

# Masterplan Consent Areas Statement

## 1 Background

1.1 Schedule 5A Paragraph 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended requires the Highland Council periodically (at least once in each 5 year period starting from 25 July 2019) to consider making a Masterplan Consent Area (MCA) scheme and record its decision and reasons in a published Statement.

1.2 The Scottish Government has recognised that the July 2024 Statements can reflect that the associated regulations on the procedures for making an MCA scheme, and the MCA Scheme Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations are not yet in force. Scottish Ministers' May 2024 Direction in respect of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 confirmed that MCAs could potentially be used for strategically important housing sites to support growth ambitions for the area.

## 2 The Statement

2.1 The Highland Council at its Economy and Infrastructure Committee of 2 May 2024 approved the following Statement.

“As the MCA regulations are not yet in place, the Council has not yet fully identified or assessed potential locations for which it may be desirable to bring forward an MCA scheme. The Council recognises the potential benefits preparation and implementation of MCA schemes could offer Highland, in particular in support of the development of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport and supporting infrastructure. The Council intend to reconsider this once the legal basis for preparing MCAs is in place. The Scottish Government has indicated that MCAs could be used to support delivery of the local development plan. The Council will consider whether it would be desirable to make any Masterplan Consent Areas as part of our work on delivery linked to the Local Development Plan's Delivery Programme. This Statement fulfils the Council's legal requirements under Schedule 5A Paragraph 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act, as amended.”

## 3 Publication of the Statement

3.1 Scottish Government has chosen not to regulate on what the Statement must contain, how it is to be published or to whom copies of it are to be sent. Instead, draft guidance has been issued on these matters.

3.2 The draft guidance suggests that a planning authority Statement may wish to include a summary of any engagement carried out prior to making a decision about the potential for MCAs for particular locations. The Highland Council has not carried out any engagement to date.

3.3 The Statement is published electronically on the Highland Council's website at [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/809/delivery\\_programmes](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/809/delivery_programmes)

3.4 A weblink to the Statement has been sent to Scottish Ministers (Planning, Architecture & Regeneration Division), Key Agencies and Highland area community councils.