder residing on the site in temporary accommodation during the build.
4. Where the number of serviced plots exceeds 5 units, the location and phasing of the plots should be broken up into smaller groups and offered for sale at differing times, prior agreed with the Council, in accordance with the development overall phasing strategy.
5. The maximum number of serviced plots to be provided on any site required by this policy, is restricted to 10 plots to avoid over-supply within any development or area.

This policy is not applicable in the redevelopment of upper-floor accommodation within urban areas.

Growing settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- 66** We wish to continue to support proportionate and appropriate rural development where it will help bolster the smallest, established settlements. We have termed these places "Growing Settlements", where the Plan supports a lesser scale of development than within the "Main Settlements" but a more positive approach than within the open countryside. We have only included settlements that have an established, sizeable cluster of development, have some development pressure, few environmental constraints to development, and facility/service networks that can accommodate additional housebuilding.
- 67** The Growing Settlements in the Plan area are listed in Table 2 'Settlement Hierarchy', located on the Map 1 'Spatial strategy' and the specific Placemaking Priorities for each are set out in Section 4 - 'Places | Àiteachan'. Our policy for guiding development in the Growing Settlements is set out as follows. Maps are included for each settlement in 'Growing settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' fàs' but please note that this is for illustrative purposes only and that the geographic extent of these images is of no policy significance.

Policy 12

Growing Settlements

A development proposal that is contained within, rounds off or consolidates a Growing Settlement listed in Tier 5 of Table 2 'Settlement Hierarchy' will be assessed against the extent to which it:

- takes account of the Placemaking Priorities identified for the individual Growing Settlement;
- is likely to help sustain, enhance or add to facilities with proposals being located within active travel distance of any facility present;
- is compatible in terms of use, spacing, character and density with development within that settlement and demonstrate high quality design;

- can utilise spare capacity in the infrastructure network (education, roads, other transport, water, sewerage etc.) or new/improved infrastructure can be provided in a cost efficient manner, taking into account the Council's requirement for connection to the public sewer other than in exceptional circumstances;
- avoid a net loss of amenity or recreational areas significant to the local community; and,
- would not result in adverse impact on any other locally important natural or cultural heritage feature, important public viewpoint/vista or open space.

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

Meeting the needs of the ageing population | A' coinneachadh ri feumalachdan an t-sluaigh a tha a' fàs nas sine

- 68** As Scotland's population continues to age, the Inner Moray Firth area has seen an increase in the over 60 population of 15.9% between 2011 and 2019 and this demographic now accounts for nearly 30% of the total IMF population. This changing demographic is already having a financial impact on the Council and its partners in delivering sufficient homes which are suitable for our aging population.
- 69** Moreover, considerable ongoing costs are incurred by NHS Highland by patients being kept long-term in hospitals, due to housing unsuitable for their needs and therefore it is key for the Council to ensure our future housing stock is suitable for our changing demographic.
- 70** Whilst the Scottish Building Standards regime now require all new homes to be accessible to ambient disabled users, the Building Standards regulations currently stop short of requiring fully wheelchair liveable homes. Therefore, to ensure an adequate supply of suitable housing for this important demographic in the future, the Council has developed a comprehensive policy to provide for this housing tenure.

Policy 13

Accessible and Adaptable Homes

In order to provide resource efficiencies and allow for residents to adapt and live in their homes all their life, new housing must be designed and constructed in a way that enables them to be adapted to meet the changing needs of their occupants over their lifetime.

The Council therefore requires, 5% of dwellings to have a "wheelchair liveable" ground floor on sites of 50 or more residential units. If evidence at the time of a planning application indicates a lower level of need, then this element of the policy will be applied flexibly.

The Council will only consider exemptions to these requirements where the applicant can provide evidence to robustly demonstrate that any of the following specific circumstances apply:

1. It is not practically achievable given the physical characteristics of the site;
2. It would significantly harm the financial viability of the scheme;
3. Site specific factors mean that step-free access to the dwelling cannot be achieved;
4. The dwellings are located on the first floor or above of a non-lift serviced multi-storey development.

In terms of the requirements for "wheelchair liveable" ground floors, the following criteria from the [Housing for Varying Needs Guidance](#)⁽¹⁷⁾ will apply:

1. Access ramps should have a minimum width of 1200mm and the entrance must be step free with a level platform of at least 1500 x 1500mm at the accessible entrance door, clear of any door swing. (7.5.6 and 7.5.7).

17 https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20131205120926uo_/

<http://www.archive2.official-documents.co.uk/document/deps/cs/HousingOutput/content/index.html>

2. A secure storage space of at least 1200 x 800mm for electrically powered scooters or outdoor chairs storage, equipped with a power socket. This may be external as part of a garage, carport or extended porch, or it may be internal as part of a utility area or store (7.14).
3. Ground floor hallways to be at least 1200mm wide, but a width of 1000mm is adequate for lengths of up to 900mm, provided there is no door opening at a right angle to the direction of the passage (10.2.3).
4. Ground floor doors to the principle rooms to have a clear opening width of 870mm, with door ironmongery at a height between 750mm and 1050mm from the floor. 10.5.7 and 10.5.9).
5. A ground floor bedroom with built-in clothes hanging space and shelved clothes storage. The space should have a minimum clear depth of 600mm and a hanging rail that can be set at a height of 1400-1500mm from the floor (11.4.8).
6. Ground floor bathroom provided which permits for someone in a wheelchair to turn through 180°, i.e. a circular area of 1500mm diameter (see diagram at 2.5.1), without being impeded by the door (14.9.2). The position of the WC should allow frontal or side transfer with a clear space of at least 750mm on one side (14.11.1) and wash basin should be positioned with its centre line at least 500mm from any wall (14.12.1).
7. Living room windows, and bedroom windows where privacy is not affected, should have a sill height no greater than 600mm from the floor, which allows a seated person to see the view outside. Glazing bars or transoms should not be positioned between 600mm and 1500mm from floor level to give an unobstructed view (16.2.1).

With respect to the above criteria, a developer may, at application stage and with the agreement of the planning authority, provide alternative ground floor unit designs tailored to the specific needs of a prospective occupier, subject to these alternative designs being of a standard at least equal to that set out in this policy.

Should this policy render any site unviable, the developer can submit an open book viability assessment as part of the planning application submission. Where the viability assessment, following independent review by the Council (the cost of which is to be borne by the applicant), confirms the requirements of this policy render the site unviable, the number of accessible and adaptable units can be varied accordingly. Where exemptions are justified on viability grounds, the minimum number of units necessary will be exempted from the requirements.

Connectivity | Ceangalachd

- 71** Most of us wish to be better connected to family, friends, work, education, community facilities, commercial opportunities, infrastructure networks, recreation, leisure, and the local environment. Although the impact of the pandemic and continuing improvements to digital connectivity have brought some of these closer to home, many of us still need or want to travel to access these things. However, our travel can have negative impacts in terms of climate change, congestion, health, safety and the wider environment.
- 72** To address this, Section 2 - 'Spatial strategy | Ro-innleachd spàsail' promotes a pattern and mix of development that should minimise the need for unnecessary travel. If we co-locate people and what they need access to, in a compact settlement or neighbourhood with good internal connectivity then we should reduce the need for travel choices that produce harmful effects. For longer journeys, the following Plan policies and investment priorities will help encourage us all to make choices that minimise our harmful impacts but still provide for travel options that are convenient, reliable and economic.

Transport strategy | Ro-innleachd còmhdhail

73 Everyone in Highland should have fair access to affordable, healthy and sustainable transport⁽¹⁸⁾ choices. This means walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport should provide the safest, most efficient and reliable choices for moving around. Transport has a fundamental role in tackling the climate and ecological emergency by ensuring road space is shared equally between the different transport modes that need it by ensuring sustainable options are prioritised, but do not unfairly disadvantage those that do need to travel by car.

Modernising the transport network

74 The evidence is compelling that we cannot simply continue to build more roads to tackle congestion and encourage never-ending growth in car travel. In a lot of places in the Plan area there is simply not enough space between buildings to fit more roads. Looking back at the places that have been delivered in the Plan area, road infrastructure has led to impacts on the quality of some places that are now dominated by the roads that serve them, making walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport less safe, attractive and competitive than driving, which has resulted in car-based living. This approach has to change to redefine the transport system we rely on so we can respond effectively to the global challenges we face. These principles are already established in [National Transport Strategy](#)⁽¹⁹⁾, are reflected in the recent publication of the [Strategic Transport Projects Review 2](#)⁽²⁰⁾ Final Report for the Highlands and Islands, and in commitments such as the Scottish Government target to make a [20% reduction in car kilometres in Scotland by 2030](#)⁽²¹⁾.

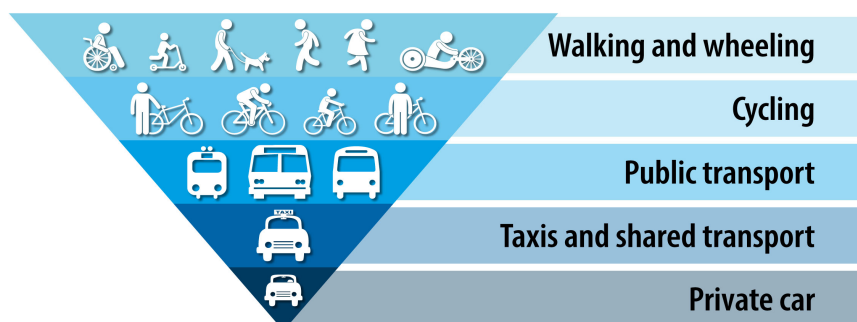
18 Sustainable transport is defined as walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and on-demand transport.

19 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/national-transport-strategy/>

20 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/strategy/strategic-transport-projects-review-2/>

21 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultation/consultation-on-the-20-reduction-in-car-km-route-map/>

Figure 3 Transport hierarchy



75 Beyond development proposals, such an approach provides a stepping stone to change the emphasis of the Council's future investment programme towards supporting sustainable transport infrastructure. This does not necessarily mean increasing costs, but rather making best use of new infrastructure to support lots of modes of travel, for the same cost as building traditional transport infrastructure, for example, by allocating road space for bike and bus lanes. To ensure we have a healthy, active population, walking, wheeling and cycling should be the easiest way to move around. The location of new development and quality of active travel infrastructure available are key factors to address to unlock the Plan area's potential for being more active. Such measures will support and enable the delivery of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept and green networks. The information in this Plan has been informed by a range of research, including up to date Active Travel audits and masterplans, which are available as supporting documents. There are also strong links between inactivity and people's health, and clear consequences of car-based living for personal and public health. To ensure healthy, fair and equal access to transport this document identifies new development in locations that are close to facilities and services that are, or can be, well connected to a sustainable transport network.

Congestion and electric vehicles

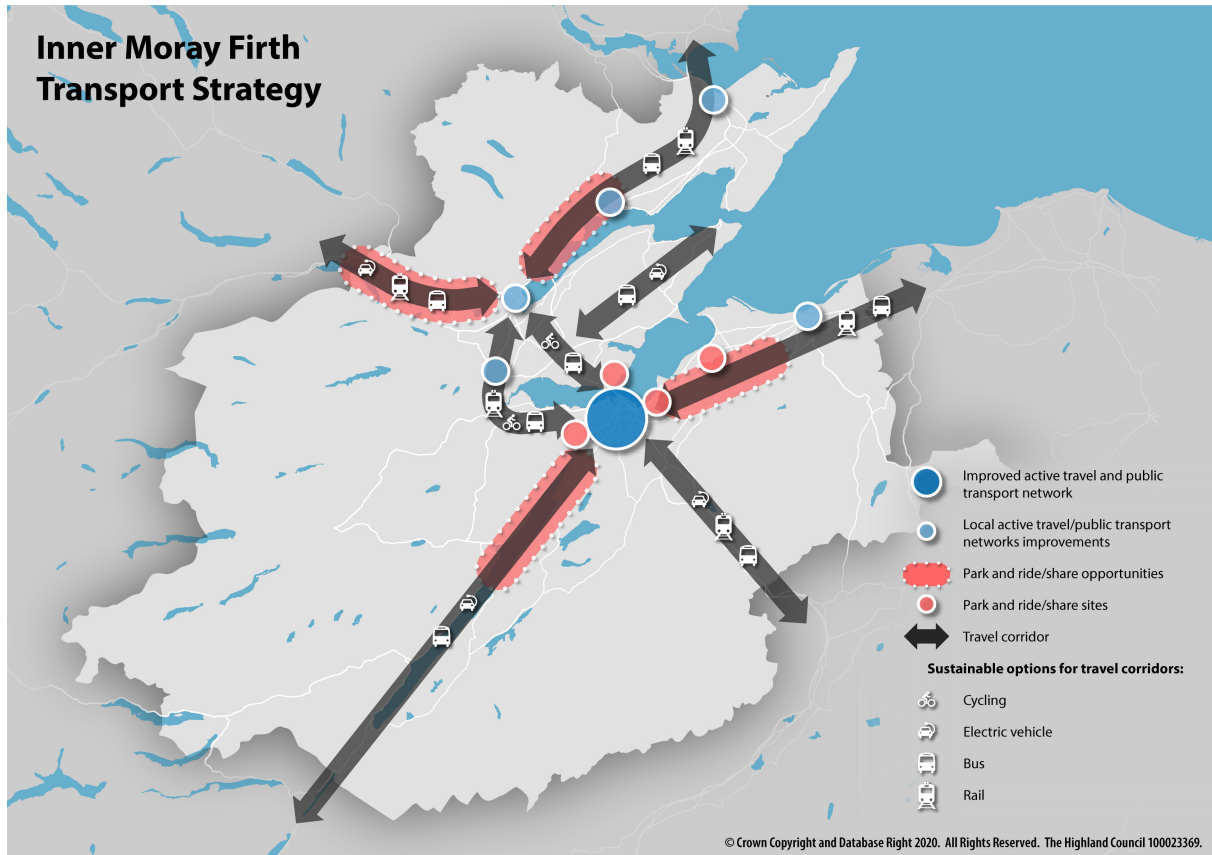
76 Tackling congestion is challenging, particularly in some of the area's towns and in Inverness, where it is most pronounced. Creating a more varied transport network where walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport are genuinely competitive with driving will make more

efficient use of available space in a fairer way for all road users. It will reduce the amount of vehicles on the road, and therefore create more space for those that do need to travel by car. Whilst new technologies like low-emissions and electric vehicles have potential to reduce the carbon footprint of transport, they will not solve the issue of congestion because the same amount of road space is required for these vehicles as is required for fossil fuel vehicles. However, it is important to recognise the potential for such technologies to tackle the area's rural challenges where the only viable mode of transport is often private car. Combined with a range of active travel and public transport interventions in the more urban places, electric vehicles and, in future, other alternative fuel technologies such as hydrogen, can contribute to tackling carbon emissions associated with transport, in combination with active travel and public transport interventions. Infrastructure needs for most electric vehicle charging can be met at home, where vehicles are parked in driveways for most of the time and where access to private chargers is easier. For people without off street parking, and where there will be need to charge in public places, including tourists to the region, further investment may be required. The Highland Council's Climate Change Team is progressing work in this area, following a study into demand and feasibility of public charging infrastructure in 2020.

Transport Strategy

- 77** This Plan is supported by an ambitious new transport strategy that ensures the creation of a modern, sustainable transport network. This is expressed in Map 3 'Transport strategy'.

Map 3 Transport strategy



Sustainable transport interventions | Eadar-theachdan còmh-dhail seasmhach

Sustainable transport interventions: Delivering the Transport Strategy

78 The Transport Strategy will be delivered through the Development Management process by applying Policy 14 'Transport' (which updates HwLDP Policy 56 - Transport) as well as ensuring the delivery of the Plan-wide interventions and settlement-scale interventions identified here and in Placemaking Priorities, Settlements maps and Site Developer Requirements:

79 For Inverness this means:

1. Creating an exemplar, fully-connected active travel system, including delivery of [Active Freeways](#)⁽²²⁾, as defined by the Active Travel Network.

22 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/49052/stpr2-phase-1-ast-project-1-active-freeways-3-feb-2021.pdf>

2. Prioritising buses on the network, particularly at known congestion points, and improving the rail infrastructure including Inverness Station.
3. Creating a network of park and ride sites at entrances to the city.
4. Effective management of city parking to support a transition to sustainable travel.
5. Improving traffic management technology to make the existing transport network as efficient as possible.
6. Reducing parking space requirements in locations where public transport and active travel options provide viable alternatives.

For other towns and villages this means:

1. Delivering active travel improvements to connect communities within and between towns and villages, including delivery of Active Freeways, as defined by the Active Travel Network.
2. Maximising the use of and connections to existing and planned new rail halts and bus stops.
3. Creating mini park and ride/share sites on strategic routes.
4. Reducing parking space requirements in locations where public transport and active travel provides a viable alternative.

80 For more rural places this means:

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

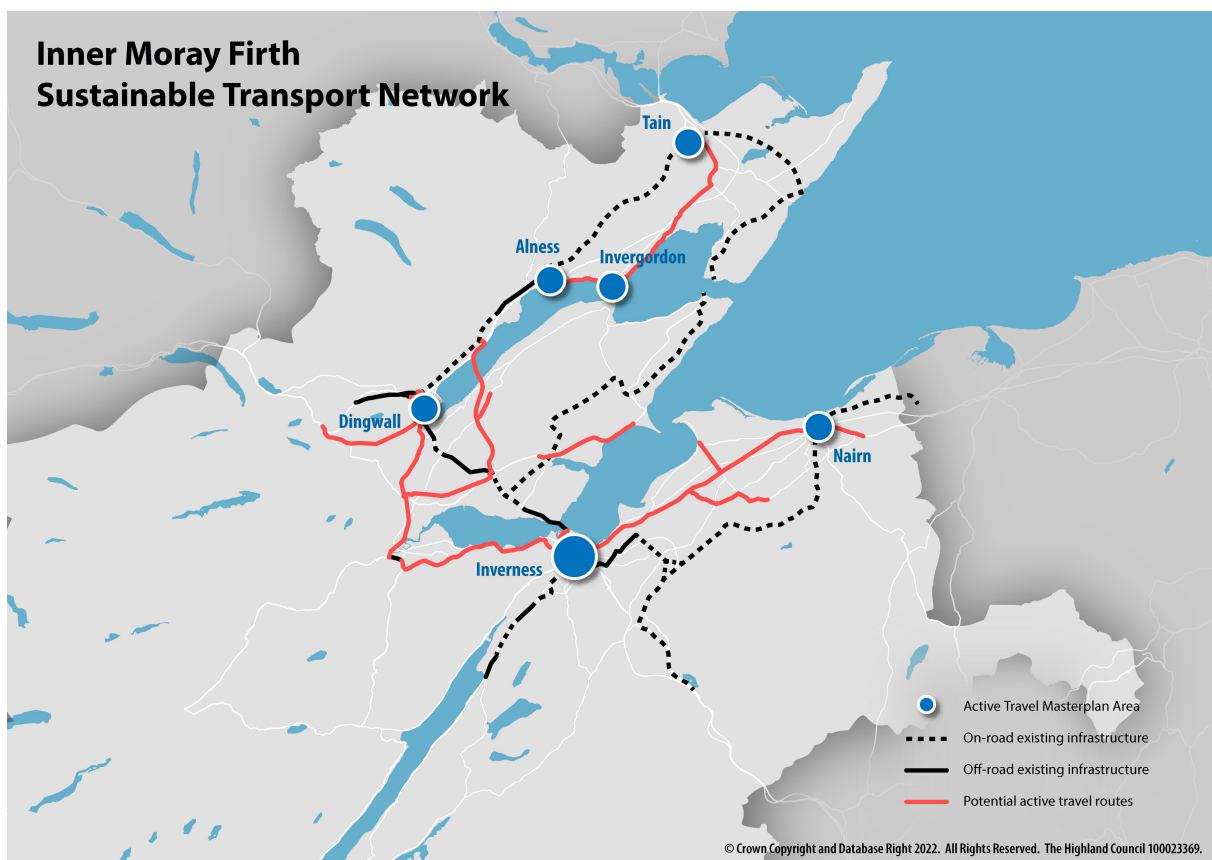
For the whole Plan area this also means:

Section 3 - General policies | Poileasaidhean coitcheann

1. Delivering a comprehensive network of Active Freeways, as defined by the Active Travel Network and between-settlement connections as shown in Map 4 'Active travel network'. Funding for these interventions will be supported by Developer Contributions, as set out in Policy 14 'Transport'. These routes include, but are not limited to: Alness to Tain; Ardesier to Nairn; Arpafeelie to Cromarty; Avoch to Fortrose; Beauly to Inverness; Beauly to Muir of Ord; Conon Bridge to Dingwall; Dingwall to Alness; Inverness to Dores; Inverness to Nairn (Croy-Cawdor); Inverness to Tomatin; Muir of Ord to Conon Bridge; Muir of Ord to Tore; Tain to Invergordon; Tain to Seaboard Villages & Nigg; Tore to Arduellie; Tore to Inverness; Tore to Munloch, and Tornagrain to Cawdor.

Sustainable transport policy | Poileasaidh còmhail seasmhach

Map 4 Active travel network



Policy 14

Transport

Development proposals should demonstrate how they can maximise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport as alternative travel options (to use of the private car) for people using the development. A proportionate assessment should be included as part of the Transport Assessment or Statement, where one is required, and is expected to include the following information:

1. Context: Appraisal of nearby committed major developments (as defined in THC Roads and Transport Development Guidance).
2. Trips: Trip generation information, specific to the location, scale and type of development, and origins of trips.
3. Users: Appraisal of the end users of the proposal and how this influences trip generation and travel choice.
4. Journey times: Representative journey times for each mode of travel expected to be available for end users of the site, including an explanation of data sources and methodologies used.
5. Route quality: Appraisal of the quality and attractiveness of routes for each mode and each origin identified.
6. Assessment: Provide an assessment of points 1 – 5 to determine the extent to which the proposal enables sustainable travel as an alternative to travel by private car. This should include any mitigation proposed to reach this goal.

Detailed supporting guidance about this information will be prepared in consultation with the development industry, transport providers and other key stakeholders.

Travel Plans should support development proposals for significant travel generating uses, or smaller-scale developments where it is important to monitor travel patterns resulting from the development. A Travel Plan should demonstrate how the proposal will support a transition to sustainable transport. The Travel Plan should include the following information:

1. Clear and measurable targets and objectives to deliver sustainable transport for that development.
2. The range of effective measures that will be implemented to mitigate the impacts of development that will deliver sustainable transport.
3. The monitoring and reporting framework that will be used to quantify the effectiveness of measures implemented, and when this will take place and be reported to the Council.
4. How the existing transport context has determined the measures considered most effective to deliver sustainable transport.
5. What mitigation will be implemented if such measures are found to be ineffective through monitoring, and how these measures will be monitored and reported to the Council.

Developer contributions will be secured to mitigate the impacts of development to support the transition to sustainable transport. These contributions are set out in the Council's Delivery Programme, and are referred to in the Developer Requirements for sites and in the Placemaking Priorities for settlements.

Where an active travel or public transport priority scheme is identified in the Plan, financial contributions towards their delivery will be sought from development proposals within the settlement, or defined catchment, on a per home or floorspace equivalent basis.