

SEA SCOPING TEMPLATE – COVER NOTE

PART 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
or
SEA Gateway
Scottish Executive
Area 1 H (Bridge)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

PART 2

An SEA Scoping Report is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled:

Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

The Responsible Authority is:

The Highland Council

PART 3

Please tick the appropriate box

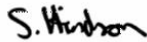
- The PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and requires an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. **or**
- The PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and requires an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. **or**
- The PPS does not require an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. However, we wish to carry out an SEA on a voluntary basis. We accept that, as this SEA is voluntary, the statutory 5 week timescale for views from the Consultation Authorities cannot be guaranteed.

SEA SCOPING TEMPLATE – COVER NOTE

PART 4

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PART 5

Signature (electronic signature is acceptable)	
Date	21 st June 2010

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report is to set out sufficient information on the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance to enable the Consultation Authorities to form a view on the consultation period and scope/level of detail that will be appropriate for the Environmental Report.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

KEY FACTS

The key facts relating to this PPS are set out below:

Name of Responsible Authority

The Highland Council

Title

Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

What prompted the Guidance

The supplementary guidance was prompted by Scottish Planning Policies focus on Green Networks and the Highland Council's commitment from their Main Issues Report for the Highland wide Local Development Plan to include policy and create supplementary guidance on Green Networks

Subject

Town Planning

Period covered by Guidance

2010 onwards

Frequency of updates

As required

Area covered by Guidance

The entire Highland Council area except that where planning is delegated to the Cairngorms National Park Authority

Purpose and/or objectives of Guidance

The purpose of the guidance is to raise awareness of the concept of green networks and facilitate the delivery of a green network in the Highland Council area.

Contact point

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DESCRIPTION OF THE GUIDANCE CONTENT

The Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance will contain the following:


- Introduction
 - This will outline the purpose, aims, status and structure of the guidance
- Definitions
 - Definition of a green network will be discussed and relevant linkages will be made to the consolidated SPP.
- Vision
 - What we wish to achieve through the creation of a green network
- Objectives
 - Specific and measurable objectives will be set out and be linked to the other related guidance in Highland such as the Open Space in New Residential Development: Supplementary Guidance, Core Path Plans and Highland Access Strategy
- Highland Green Network
 - This section will discuss the three elements of a Green Network and set out network principles and identify the locations where green networks may be mapped in future. The Three elements of a Highland Green Network will be:
 - Protection and Enhancement;
 - Biodiversity and Environment; and
 - Recreation and Leisure.
- Mapping the network
 - A concept map of a highland green network will be set out showing where a network may occur and key features in certain areas, ie a coastal trail in the A96 Corridor Green Network.
 - This section will also contain the methodology which will be used in mapping a green network.
- Delivery of the network
 - This section will focus on how a green network can be delivered on the ground including how it can be funded or other mechanisms for delivering the green network (ie land management agreements)
 - Funding Opportunities
- Timescales
 - This section will outline how long it may take to deliver a green network in highland and also discuss review of the guidance.

CONTEXT

Relationship with other plans, programmes or strategies and environmental objectives

Table 1 lists the plans, policies and strategies which are relevant to the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and which may affect or influence its content. The contents of each plan, policy and strategy along with the relationship to the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and likely environmental impacts, is also summarised. We would welcome the Consultation Authorities views on any additional plans, policies or strategies which we may wish to consider.

Table 1. Plans, programmes, strategies and environmental objectives to be analysed in the Environmental Report for their relationship with Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

International		
EC Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC)	The objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. Aims to identify and mitigate significant environment effects arising from certain plans and programmes.	The Directive requires that an SEA be carried out on documents such as this and an Environmental Report produced.
European Climate Change Programme (2005)	The European Commission's main instrument to discuss and prepare the further development of the European Union's climate policy. To identify and develop all the necessary elements on an EU strategy to deliver the EU Kyoto Protocol commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 8% below 1990 levels by 2008-2012.	The guidance should promote choice and raise awareness of the need for change; and aim to reduce the need to travel. The Council will promote active travel.
EC Directive establishing a framework for Community action in the Field of Water Policy Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	The Water Framework Directive is designed to integrate the way we manage water bodies across Europe. It aims to protect and enhance our water environment, promote sustainable water consumption, reduce water pollution and lessen the effects of floods and droughts.	The Strategic Environment Assessment will consider the implications of a green network on the water environment and how its can benefit the existing environment and reduce risk of flooding.
The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)	Principles of international commitment to sustainable development reaffirmed. Aims to strengthen and improve Government at all levels to fulfil commitment to sustainable development.	The guidance will take into consideration the principles of sustainable development and seek to reflect these within the overarching objectives of the strategy and individual projects.
Agenda 21(1992)	Agenda 21 underlines the growing awareness of the need to adopt a balanced	The guidance will reflect the principles of sustainable

	<p>and integrated approach to environment and development issues.</p> <p>Agenda 21 contains a broad range of qualitative objectives that relate to sustainable development. These include a requirement for countries to adopt integrated strategies to ensure compliance with legislation relating to sustainable development, to promote the use of renewable energy systems and to build public environmental awareness.</p>	<p>development, and will make reference to the Council's development policy planning guidance – Planning for Sustainability in the Highlands.</p>
EC Directive On Public Access to Environmental Information (2003/4/EC)	Enforces the right of the public to view environmental information held by public authorities.	The Highland Council is required to ensure that all environmental information relating to the guidance is made available to the general public.
UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. 'The Aarhus Convention' Adopted June 1998	Acknowledges the need for public participation in environmental issues and grants the public rights to access to justice and information on the environment.	Public involvement in the formulation of the guidance should be actively facilitated. Consultations should incorporate the views and suggestions of local residents, business groups, council representatives and government.
The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	<p>International commitment to maintaining the world's biodiversity.</p> <p>Three main goals established – the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.</p> <p>Requirement for each country who has signed the declaration to develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.</p>	Adequate consideration of impacts affecting biodiversity with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate will be recommended.
The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat 'The Ramsar Convention' Adopted February 1971	An international treaty that provides the framework for national and international co-operation for the conservation of wetlands primarily to provide a habitat for birds.	The guidance must recognise the legal status of any 'Ramsar' protected site and reflect its ecological importance in its biodiversity objectives.
EU Soil Thematic Strategy (Consultation stage)	The emerging Soil Strategy aims to reduce soil pollution, erosion, compaction and sealing of soil. It also aims to protect the role of soil in storing CO ₂ , avoiding water pollution and preserving biodiversity. Protection of the sustainable production of food and renewable resources is a further aim.	The Strategy highlights soil protection as an issue and implicates soil degradation as a forthcoming issue in relation to land use.
European Landscape Convention (2000)	Promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organises European co-operation on landscape issues.	The Convention directs the way in which European designated landscapes issues should be taken into consideration.
EC Air Quality Framework Directive	Sets new air quality standards for previously unregulated air pollutants. Includes sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, lead and ozone pollutants.	The guidance should consider the strategic approach to air quality in Highland and the contribution green networks could make to this.
EC Birds and Habitats Directive	Protects all wild birds, their nests, eggs and habitats within the EC. Gives basis to classify Special Protection Areas (SPA's) to protect habitat and vulnerable bird species.	The guidance will take into consideration the requirements of the directive in its section on Natural, Built and Cultural

	Gives basis to classify Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's)	Heritage. The Council will work closely with the appropriate agencies on this matter.
European Biodiversity Framework	Promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, emphasising education, training and awareness raising, species identification, monitoring and exchange of information.	The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
European Framework on Sustainable Development	Promotes coherent and cost-effective policy making; technological innovation; stronger involvement in civil society; and business in policy formation. Strategies for Sustainable Economic support progress in respect of the local environment.	The guidance will promote efficient resource use, and sustainable travel through a number of the topics. Sustainable development would be considered a cross cutting theme.
European Spatial Development Perspective	Emphasises the importance of achieving, equally throughout the EU, economic and social cohesion, as well as the conservation and management of natural resources and cultural heritage. It stresses more balanced competitiveness of the European Community.	This will influence the delivery of all of the Objectives of the guidance.
Kyoto Protocol (1992)	United Nations international treaty on climate change. The Protocol entered into force in February 2005. Developed countries that have ratified the Protocol are committed to reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases. Commitment signed by 38 countries (plus the EU) to introduce legally binding targets to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 5% of 1990 levels in the period 2008-2012. The UK has committed to an 8% reduction.	The guidance will take account of targets of reducing CO2 emissions and consider measures to reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable and active forms of transport.
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	The Water Framework Directive is designed to integrate the way we manage water bodies across Europe. It aims to protect and enhance our water environment, promote sustainable water consumption, reduce water pollution and lessen the effects of floods and droughts.	In terms of degradation of water quality the guidance will make reference to the guidance in The Council's Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands.
The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	The objectives of this Convention, to be pursued in accordance with its relevant provisions, are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding. Its short-term aim is to significantly reduce global biodiversity loss by 2010.	The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
EC Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks - 2007/60/EC	requires Member States to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk.	The guidance will ensure any policy on flooding complies with this directive and the way in which the Directive is being implemented by both SEPA and the Scottish Government.
EU Thematic Strategy on	sets objectives for reducing certain	The guidance will take this

Air Pollution (2005)	pollutants and reinforces the legislative framework for combating air pollution via two main routes: improving Community environmental legislation and integrating air quality concerns into related policies.	strategy into consideration when assessing any impact on air quality.
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.	The guidance will consider the role it has to play with regard to climate change esp. Reduction of greenhouse gases.
EU Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)	Protection scheme for all of Europe's wild birds, identifying 194 species and sub-species. Provides a framework for the conservation of wild birds in Europe. The Directive requires the identification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to conserve rare or vulnerable species. Aims to sustain populations of naturally occurring wild birds by sustaining areas of habitats in order to maintain populations at ecologically and scientifically sound levels.	Adequate consideration will be given to the impacts affecting biodiversity, with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate. The guidance must ensure that the ecological value of important SPAs is not undermined.
EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EC)	Aims to ensure biodiversity by conserving natural habitats of wild flora and fauna. It requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be identified which form a network of protected areas called Natura 2000 along with SPAs. Projects are only permitted on such sites under exceptional circumstances. Also aims to maintain, or restore, in a favourable condition designated natural types and habitats of designated species.	Ensure that the guidance is mindful of the list of sites of the natural habitats and species and take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of these habitats and avoid disturbance of scheduled, scarce or rare species. Ensure that schemes pursuant to the guidance do not result in damage to special areas of conservation.
SE Circular EU Habitats and Birds Directive (2000)	EU Nature conservation policy is based on two main pieces of legislation – the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive. Its priorities are to create the European ecological network (of special areas of conservation) called NATURA 2000, and to integrate nature protection requirements into other EU policies such as agriculture, regional development and transport.	The Local authority should be aware of the NATURA 2000 sites and protect the setting of these areas from unsympathetic development through the creation of the guidance.

National



SEA Good Practice Guidelines (ODPM) 2005	The guidelines are designed to assist practitioners responsible for plans and programmes requiring SEA, explain the role of the Environment Agency in the process and promote good practice approaches.	The Council will use these guidelines to inform how best to carry out an environmental assessment on qualifying plans and programmes.
Forestry Commission (2004) The UK Forestry Standard: The Government's Approach to Sustainable Forestry	The two central aims of the Standard are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sustainable management of our existing woods and forests; and - A steady expansion of tree cover to increase the many diverse benefits that forests provide. 	The guidance will include areas of semi-natural and amenity woodland in the green network where appropriate.
Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981	This Act is the principle mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. The Local Plan will aim to protect designated areas and priority habitats from development influences.	There are a number of SSSIs in the area. The guidance should recognise their statutory importance and strive to ensure they are adequately protected.
UK Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996	Offers protection for rare wild mammals throughout the UK, including species such as red squirrels, bats and otters.	The guidance will consider the location of habitats when mapping a conceptual green network
UK The Protection of Badgers Act 1992	UK legislation offering specific protection to badgers and their setts. It is an offence to wilfully kill, injure or mistreat a badger. Their setts are also protected from obstruction, destruction, damage and, when active, disturbance. Any work within 30 metres of a badger sett may require a licence from SNH, and if destruction of the sett is unavoidable, a licence will definitely be required from SNH beforehand.	Badger habitats will be considered as part of the green network.
UK Climate Change Bill	The UK Climate Change Bill sets a target of 60% CO ₂ reduction by 2050. The Bill is currently moving through the House of Commons. A Climate Change Committee has been created to take forward the actions in the Bill. Scotland will have certain devolved powers in implementing a Climate Change Bill for Scotland.	The guidance will take a strategic approach to how a green network can play a part in reducing carbon emissions.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1995 and 1999	It is the UK Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in 1992. It describes the UK's biological resources and commits the government to a detailed plan for the protection of these resources. It currently has 391 Species Action Plans, 45 Habitat Action Plans and 162 Local Biodiversity Action Plans with targeted actions, a major review of the Priority Species and Habitats are underway, and will be completed in late 2008.	The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Describes the plans drawn up by the Government and devolved administrations to improve and protect ambient air quality in	The guidance will have regard to the implications of different policies on air quality and

<p>Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2000 – amended 2003)</p>	<p>the UK in the medium-term. Standards set for 8 main air pollutants of particular concern to human health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benzene; - 1,3-butadiene; - Carbon Monoxide; - Lead; - Nitrogen Dioxide; - Ozone; - Particles (PM10); and - Sulphur Dioxide <p>Local authorities are charged with drawing up their own strategies to tackle the air quality objectives in their areas. Standards are to be achieved between 2003 and 2008. The standards are purely health based and objectives are to be derived from these, taking account practically, technical feasibility, and economic factors.</p>	<p>promote measures which reduce the need to travel and encourage the development and uptake of more sustainable options. The guidance should seek to ensure that air pollution within the area is managed and where possible, steps are taken to alleviate air quality problems.</p>
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Scotland National



<p>The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005</p>	<p>The Act ensures that during the preparation of a qualifying plan or programme, there will be the carrying out of an environmental assessment. The SEA process that should be followed by a responsible authority is also outlined.</p>	<p>The Council will follow the procedure outlined in the Act when carrying out an environment assessment on a plan or programme.</p>
<p>Scottish Executive et al (2005) Securing the Future. The UK's shared framework for sustainable development</p>	<p>Sets out the guiding principles that have to be adhered to in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development. The following principles set out the framework for all sustainable development policy within the UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Living within environmental limits - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society - Achieving a sustainable economy - Promoting good governance - Using sound science responsibly 	<p>The guidance should adhere to the five principles in order that all policies are sustainable. The emphasis within the strategy is on balancing all aspects of sustainability, and this should be considered within the guidance.</p>
<p>Scottish Executive: Choosing Our Future Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)</p>	<p>This document sets out the action that will be taken in Scotland to turn the shared priorities set out in the UK Framework for sustainable development into action. It has six key priorities; sustainable consumption and production, climate change and energy, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement, sustainable communities, learning to live differently and delivery.</p>	<p>The guidance will take account of objectives relating to sustainable development. Measures for reducing the need to travel and a shift to active and public transport will positively contribute to these indicators.</p>
<p>Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003</p>	<p>Part 1 of the Act introduces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - statutory right of responsible access; - reciprocal obligation on owners to manage their land responsibly; - places a duty on local authorities to 	<p>The guidance needs to be aware of community land ownership and liaise with communities in order to assess if there are any allocations that may be required for the community's benefit. The</p>

	<p>Part 2 introduces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community's right to buy <p>Part 3 introduces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - crofting community right to buy 	<p>guidance will also take into account local paths that need to be maintained, improved and safeguarded from development.</p>
Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006	<p>Act of the Scottish Parliament to make further provision relating to town and country planning; to make provision for business improvement districts; and for connected purposes.</p>	<p>The guidance will be produced using the guidance set out in this Act and also the secondary legislation of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Development Planning) Regulations 2009</p>
Scottish Outdoor Access Code (2003)	<p>The Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which aims to support the access provisions of the Land Reform Act, is based on three key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - respect the interests of other people - care for the environment - take responsibility for your own actions 	<p>The guidance should contribute to the development of core path networks alongside the core path plan. The guidance will identify paths that play a key part in a green framework.</p>
Scottish Executive (2000) Rural Scotland : A New Approach	<p>Provides strategic confirmation of key issues such as establishing National Parks, Land Reform Act (ownership and access), water quality, planning and farming and notes their contribution to environmental quality. The main environmental objectives are to maintain the quality and diversity of Scotland's natural and cultural heritage.</p>	<p>The guidance should endeavour to maintain and enhance water quality, and safeguard amenity woodland and important croft land in order to protect the local landscape and maintain the natural heritage of an area.</p>
Scottish Executive (2006) Rural Development Programme for Scotland 2007-2013 The Strategic Plan	<p>The consultation paper sets out key themes and priorities for the Rural Development Strategy for Scotland.</p> <p>The Strategy will guide the use of European Union Funds and other resources for rural development in the 2007-13 Scotland Rural Development Programme. The Strategy will form part of a UK National Strategy Plan which must be submitted to the European Commission. The three proposed themes for the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - underpinning performance and quality in the agriculture food processing and forestry sectors - enhancing rural landscapes and the natural heritage - promoting a more diverse rural economy and thriving communities. 	<p>The three themes of the strategy support SEA objectives through the promotion of rural economic development and communities, natural heritage and landscape enhancement.</p> <p>The guidance will seek to improve facilities for local communities, whilst acknowledging the need to maintain the local landscape and will plan for maintaining the natural heritage of the region.</p>
Scotland's Biodiversity (2004) It's In Your Hands. A Strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland	<p>Vision:</p> <p>'It's 2030: Scotland is recognised as a world leader in biodiversity conservation. Everyone is involved; everyone benefits. The nation is enriched'</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conserve what we have - sustain healthy ecosystems - create networks and connections - engage more people - promote sustainable development <p>The strategy also underlines the need to promote understanding and appreciation of natural heritage.</p>	<p>Sets out the overall approach to biodiversity conservation and enhancement which the guidance should contribute towards.</p> <p>The guidance should identify key species and habitats, and give adequate consideration to the impacts affecting biodiversity with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate.</p>
Scottish Historical	The Scottish Historic Environment Policy	The guidance will take into

Environment Policy (2008) (HS)	sets out Scottish Ministers' policies, providing direction for Historic Scotland and a policy framework that informs the work of a wide range of public sector organisations.	consideration the SHEP when built and cultural heritage of elements of the green network are being discussed.
Scottish Executive(2001) A Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture	The Strategy sets out the national vision for the agricultural and land management sector, responding positively to contextual change and providing a more viable future for the industry. It aims to make the industry more prosperous by establishing better connections with the market. It views agriculture as an integral part of rural development and emphasises the importance of environmental stewardship.	The guidance should take account of the concerns and opinions of local crofters, farmers, estate managers and landholders in the provision of a green network.
The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)	Under the Regulations, competent authorities i.e. any Minister, government department, public body, or person holding public office, have a general duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.	The guidance will have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.
Scottish Executive (2001) Potential Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in Scotland	Identifies a full range of potential adaptation strategies for Scotland, including those specifically relating to agriculture, forestry, fishing and biodiversity. Emphasises the importance of flexible resource management and the need to move on from defining conservation objectives on the basis of single species or fixed locations as these may no longer be achievable. The strategy notes that: 'the fragmented and often overlapping nature of policies for forestry, agriculture and biodiversity impedes appropriate adaptation strategies. In the medium-term, drivers of change from agriculture, from mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, from sustainability issues and from the protection of biodiversity may lead to a blurring and perhaps complete removal of the distinctions between policies for forestry, agriculture and biodiversity.'	The guidance will take account of the Scottish share and consider measures from the transport sector which would positively contribute to the targets, for example reducing the need to travel and encouraging modal shifts to more sustainable methods.
Scottish Executive (2003) Let's Make Scotland More Active	The Strategy focuses on the need to increase physical activity amongst Scotland's population and sets targets of achieving 50% of adults and 80% of children meeting at least the minimum recommended levels of physical activity by 2022.	The guidance will promote the development of facilities (e.g. cycle, footpaths and sports centres) that encourage local populations to become more active, throughout a green network. The guidance will take into account health related impacts of different strategies and seek to promote more active travel.
Scottish Executive (2003) Improving Health in Scotland The Challenge	Addresses wider health issues and aims to improve life expectancy. Also aims to reduce health inequalities between deprived and affluent people. Aims to 'mainstream' health policy so that it becomes an integral part of wider public sector policies. To achieve the required 1% annual increase, the strategy focuses on ensuring that physical activity is encouraged across the population as a whole, and	The guidance will seek to identify the development of facilities (e.g. cycle, footpaths and sports centres) that encourage local populations to become more active. The guidance will take into account health related impacts of different strategies and seek to promote more active travel.

	targeting specific communities for basic changes in activity levels.	
Delivering a Healthy Scotland Meeting the Challenge: Health Improvement In Scotland Annual Report (2006)	Aims to improve health and narrow the health inequalities gap, with a strategy to achieve a more rapid rate of health improvement. Report illustrates progress and actions on health improvements and how it contributes to key cross cutting government themes, e.g. sustainable development, social justice and community regeneration. Makes reference to the ways in which sustainable development supports health improvement and vice versa, in particular maintaining and increasing levels of green spaces in and near towns for recreation and enabling walking and cycling; funding initiatives that promote non car based travel.	Take measures in the guidance to promote health lifestyles. For example protect accessible green spaces to encourage physical recreation/ active travel.
Forestry Commission Scotland (2005) Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme	The aim of the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (SFGS) is to help deliver the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS) by encouraging the creation and management of woods and forests to provide economic, environmental and social benefits.	The guidance supports the aim of managing existing woodland and enhancing it to maximise biodiversity, landscape, community and recreation objectives. The guidance will support the creation of forest crofts and forest walks.
Forestry Commission Scotland (2004) Framework Document for Forest Enterprise Scotland	The purpose of Forest Enterprise Scotland is to manage the national forest estate to deliver economic, environmental and social objectives of the Scottish Forestry Strategy. Guiding principles include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustainable forest management - delivering the Scottish Forestry Strategy - helping to deliver other Scottish Executive agendas - efficiency and effectiveness 	The guidance and the SEA process will take account of the principles outlined, in relation to particular issues concerning community access to forests for recreational purposes.
Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and SNH (2003) Habitat Networks for Wildlife and People	Aims to enrich the natural heritage of Scotland by the creation of woodland networks through linking woodlands, old and new, to form a more continuous woodland cover. This benefits wildlife by providing wider and more sustainable habitats and should enhance opportunities for people who live near, work in or simply enjoy woodlands. Proposes methods by which woods and forests can be linked and suggests woodland should be viewed as an integral part of the wider landscape rather than as individual stands of trees.	The guidance should aim to complement this strategy by encouraging an increase in woodland cover and the creation of forest crofts and woodland walks.
Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS)	The Act translates the EC Water Framework Directive into the Scottish context. It includes a number of key commitments relating to Scotland's water environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing River Basin Management districts; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preparing River Basin Management Plans - regulation of controlled activities (including those likely to cause pollution to the water environment, those involved in abstraction, and those from construction on or near 	The guidance will reflect the Act in the development of adequate drainage systems. Future expansion of local water provision or abstraction and wastewater handling to cope with expected population increases will require close consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water.

	<p>water).</p> <p>The Act aims to prevent further deterioration of water quality and has given Scottish Ministers powers to introduce regulatory controls over activities in order to protect and improve Scotland's water environment. That is, wetlands, rivers, lochs, transitional waters (estuaries and saline lagoons), coastal waters and water under the ground (groundwater).</p>	
<p>The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 (CAR)</p>	<p>Brings into effect the regulation of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abstractions from surface and groundwater; • impoundment of rivers, lochs, wetlands and transitional waters; • groundwater recharge; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engineering in rivers, lochs and wetlands; - engineering activities in the vicinity of rivers, lochs and wetland which are likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the water environment; - activities liable to cause pollution; - direct or indirect discharge of certain substances to groundwater; and • any other activities which directly or indirectly are liable to cause a significant impact upon the water environment. 	<p>The Regulations apply across the water environment to provide a holistic approach to pollution control and protection of the water environment.</p> <p>Any activities that may fall within the remit of these regulations will require close consultation with SEPA and the receipt of appropriate licences.</p>
<p>Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997</p>	<p>The introduction of the Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997 instigated changes to the responsibilities and duties of Local Authorities in Scotland. In respect of this Act the flooding referred to is the flooding of land, not being agricultural land. Flooding of agricultural land falls out with the requirements of the Act. The implications on The Highland Council of this Act impose the following additional requirements:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assessment of watercourses, from time to time for the purpose of ascertaining whether any such watercourse is in a condition likely to flood. b) A duty to maintain watercourses, which are in a condition likely to cause flooding, or where works would substantially reduce the likelihood of such flooding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of Local Authorities out with the area. Where it appears to The Highland Council that any watercourse in the area is in a condition which is likely to cause flooding, out with the area, the Council shall notify the local authority for the area in which the land is situated. • Reports shall be published, at two year intervals. 	<p>The guidance should take account of flood plains and areas at risk of flooding from SEPA's flood risk maps.</p> <p>Flood plains may form a significant part of the green network.</p>

<p>Passed to the Future (2002) Historic Scotland Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment</p>	<p>Sets out the Scottish Executive's policy for the sustainable management of the historic environment. It notes the irreplaceable nature of historic environment features, but also sets out the following key principles to guide the parameters in which change can take place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognising value – in terms of quality of life and as a means of meeting social, environmental and economic needs - good stewardship – taking into account capacity for change and the sustainable use of resources • assessing impact – following the precautionary principle where impact is not clear • working together – to reduce damage, resolve conflict and maximise benefit 	<p>The guidance should recognise the important role of the historic environment and acknowledge the need to work together with others to consider a balance between social, economic and environmental needs.</p>
<p>Forestry Commission Scotland: Scottish Forestry Strategy, 2006</p>	<p>This document sets out a framework for taking forestry through the first half of this century. It sets out a vision for a forestry sector that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diverse and strong • in tune with the environment • employing many people in a wide range of enterprises • providing the many other services and benefits that people need, now and for the future. 	<p>The guidance should take account of forestry issues.</p>
<p>Scottish Executive Trunk Road Biodiversity Action Plan (TRBAP) (2000)</p>	<p>Sets the Scottish Executive's commitment to protecting Scottish biodiversity on the trunk road network. The purpose of the document is twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to assist in the delivery of biodiversity targets and objectives as set down in the Scottish Local Biodiversity Action Plans. - to raise awareness of biodiversity in all engineers, managers, planners, designers and ecologists working on the Scottish Trunk Road network. 	<p>The guidance should take account of any recommendations and actions outlined within the Trunk Road Biodiversity Action Plan.</p>
<p>Scotland's Scenic Heritage (1978) Countryside Commission for Scotland</p>	<p>this report sets out the results of a review conducted to identify areas of unsurpassed attractiveness which must be conserved as part of our national heritage.</p>	<p>The guidance will take this into consideration when working toward the plan objectives of Quality Environment in Highland.</p>
<p>Scottish Climate Change Bill</p>	<p>The aim of the Bill is to establish a framework to enable more actions to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. The Bill is currently out for consultation and The Highland Council have submitted a response</p>	<p>The guidance will take into consideration the provisions of the act.</p>
<p>Historic Scotland's Memorandum of Guidance on Listed buildings and Conservation Areas.</p>	<p>This is the document to which all planning authorities are directed by Scottish Office Development Department Circular No.13/1998 in their consideration of conservation and listed building consent matters. The Memorandum aims to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present the principles and policies upon 	<p>The guidance should recognise the importance of the historic environment and acknowledge the need to work together with others to consider a balance between social, economic and environmental needs.</p>

	<p>which the legislation is based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer clear guidance which will help both applicants and planning officers to determine whether they are following those principles and policies and achieving what is best for the site 	
Meeting the Needs, Priorities, Actions and Targets for Sustainable Development in Scotland (2002)	Prioritises responsible resource use; Encourages energy conservation and promotes use of power from renewable sources; Ensures the provision of better land use planning, alternative service delivery and sustainable transport systems.	The guidance will promote sustainable travel
Scottish Executive Policy Statement for Scotland - Designing Places	Sets out the Scottish Governments Policy to encourage well designed places throughout Scotland	The guidance will take the provisions of Designing Places into consideration when mapping the conceptual network and setting principles.
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act	Sets out a series of measures which are designed to conserve biodiversity and to protect and enhance the biological and geological natural heritage of Scotland. Places a general duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity.	The guidance will take into consideration the measures proposed in the Act
Physical Activity and Sport Strategy	Aims to increase and maintain the proportion of physically active people in Scotland. Sets targets to achieve 50% of adults aged over 16 and 80% of all children aged under 16 who meet the minimum recommended level of physical activity by 2022 through building healthy public policy. Creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, developing personal skills and directing health services at the people who need it most.	The guidance will take into consideration the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy and will help to implement this through promotion of open space for use for physical activity.
Scottish Historic Environment Policy 2	Sets out the policy for the identification and designation of nationally important ancient monuments. Sets the context to conserve the evidence of Scotland's past based on their cultural significance.	The guidance should ensure the conservation of historic areas of cultural importance.
Scottish Biodiversity Action Plan 2005-8 and 2008-2011	Its aim is to conserve biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and wellbeing of the people of Scotland now and in the future. It will do this by a number of measures; 1. Species & Habitats: To halt the loss of biodiversity and continue to reverse previous losses through targeted action for species and habitats, 2. People: To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity, and engage many more people in conservation and enhancement, 3. Landscapes & Ecosystems: To restore and enhance biodiversity in all our urban, rural and marine environments through better planning, design and practice, 4. Integration & Co-ordination: To develop an effective management framework that ensures biodiversity is taken into account in all decision making, 5. Knowledge: To ensure that the best new and existing knowledge on biodiversity is available to all policy makers and practitioners.	The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
Draft River Basin Management Plan for the	The draft river basin management plans (below) will ensure that statutory agencies,	The guidance will make sure that the recommendations and

Scotland River Basin District (2008)	private organisations, public sector bodies and individuals work together to create a final plan that addresses all aspects of water management.	findings of the RBMP will be taken into consideration when working to formulate policies on the water environment.
Changing out Ways - Scotland's Climate Change Programme (2006)	The Scottish Executive is committed to playing its full part to tackle climate change. Key elements of this programme are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presenting a vision for Scotland and how we are to move forward - quantifying Scotland's 'equitable contribution' in carbon terms - setting a Scottish target for carbon emission reductions - demonstrating Scotland's achievements so far - setting out new actions and future directions across the main sectors - responding to the inevitable consequences of climate change 	The guidance will support active and public transport, and will highlight the need for the provision of locally important pedestrian and cycle paths.
State of Scotland's Greenspace (2009)	The State of Scotland's Greenspace 2009 reveals for the first time the extent of urban greenspace in Scotland. It also provides information on the different types of greenspace and charts local authority work on greenspace audits and strategies.	The guidance will consider the findings of this report.



National Planning Framework for Scotland 2	This is the governments land use element of its economic strategy and sets out how each part of Scotland can play its part in making Scotland the best small country in the world.	The guidance must take into account the information within NPF2
Scottish Planning Policy (2009)	This sets out national policy, the purpose of the planning system and the objectives for core parts of the planning system	The guidance will have regard to the SPP to ensure the the guidance meets with the Scottish Governments view on green networks
PAN 43 Golf Courses and Associated Developments (1994)	Golf course proposals will be assessed on the demand for such development in the area and their ability to fit into the landscape.	The development and design of golf courses can provide attractive green, open spaces. However, such development will impact on biodiversity. The guidance should therefore consider the role of golf courses in a green network
PAN 44 Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape (1994)	House building is likely to continue to be the most widespread urban land use change for many years ahead. Recycling disused and vacant land as brownfield sites for new housing remains a national priority and can provide for a large part of these needs. Demand for new housing is high in many settlements, and development may threaten the character or identity of a place. A cumulative loss of landscape quality has	Development Plans will advocate sensitive siting and design of new development within existing settlements, where possible. The guidance will set out how green networks can help to integrate development into the landscape.

	already become apparent. Suburban housing estates, often devised with little appreciation of local character or a sense of place, have taken shape around the fringes of many towns.	
PAN 51 Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation (1997)	The environment and land use of Scotland provide the basis for sustaining life, economic development and social well-being. A range of specific environmental protection regimes are designed to safeguard the natural and built environment. They operate alongside the land use planning system which aims to ensure that development takes place in suitable locations and is sustainable, while also providing protection from inappropriate development.	Locations where there are special environmental protection concerns should be set out in the guidance if they are to form part of the green network.
PAN 60 Planning for Natural Heritage (2000)	Complements SPP on Natural Heritage, with examples of good planning practice in relation to natural heritage from across Scotland highlighted in a number of cases. Provides advice on how development and the planning system can contribute to the conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of Scotland's natural environment, and encourages developers and planning authorities to be positive and creative in addressing natural heritage issues.	The guidance will consider the implications of this PAN on the development of a green network.
PAN 61 Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (2001)	Planners have a key role in highlighting the need for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and co-ordinating SUDS projects.	The guidance should set out how SUDS can play a role in the formulation of a green network.
PAN 65 Planning and Open Space (2008)	Gives advice on the role of the planning system in protecting and enhancing existing open spaces and providing high quality new spaces. Supports NPPG 11: Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space. Also sets out how local authorities can prepare open space strategies and gives examples of good practice in providing, managing and maintaining spaces. The advice relates to open space in settlements: villages, towns and major urban areas. A key aim of the PAN is to raise the profile of open space as a planning issue.	The green network will aim to protect areas that are valued; and ensure provision of appropriate, quality, open spaces in, or within easy reach of, new development.
PAN 68 Design Statements (2003)	One of a series of advice notes which addresses design in more detail and should be read in conjunction with them. It explains what a design statement is, why it is a useful tool, when it is required, and how it should be prepared and presented. The PAN does not introduce a prescriptive approach. It seeks to ensure that local authorities and applicants become more confident in preparing them. The aim is to see design statements used more effectively in the planning process and to create places of lasting quality.	The green network will encourage the good general design of built development and will offer guidance on specific areas where the high quality of design is particularly relevant in order to fit development sensitively in to the landscape.
PAN 69 Planning and Building Standards Advice on Flooding (2004)	Provides background information and best practice advice in support of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 7: Planning and Flooding. The SPP aims to prevent future development which would have a significant	The guidance will consider role flooding will play in a green network.

	<p>probability of being affected by flooding or which would increase the probability of flooding elsewhere.</p> <p>The PAN takes as a starting point the responsibilities of local authorities and developers in ensuring that future development is not located in areas with a significant risk of flooding, including functional flood plains. However, there are circumstances where development would benefit from selecting designs, forms of construction and materials which may help to minimise the effects of a flood event on the property.</p>	
PAN 72 Housing in the Countryside (2005)	This PAN aims to create more opportunities for good quality rural housing which respects Scottish landscapes and building traditions.	The guidance should consider how housing in the countryside could contribute to the green network.
PAN 79 Water and Drainage (2006)	Development Plans guide the future development and use of land in the long term public interest. Local Plans play a key role in identifying suitable locations for development in the context of an overall settlement strategy. Provision of water and waste water is an important consideration in the delivery of public policy objectives, including those set out in development plans.	Issues relating to water and drainage should not be viewed in isolation but considered in relation to the objectives of the guidance.
PAN 83 Masterplanning	This will offer guidance on how to formulate a Masterplan for a given area.	The guidance should set out the role the green network needs to play in the masterplanning of major development sites.

Regional



<p>A Smart, Successful Highlands and Islands (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2005)</p>	<p>This is an enterprise strategy for the Highlands and Islands. Its central aim is to realise the populations' full potential on a sustainable basis, and outlines the strategic objectives of strengthening communities, developing skills, growing businesses and making global connections. In particular it addresses the issues of remoteness, affordability of housing, unique cultural and natural assets, lower than average incomes, increasing rural populations and balancing growth, and increasing business development.</p>	<p>The guidance will reflect the need to build communities' prospects for a sustainable future, through land allocations for business and housing (emphasising affordable housing), protecting and enhancing natural and built heritage, and encouraging (where appropriate) the use of renewable energy.</p>
<p>The Highland Council's Planning for Sustainability in the Highlands DPPG (2006)</p>	<p>This is a guidance note in support of sustainable design. It offers advice on designing in a sustainable way to maximise the benefits which new development can provide while aiming to reduce the carbon footprint that this will create.</p>	<p>All new Local Development Plans for the Highlands will now place a requirement on planning applicants to demonstrate, by means of a Sustainable Design Statement, that their proposals take account of sustainable design practice. The guidance will describe the role it has to play with respect to this.</p>
<p>Highland Council Local Transport Strategy (2000)(currently being reviewed)</p>	<p>The Highland Council prepare a Local Transport Strategy and implement the policies, plans and projects to improve and manage the Highland transport system.</p>	<p>This document will be utilised to enable and encourage active transport improvements in a green network.</p>
<p>City of Inverness Greenspace Strategy</p>	<p>Sets out a long term vision for protecting and enhancing greenspace within the city. Sets out the importance of greenspace in Inverness and the positive impacts it can have on health, economy, environment, education and tourism.</p>	<p>Should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and will deliver towards the objectives within the guidance to help create a healthier Highland.</p>
<p>A96 Corridor Master plan</p>	<p>An implementation scheme covering the overall phasing, infrastructure, funding, developer contributions protocol and deliver mechanisms for expansion and development eastwards of Inverness to the border with Moray.</p>	<p>The guidance is to update the green framework section of this masterplan</p>
<p>Highland Climate Change Strategy</p>	<p>A requirement of being a signatory to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, the Climate Change Strategy will set out Highland Councils actions to mitigate the causes of Climate Change and adapt to its likely impacts. The Strategy will be developed during the term of this administration.</p>	<p>This will be taken into consideration when bringing forward the guidance and consider the role a green network has to play.</p>
<p>Inverness Local Plan</p>	<p>Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Inverness area</p>	<p>The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.</p>
<p>Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan</p>	<p>Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Ross and</p>	<p>The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.</p>

	Cromarty area	
Wester Ross Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Wester Ross area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Sutherland Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Sutherland area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Caithness Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Caithness area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
West Highland & Islands Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the West Highland and Islands area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Nairnshire local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Nairnshire area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Supplementary Planning Guideline on Residential Development Layout and Design	This is in preparation and will set out guidance on Residential layout and design	The guidance will consider the implications of this emerging guidance.
Supplementary Planning Guideline on Developer Contributions	This guidance is in preparation and will set out guidance on Developer Contributions	The guidance will consider the implications of this emerging guidance.
Open Space in New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance	This guidance sets standards for quantity, quality and accessibility of open space in new residential development	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Highland Access Strategy	Aims to address the needs and aspirations of people of all ages and abilities to deliver a wide range of recreational and enjoyment of the environment benefits for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and paddlers. Thereby contributing to social inclusion, health improvements, sustainable transport and improvement to the overall quality of life by unlocking this potential and guiding the way in which the Council and its partners can take forward plans for access throughout the Highland Council area.	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Highland Area Tourism Strategy (partnership strategy)	Produced in 2006 by the Highland Area Tourism Partnership sets out a Strategy (until 2015) and Action Plan (3 year) which sets out how Highland tourism could be developed to achieve the Government's 50% growth target by 2015.	Tourism will be a strong influence and driver for the Highland green network
Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy	This document sets out the Council's aspirations for forestry and woodland in the Highlands. It provides guidance for developers and a focus for the Council's engagement with the private sector, the Forestry Commission and Forest Enterprise, in its role as consultee on forestry applications.	The contents of this document will influence the mapping of a green network.
Interim Housing in the Countryside Supplementary Guidance	Sets out policy guidance on how the current housing in the countryside policy should be applied.	The guidance will consider the role green networks have to play in successfully integrating houses in the countryside into the landscape
Sutherland Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.

	access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	
Lochaber Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Ross and Cromarty Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Skye and Lochalsh Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Caithness Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Inverness and Nairn Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Highland Open Space Audit	A comprehensive audit of open space in Highland was carried out in Summer/Autumn 2009. The findings of this will be published in Summer 2010. the audit considers the quality, quantity and accessibility of greenspace in Highland.	The guidance will take into consideration the audits findings.

Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

The Highland Council Local Development Plan extends over an area of 26,484 square kilometres and is an area of high quality natural environment and diverse historic background. It has a population of 217,440 and at 8.2 persons per square kilometre, is sparsely populated compared with other regions in Scotland. A large proportion of the land area is identified as “fragile” in terms of remoteness and scarcity of population.

Natural heritage designations cover a range of habitats in Highland. In terms of international designation there are 13 Ramsar sites and 91 Special Areas of Conservation (SACS). In addition there are 367 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which cover important biological, geomorphological and geological areas. There are also 26 National Nature Reserves in Highland and in addition the Cairngorms National Park lies partly within the authority of the Highland Council. 16 National Scenic Areas are found within the Highland region and 46 Special Protection Areas. These natural heritage features are available at Appendix 1.

Areas which are considered to have special architectural or historic interest are designated as Conservation Areas. At present there are 30 Conservation Areas in Highland. Any building or structure which is considered to be of special architectural or historic interest is listed: Those of national importance are listed as “Category A”; those of regional importance “Category B”; and those of local importance listed as “Category C”. The number of listed building in Highland is 3014. They can be seen at Appendix 2.

There are 51 areas in Highland that are listed in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. National guidance requires the settings, as well as the gardens themselves, be safeguarded from unsympathetic development. The history of Highland region and relative remoteness, means that many archaeological features of all periods remain well preserved, including 1237 Scheduled monuments. These features have been identified on a map in Appendix 2 - Baseline Information Maps.

Most Highland soils are very shallow, often due to shallow parent materials. In some parts of Highland, soil erosion is becoming increasingly significant. Peat is very common throughout Highland and Caithness and Sutherland contain one of the largest and most intact areas of blanket bog in the world, supporting a distinctive wildlife community. A map showing the extent of the blanket bog is shown in Appendix 2.

With a large geographical area and a low population size, Highland region is not affected by air pollution from extensive road networks and heavy industries as in other parts of Scotland. The air quality is reflected by the extensive number of lichen communities of international importance.

The quality of the freshwater environment is also recognised internationally for its importance as a spawning ground for wild salmon and use by whiskey distilleries. The many lochs and rivers that characterise the area are important for local economies and provide the scenic backdrop that encourages so many tourists to the area.

The key facts and the baseline information collated for this scoping report has enabled us to identify some environmental problems in the Highland area. Environmental problems that affect the area are identified in table 2 below. The some of the negative trends highlighted in this table are likely to continue if there is not additional guidance on Green Network Development in Highland. Feedback from the Consultation Authorities is sought on the scope of environmental problems identified.

Table 2 Environmental Impacts Relevant to Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

SEA Issue	Potential Environmental Impact resulting from Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance	Implications for Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	Less stress on biodiversity and loss of habitat resulting from development. Modification of conflicts between designated areas and economic development. Vulnerability of rare and endangered flora and fauna to changes in climate should be reduced in the longer term. Likelihood of detrimental impact on local landscape character should be reduced. Reduced risk of loss of native woodland cover.	The guidance needs to ensure that the principles of the networks clearly set out the aims for protection and enhancement of Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna. Sites of specific importance should be included in the mapping exercise of the green network. It is likely that there will be a significant impact on this SEA issue.
Population	Increasing population putting increased pressure on the natural environment in terms of increased recreational access to the outdoors.	The green network will identify opportunities to come into contact with the natural environment through better recreational access. The green network guidance will need to reiterate the need for responsible access to the outdoors. It is likely that in time there will be a significant impact on this SEA issue.
Human health	Increased opportunity for recreation. Green spaces can offer benefits in terms of social and mental health.	The guidance will promote the recreational benefits of a green network and set principles on recreation and leisure to facilitate a move to a healthier highland. It is likely that in the longer term there will be a significant impact on this SEA issue.
Soil	Limited impact on a reduction in soil sealing.	The guidance will identify the need to build green networks right through new developments therefore reducing soil sealing. The guidance will have very limited impact in this respect.
Water	Green networks will reduce surface water run-off, increase the lag time of rainfall entering the watercourse, reduce risk of flooding by providing natural drainage and provide opportunities for SuDS.	The guidance will highlight the benefits for the water environment, however it is likely that these will be limited.
Air	Green infrastructure identified as part of a green network can act as a “green lung” for newly developed areas	The guidance will highlight this as a benefit however it is not likely that the guidance will have a significant impact in this respect.
Climatic factors	Green networks can highlight opportunities for active travel both within and outwith settlements. In green networks can help species adapt to climate change	The guidance will highlight the opportunity for active travel within the green network and the benefits it may bring with regard to climate change. It is likely that there maybe some significant impacts.
Material assets	Green networks can enable the development of additional active travel links	The guidance will identify a range of projects which may contribute to a more connected network of footpaths and cycle links. It is likely that there may be significant impacts resulting from this

		SEA issue.
Cultural heritage	Reduced risk of impact on the setting for cultural heritage features.	The green network could identify certain cultural features which are part of the green network and set out ways in which the green network can enhance/protect its settings.
Landscape	Avoid the degradation of local landscape character which may occur through new development.	The guidance can make linkages to other design guidance being produced to ensure that a green network can be a positive tool in enabling development to integrate better into the landscape.

The above has aided the Council in understanding the need for the level of detail and scope of the guidance and the environmental report.

Scope and Level of Detail Proposed for the Environmental Assessment

Alternatives

SEA requires that “reasonable alternatives” to the Plan are considered. These set the context for the following two sections of this report – scoping of SEA issues and consideration of a framework for the assessment of environmental effects. Only one reasonable alternative has been identified by the Council. This alternative is outlined below:

Preferred Approach - Prepare Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

The Council’s preferred approach at this time is to prepare green networks supplementary guidance to set the context for a Highland Green Network. The guidance would focus on the benefits of a green network and how a green network can be delivered. The Guidance would set principles in the following areas:

- Protection and Enhancement;
- Biodiversity and Environment; and
- Recreation and Leisure.

Alternative Approach – Do Nothing

The alternative approach is to not prepare guidance on creation of a Highland Green Network. This approach may lead to fragmentation of habitats, less co-ordinated approach to recreation and limited opportunities to protect and enhance the cultural heritage of the area.

The two alternative approaches will be assessed against appropriate SEA objectives. We would welcome the Consultation Authorities views on these alternatives.

Scoping in/out of SEA issues

In accordance with Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 the Highland Council has considered whether the environmental effects (positive and negative) of the proposed Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance are likely to be significant. It is not anticipated that there will be any significantly negative effects on the environment resulting from this supplementary guidance, therefore the role of the Strategic Environmental Assessment will be to maximise the positive impacts that the guidance may have. From the environmental problems listed in Table 2 in above, there could be varying challenges relating to certain SEA issues. For this reason we consider the plan is likely to have significant effects (positive and negative) on some environmental issues at a strategic level. A summary of our conclusions is given in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Scoping of SEA issues

SEA issues	Scoped in	Scoped out	If scoped out, why
biodiversity, flora, fauna	X		
population	X		
human health	X		
soil		X	It is not considered that there will be significant impact on this SEA topic through this guidance. This is due to the way in which green networks will be developed over time. A positive impact is more likely to come through the implementation of the Open Space in New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance.
water	X		
air		X	It is not considered that there will be significant impact on this SEA topic through this guidance. While green infrastructure can improve air quality, its positive impact will be limited.
climatic factors	X		
material assets	X		
cultural heritage	X		
landscape	X		

Methodology for Assessing Environmental Effects

The preferred approach and its alternative will be subject to detailed assessment against all the SEA objectives and criteria. We would welcome comment on the proposed SEA objectives as outlined below. The SEA objectives are derived from those used for the Strategic Environmental Assessment on the Highland wide Local Development Plan

This process will identify as far as possible what level of environmental impact the operation of these policies will have and any mitigation or improvement which will be required. The assessment will include consideration of the following aspects of possible environmental effects: length/duration; permanency; positive and negative; and cumulative and secondary.

A matrix approach will be used to assess the level of significant impact and the cumulative effects. It has been developed setting out environmental objectives, with indicators and columns for carrying out the appraisal of potential impacts. A sample of the method to be used is shown in Appendix 2.

1	Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses.
2	Maintain, enhance and create green networks for wildlife and people.
3	Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments
4	Protect and enhance human health
5	Retain and improve quality, quantity and connectivity of publicly accessible open space.
6	Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change
7	Increase opportunities for recreational access to the outdoors and active travel
8	Protect and where appropriate enhance the cultural heritage
9	Value and Protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes

Cumulative Effects

The cumulative effects of this guidance on each of the SEA objectives will be assessed with regard to the issues which have been scoped into the environmental report

Proposed Mitigation Measures

The SEA Directive requires the use of mitigation measures that make recommendations to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects. The proposed mitigation measures will be discussed in the Environmental Report. In addition the Environmental Report will encourage the enhancement of the positive effects. Changes to the guidance will be considered should it provide for better mitigation against negative environmental effects.

Monitoring Framework

The Environmental Report will outline the proposed monitoring framework.

Next Steps

Proposed consultation timescales

The Environmental Report for the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance will be published for consultation in tandem with the draft guidance. It is anticipated that this will be in late August 2010. The consultation period will run for a period of 8 weeks. The views collected during this consultation period will be used in producing a revised Environmental Report. A proposed timetable for the various stages is outlined below:

Stage	Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance	Strategic Assessment	Environmental	Time Scale
1	Workshop on the scope of the Guidance	Prepare a Scoping Report and send to the Consultation Authorities		May/June 2010
2	Prepare and publish the draft Green Networks Supplementary Guidance. Consult the community for a total period of 8 weeks	Publish an Environmental Report and consult the community and the Consultation Authorities on this for a total of 8 weeks.		August 2010
3	Publish final version of Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance.	Publish revised Environmental Report, if required.		November 2010
4.	Put guidance into place and monitor our progress	Publish Post-Adoption Statement and submit to SEA Gateway		November 2010

Appendix 1 – Baseline Information and Maps

The information and maps in this section represent baseline data at a Highland wide Level. Date of data noted where known, otherwise taken as June 2010.

While some of the information below may not be directly relevant it helped to scope the environmental issues which may be relevant to this guidance.

Maps Contained in this Section are:

- Cairngorms National Park
- Core Path Network
- Highland Cycle Network
- Population Change 1998-2007
- Highland Flood Risk
- Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy
- Fragile Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Local Nature Reserves
- National Nature Reserves
- National Scenic Areas
- Ramsar Sites
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Settlement Hierarchy.

SEA Indicator Scoped In	Key Information	Data Source
Population and Human Health	Incidence of Coronary Heart Disease in Highland is 304 cases per 100,000 (Scotland – 306) for year ending 31 Dec 2006. 1997 figure was 396.	www.isdscotland.org
	Highland wide in 2006 22 pedestrians and 5 cyclists were killed or serious injured in road accidents. 1994-98 yearly averages are 38 pedestrian and 16 cyclist fatalities.	www.scotland.gov.uk
	82 non-domestic noise complaints received by Highland Council in 2006/7.	www.audit-scotland.gov.uk
	Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey 2006 suggests 56% of respondents thought crime to be a 'big' problem (93% considered a problem overall). Feelings of safety while walking alone after dark is often used as a proxy measure for fear of crime. Overall, just over 3 in 10 respondents (32%) reported that they felt unsafe while walking alone after dark (which was the same as the proportion that reported feeling unsafe in the 2003 survey). Just over one in 10 (12%) reported that they felt 'very unsafe'. No regional data.	www.scotland.gov.uk
	11 health-related walking groups operating in PPS area.	www.stepituphighland.org.uk
	50% of Highland population walked a least on one day in the past week with the main aim been as a mode of transport (Scotland 53%). 64% walked at least one day in the past week just for pleasure or to keep fit (Scotland 46%).	SHS Transport Across Scotland 2005-2006
	208, 914 people living in Highland.	Census 2001 http://195.173.143.171/plintra/iandr/cen/prof_high.htm
	Highlands population is projected to increase by 3.6% by 2024. There is expected to be 16, 029 more people of	Highland Council population Projections 2004-2024 http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/20D86A3A-5750-42B3-927D-

	retirement age and 5507 fewer children than in 2004. therefore the population is expected to age.	21000CD24694/0/bn8popproj.pdf
	3 data zones in highland Region fall within the 5% most deprived zones in Scotland. 2 data zones fall within the top 5% least deprived.	The Scottish index of multiple Deprivation 2004 http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/796EA9D0-C754-4A2D-9799-DBB026E6A611/0/simd2004_paper.pdf
	A large proportion of Highland Region is referred to as “Fragile” in terms of remoteness and scarcity of population. An average of 8 people live per sq km, throughout the region, reducing to 2 people per sq km in some parts.	Highland Council Definition of Fragile Rural areas in Highland. http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/267DCD97-B9B0-4BF3-BE1C-15D662186C48/0/fragile_paper.pdf
	45% of Highland households are within 3mins. walking distance of a bus stop (Scotland 55%) but with 20% having frequency of services of less than 1 bus per hour (Scotland 4%). 12% of the population in Highland had used a train in the past month (Scotland 19%). <i>SHS Transport Across Scotland 2005 – 2006.</i>	SHS Transport Across Scotland 2005 - 2006
Material Assets	Key Information	Data Source
Housing	There are 13, 329 housing units available in Highland between 2007 -2011	The Highland Council housing land Audit 2006 http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/B3104D9D-838A-42F1-B679-AE682078AE23/0/briefingnote24.pdf
House Sales	A quarter of all house sales in highland are to people from out with the area.	Highland Council Paper – House Sales – What do they tell us about migration in Highland. http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7C0C7DCA-0AB6-4EAE-B6C6-C33A0E03BA52/0/bn2.pdf
Libraries	42 establishments containing a library	Highland Council Housing and Property data files
Vacant homes	There are 93 211 households in highland region and of these just under 10% are vacant or second/holiday homes.	Highland Council Household Estimates (2004) http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/ADF1B5B3-1C8D-4C34-97AE-F5B3A35DA583/0/bn3.pdf General registrar for Scotland household Estimates 2006: http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/household-estimates-statistics/household-estimates-for-scotland-2006/index.html
Number of degraded dwellings	Number of degraded dwellings in each building condition category:	Highland Council Housing and Property data files

	<p>A - Good - Performing well and operating efficiently</p> <p>B - Satisfactory - Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration</p> <p>C - Poor - Showing major defects and / or not operating adequately</p> <p>D – Bad - Life expired and / or serious risk of imminent failure</p>	
	Supply of Affordable housing	Highland Council Affordable housing policy: http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3098EF9A-20A2-46A4-ACD4-B05FEBCFCBE0/0/dppgaffordablehousing.pdf
Renewable Energy Installations	Renewable Energy Installation account for 536.25kW of Highland Council Energy use.	Highland Council Energy Management and Performance Plan.
Water Treatment Works	Number of water treatments works in Highland. Investment in future.	<p>Scottish Water Strategic Asset Capacity and Development Plan (2006); http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SW_PAGE_GROUP_PS_ADMIN/SW_PUB_SCHEME_ADMIN_HOLDING/TAB65572/RELEASED%20STRATEGIC%20CAPACITY%20AND%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN%20MARCH%202006%20V2.pdf</p> <p>Scottish Waters Vision for Highlands 2010; http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SWE_PGP_INVESTMENT/SWE_PGE_INVESTMENT/SWE_INV_HIGH_2010</p>
Footpath networks	Proportion of population living within 200m of a footpath. The core paths plan is yet to be completed but this information will be added to the baseline data when the plans are adopted, Summer 2008.	The Highland Councils Core Path Plan.
Cycle paths	Number of designated cycle routes in Highland	Sustrans National Cycle Network Map; http://www.sustrans.org.uk/webfiles/general/sustrans_2008_ncn_map.pdf
Listed Buildings	<p>A Listed - 186</p> <p>B Listed - 1667</p> <p>C(S) Listed - 1161</p>	Historic Scotland GIS Dataset
Schedule Monuments	Total Number of Schedule Monuments in Highland is 1237	Historic Scotland GIS Dataset
Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Total Number of Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Historic Scotland GIS Dataset
Climate Factors	Key Information	Data Source
Reduce vulnerability to effects of climate change.	<p>Areas affected by flooding/costs (sea)</p> <p>Areas affected by flooding (river)</p> <p>Priority Species</p>	<p>UKCIP08 The climate of the United Kingdom and recent trends. www.ukcip08.org.uk</p> <p>SEPA flood maps www.sepa.org.uk</p>

	Impact on Natural Resources Impact on Provision of Services/cost to Council	SCCIP pilot project LCLIP. www.sccip.org.uk Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership.
Reduce need for energy.	Highland Council Energy Consumption is 22, 250GWH per annum.	Highland Council Energy Management and Performance Plan http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/ronlyres/4EA59619-0EF5-42CC-9889-7EDA9F997E8E/0/emppfeb06.pdf
Reduce air pollution to levels that do not damage natural systems, including contribution to climate change.	Carbon Footprint – 11.73-11.99 tonnes CO ₂ per capita	Stockholm Environment Institute. <i>Taken from the report “A Right Climate for Change”, (2007) Local Footprints Project and Stockholm Environmental Institute.</i> Scottish Climate Change Bill; http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Climate-Change/16327/Climate-Change-Bill
Number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Highland	None at present	http://www.scottishairquality.co.uk/
Reduce the need to travel.	Number of employees travelling by car. Availability of video conferencing material. Staff training and awareness Number of School Travel Plans Number of Office Travel plans	This should be monitored through the Highland Council green travel plan which is currently under development, Local Transport Strategy http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/transportplanning/localtransportstrategy.htm
Increase potential use of public transport.	Number of staff choosing public transport for commuting and business travel. Staff training and awareness. Number of School Travel plans Number of Office Travel Plans	This should be monitored through the Highland Council green travel plan which is currently under development, Local Transport Strategy http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/transportplanning/localtransportstrategy.htm
Increase the proportion of energy from renewable sources	Renewable Energy installations in Highland Council Building is 1200KWh Promotion of renewable energy.	Highland Council Energy Management and Performance Plan http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/ronlyres/4EA59619-0EF5-42CC-9889-7EDA9F997E8E/0/emppfeb06.pdf Highland Council Renewable Energy Strategy http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/energyplanning/renewbleenergy/highlandrenewableenergystrategy.htm Community Benefits from Renewables http://www.highland.gov.uk/livinghere/communityplanning/communitybenefit/
Improve the use of sustainable building techniques	Promotion of Sustainable design in the Community.	Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/designingforsustainability.htm

		Highland Housing Fair: http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/sustainabledevelopment/sharingthegreenagenda/highlandhousingfair.htm
Water	Key Information	Data Source
Avoid impact to and where possible enhance the water environment.	Number of rivers/lochs in good Ecological Condition.	EU Water Framework Directive. Highland Biodiversity Action plan SEPA Scottish Water
Flooding likelihood	Vulnerability of Highlands communities to flooding.	Scottish Government: the Future of Flood risk Management in Scotland: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/Flooding/Consultation UKCIP08: www.ukcip08.org.uk
Existing flood defences		Office of Science and technology (2005) Foresight report: <i>Future Flooding Scotland</i> . http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Previous_Projects/Flood_and_Coastal_Defence/Reports_and_Publications/Scotland/final_scotland.pdf
Pumping Stations and Sewage Works		Scottish Water (2006) Strategic Asset Capacity and Development Plan; http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SW_PAGE_GROUP_PS_ADMIN/SW_PUBLIC_SCHEMA_ADMIN_HOLDING/TAB65572/RELEASED%20STRATEGIC%20CAPACITY%20AND%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN%20MARCH%202006%20V2.pdf
Water Quality		SEPA Water Quality Classifications: http://www.sepa.org.uk/pdf/data/classification/water_qual_class_2006.pdf Scottish Executives Bathing Water Strategy: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/03/23151924/0 Scottish Executives Statistics Environment: European Directive 76/160/EEC, which sets mandatory bacteriological and other health-related standards for bathing waters in Europe. Biodiversity??
Hydro-power	80 Hydro-powered stations in Highlands and islands	http://www.hi-energy.org.uk/hydroenergy.html
Ground Water and River Levels		Centre for Hydrology and Ecology. National Water Archive; http://www.ceh.ac.uk/data/NWA.htm
Soil & Waste	Key Information	Data Source
Minimise waste and re-use or recover it by recycling, composting or energy	Waste into landfill: The proportion of waste in Highland being put into landfill. % of recycling/composting.	HC Waste Data Report - http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F6627158-2F0E-4C68-8250-9475DA7B8999/0/20062007AnnualWasteData

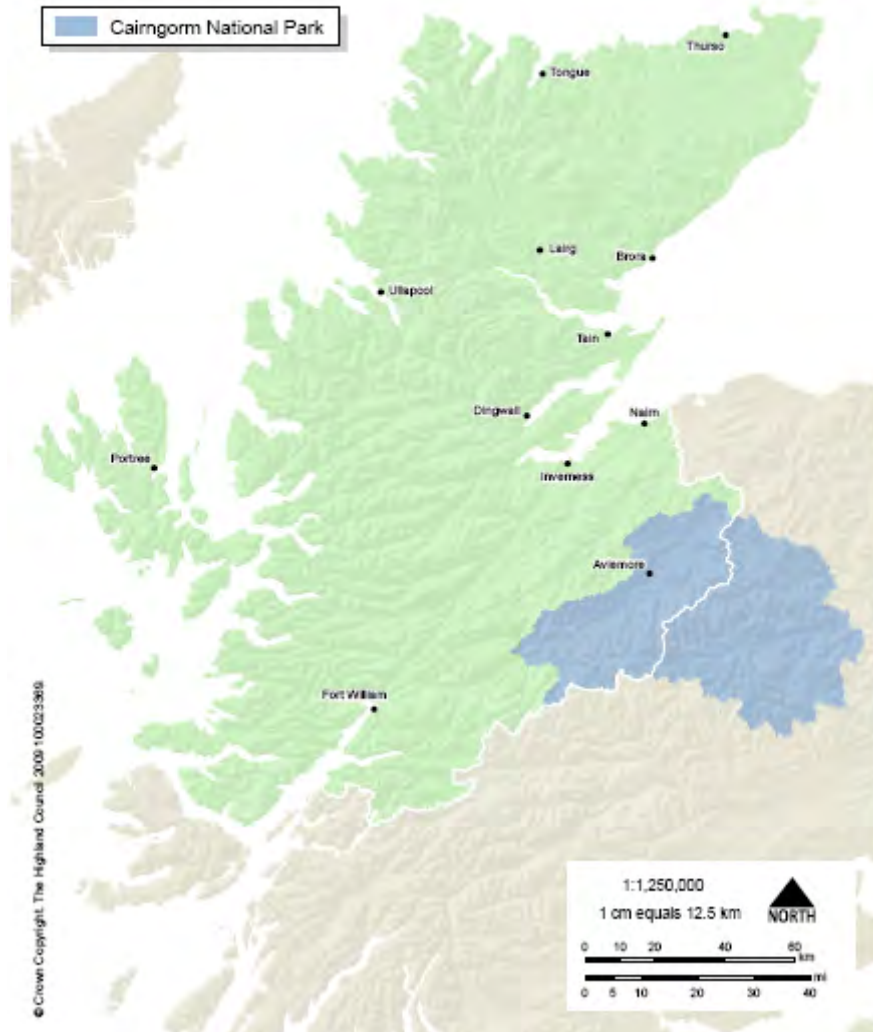
recovery.	<p>Currently 183 recycling points in Highland.</p> <p>26% of waste in highland recycled.</p> <p>77393 tonnes waste to landfill.</p> <p>Target of 40% recycling rates for 2010.</p>	<p>Report.pdf SEPA Waste Data Digest Series - http://www.sepa.org.uk/nws/data/data_digest.htm Audit Scotland Annual Statutory Performance Indicators reports - http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/performance/council</p> <p>The National Waste Strategy: http://www.sepa.org.uk/NWS/guidance/nwp.htm</p>
Erosion	Distance and numbers of path where erosion or poor path construction has or is reducing soil quality and quantity. No data available but possible monitoring of core paths in the future can be used.	The Highland Council Core Paths Plan (to be adopted in summer 2008)
Contaminated Land	<p>Number of sites of Contaminated land in Highland</p> <p>Area of Contaminated Land (ha) in Highland</p>	Highland Council Contaminated Land Database.
Cultural Heritage	Key Information	Data Source
Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness.	<p>Townscape Quality</p> <p>16 National Scenic Areas found in Highland Region</p>	<p>A96 Development Framework: http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7297B608-64F3-478C-AC10-4CEABF3595C1/0/A96DevelopmentFramework.pdf</p> <p>www.snh.org.uk</p> <p>Inverness City Vision: http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6E3C5D49-3E28-49D9-AC41-711ADDABA265/0/InvernessCityVision.pdf</p>
	There are 52 areas in highland listed in the inventory of Gardens and Designated Landscapes.	www.snh.org.uk SNH (2004) facts and figures.
Landscape	Key Information	Data Source
Retain and improve quality and quantity of publicly accessible open space.	Landscape Character	<p>Scottish Natural Heritage: <i>Overview of Scotland's national programme of Landscape Character Assessment (2004)</i></p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1996) <i>Cairngorms landscape assessment.</i></p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1998) <i>Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Assessment.</i></p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1999) <i>Ben Alder, Ardverikie and Creag Meagaidh Landscape</i></p>

		<p><u>Character Assessment</u></p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1998) <u>Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment</u></p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1998) <u>Moray and Nairn Landscape Character Assessment</u></p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1998) <u>Caithness and Sutherland Landscape Character Assessment</u>.</p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1996) <u>Skye and Lochalsh Landscape Character Assessment</u>.</p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1998) <u>Lochaber Landscape Character Assessment</u>.</p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage (1999) <u>Ross and Cromarty Landscape Character Assessment</u>.</p>
Peatlands	Proportion of peat land in Caithness and Sutherland.	SNH; http://www.snh.org.uk/scottish/nhighland/Peatlands/CSI.asp
Forest and Woodland		<p>The Highland Forest and Woodland strategy.</p> <p>http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/agriculturefisheriesandforestry/treesandforestry/highland-forest-and-woodland-strategy.htm</p> <p>Forestry Commission Scotland; http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland</p>
Agricultural Land	<p>Land use, employment and production information.</p> <p>Crofting in Highland</p>	<p>National Farmers Union Scotland; http://www.nfus.org.uk/facts_index.asp</p> <p>Crofters Commission Annual report 2006/07; http://www.crofterscommission.org.uk/documents/croft-englishfinalreport0607.pdf</p>
Coast	<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Number, type and specification of harbours in Highland.</p>	<p>Highland Biodiversity Action Plan www.highland.gov.uk</p> <p>http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/harbours/</p>
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Key information	Data Source
Protect, enhance and where necessary restore designated wildlife sites and protected species	There are currently 12 RAMSAR sites, 90 SAC's, 46 SPA's, 368 SSSI's, 12 NNR's, 1 LNR,	www.snh.org.uk
	The Cairngorms National Park extends into Badenoch and Strathspey which is within the Highland Council area.	www.cairngorms.co.uk
Improve biodiversity,	Highland region supports 192 of	Highland Biodiversity Action Plan

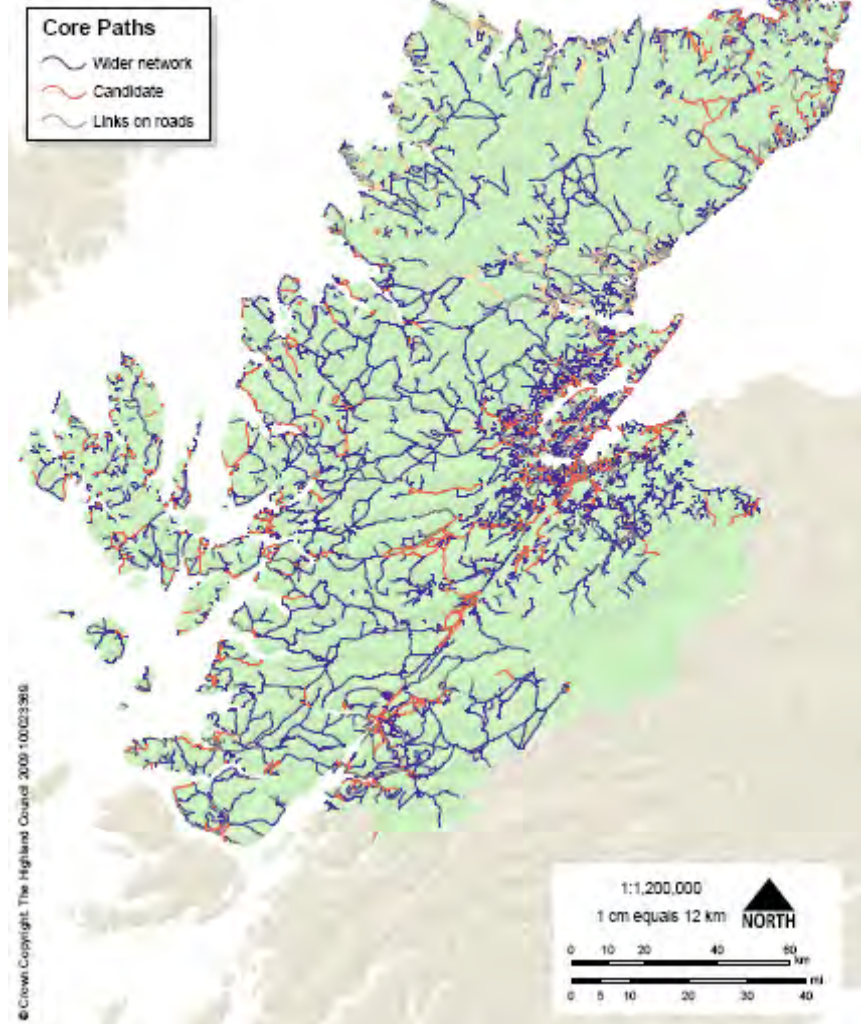
avoiding irreversible losses.	the 238 priority species in Scotland and 40 of the 42 priority habitats. 455 of the priority species of conservation importance are found in Highland.	www.highlandbiodiversity.com Habitat and Birds Directive – Annex 1
Provide appropriate opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wild life and wild places.	Proportion of population living within 200m of a footpath. The core paths plan is yet to be completed but this information will be added to the baseline data when the plans are adopted, Summer 2008.	The Highland Councils Core path plan.
	Site condition monitoring database being produced by SNH will provide information on the condition of designated sites, 2000-2005, including recreational pressures but this database is not yet operational to provide this data.	SNH
Fisheries and Aquaculture	Natural Resources of the Seas around Highland.	http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/agriculturefisheriesandforestry/fisheriesandaquaculture/

Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Cairngorm National Park

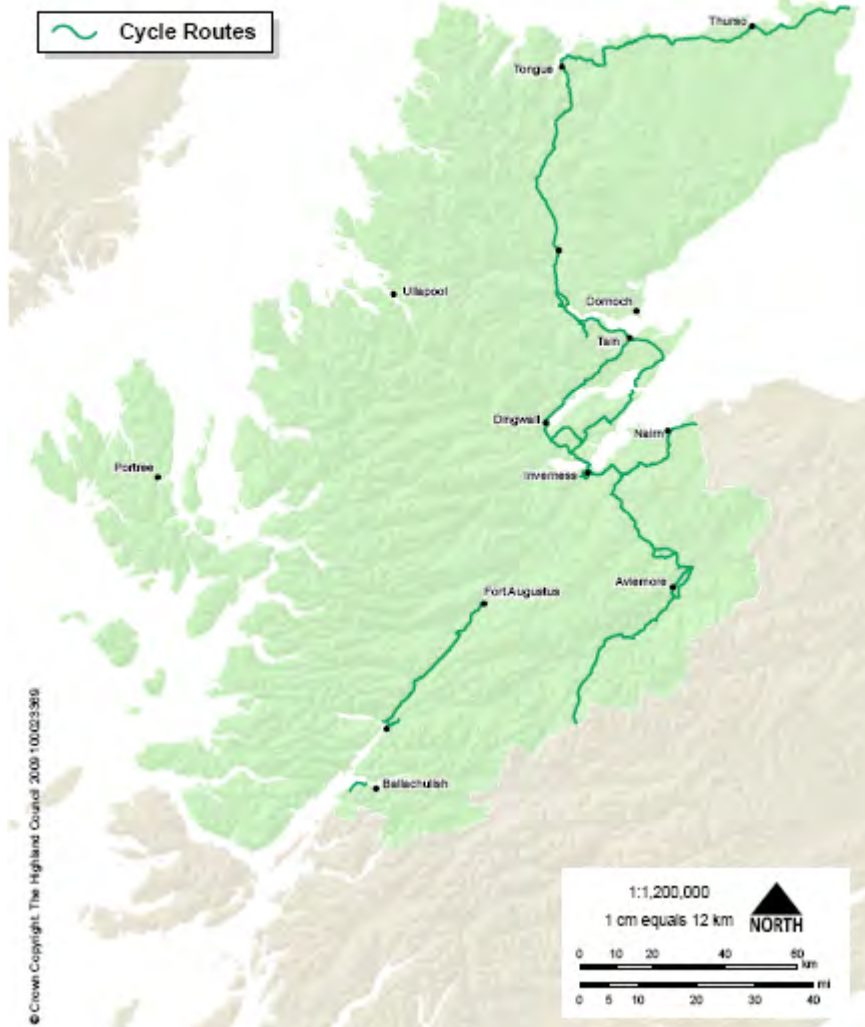


Highland Wide Local Development Plan Core Paths Network



Highland Wide Local Development Plan

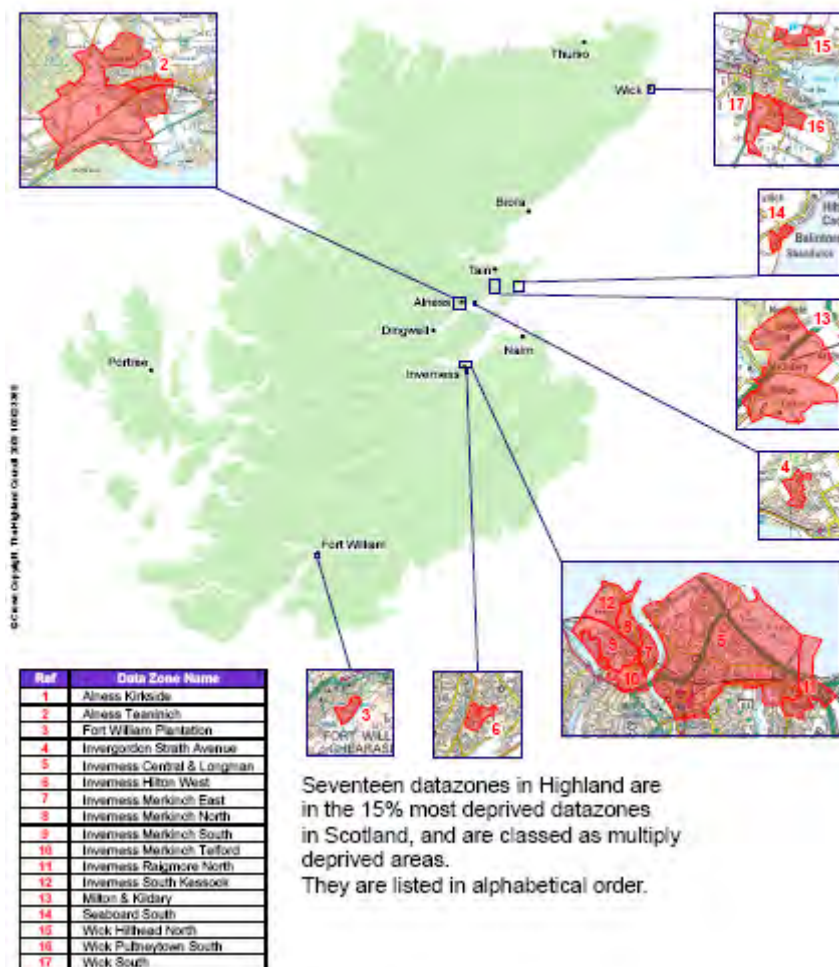
Highland Cycle Network



Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Most Deprived Areas in Highland

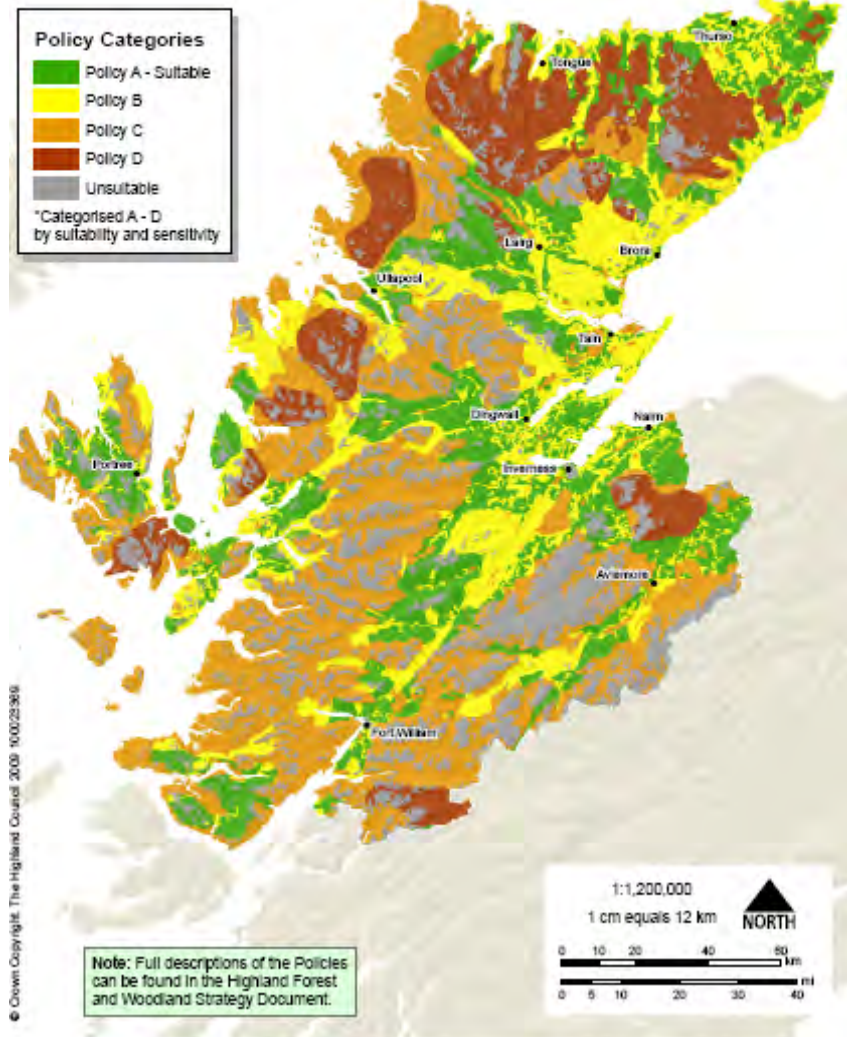
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006



Seventeen datazones in Highland are in the 15% most deprived datazones in Scotland, and are classed as multiply deprived areas. They are listed in alphabetical order.

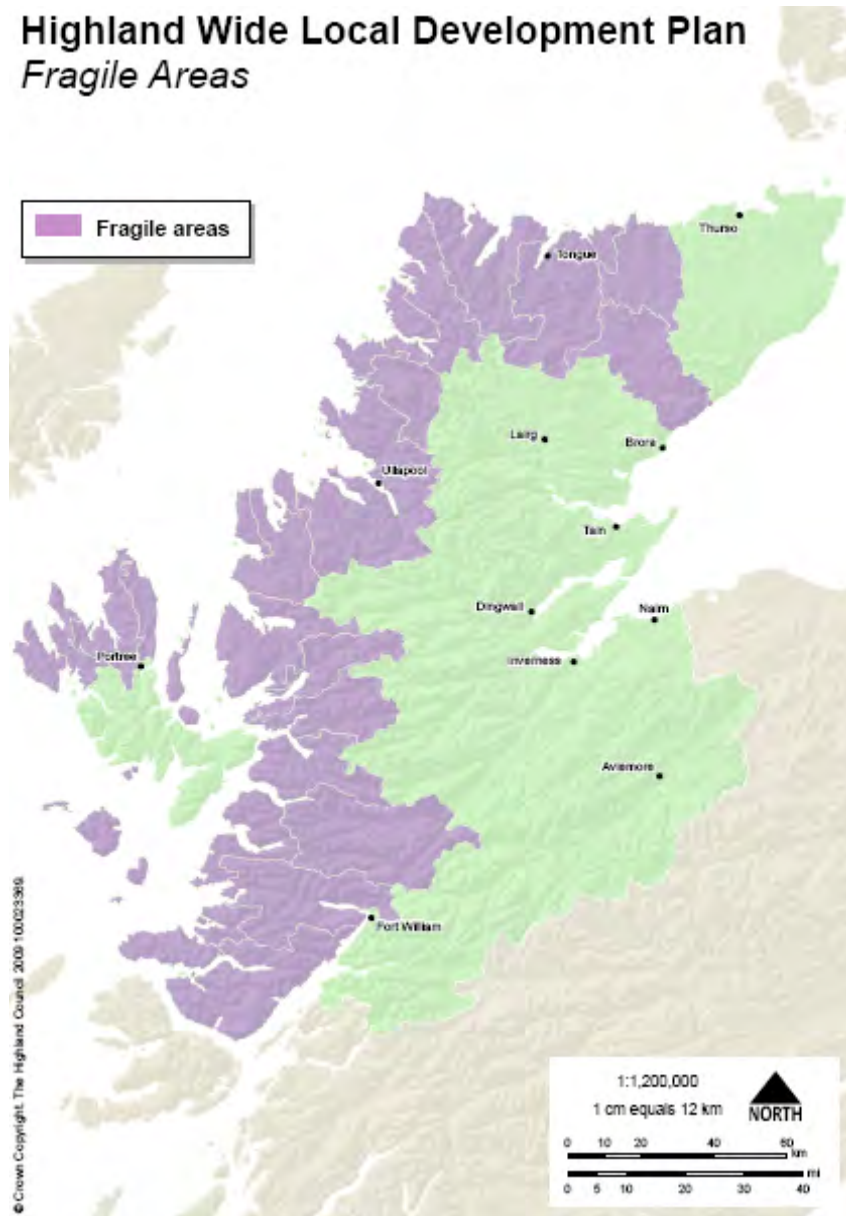
Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy



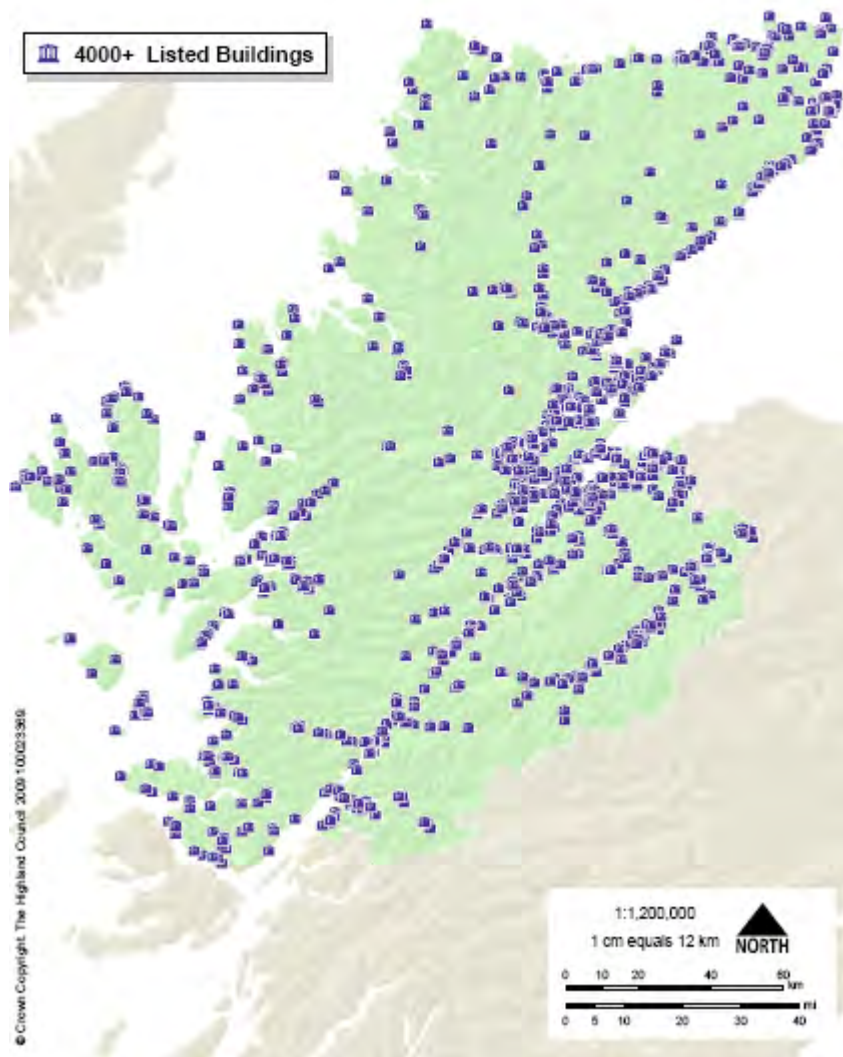
Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Fragile Areas



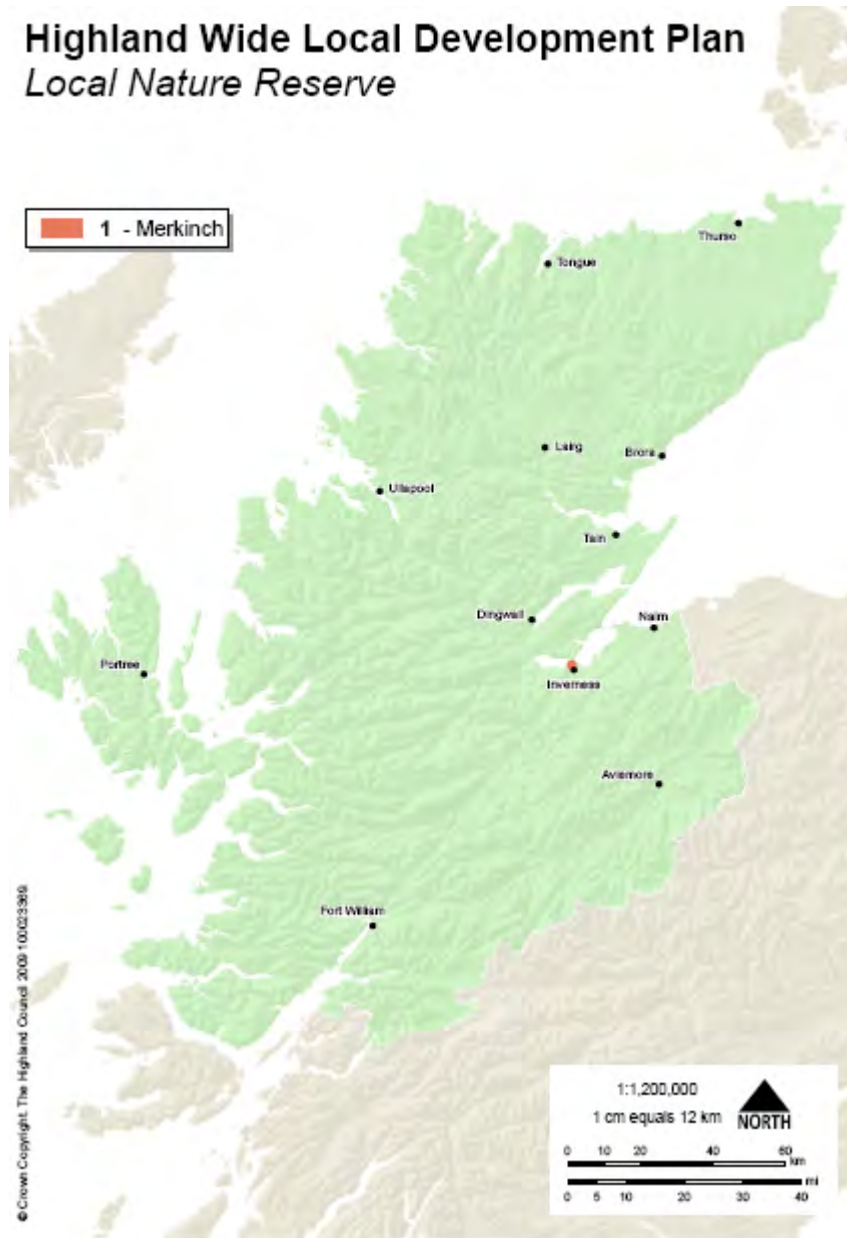
Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Listed Buildings



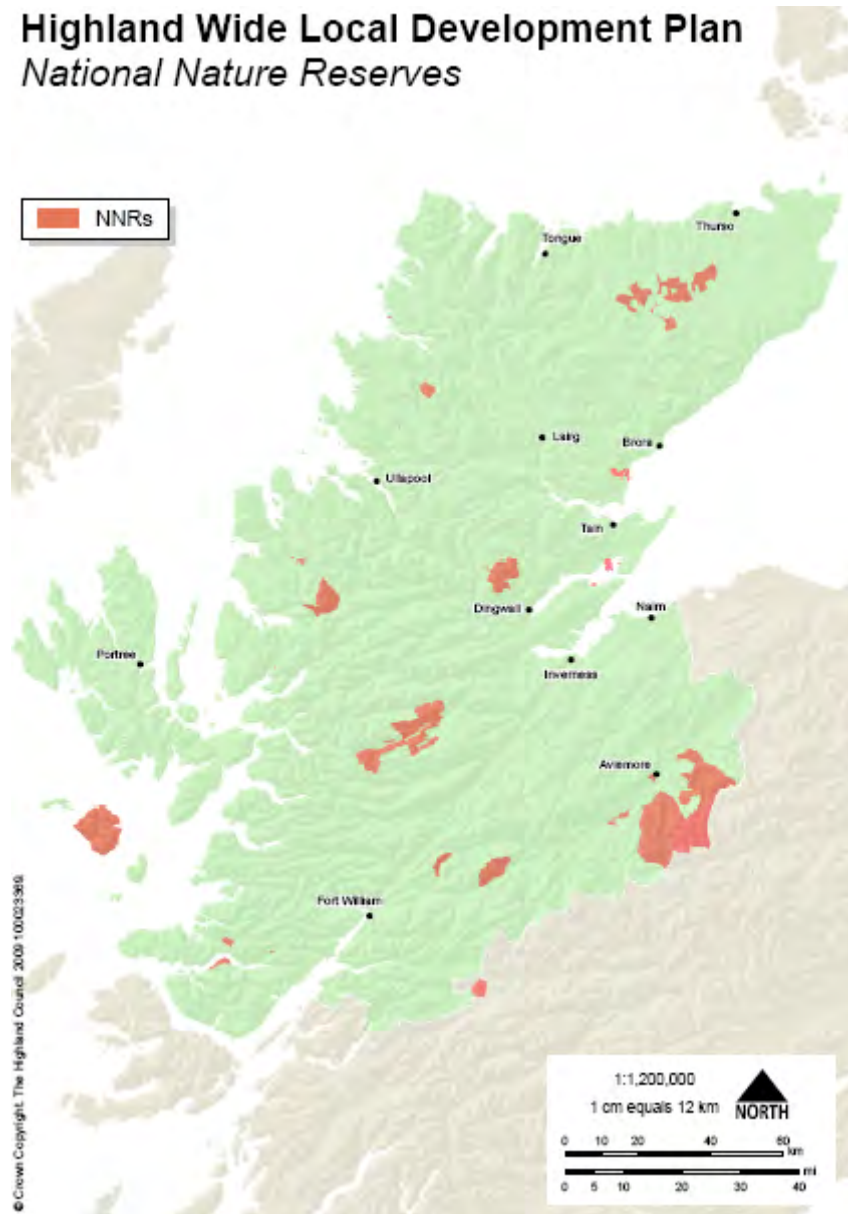
Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Local Nature Reserve



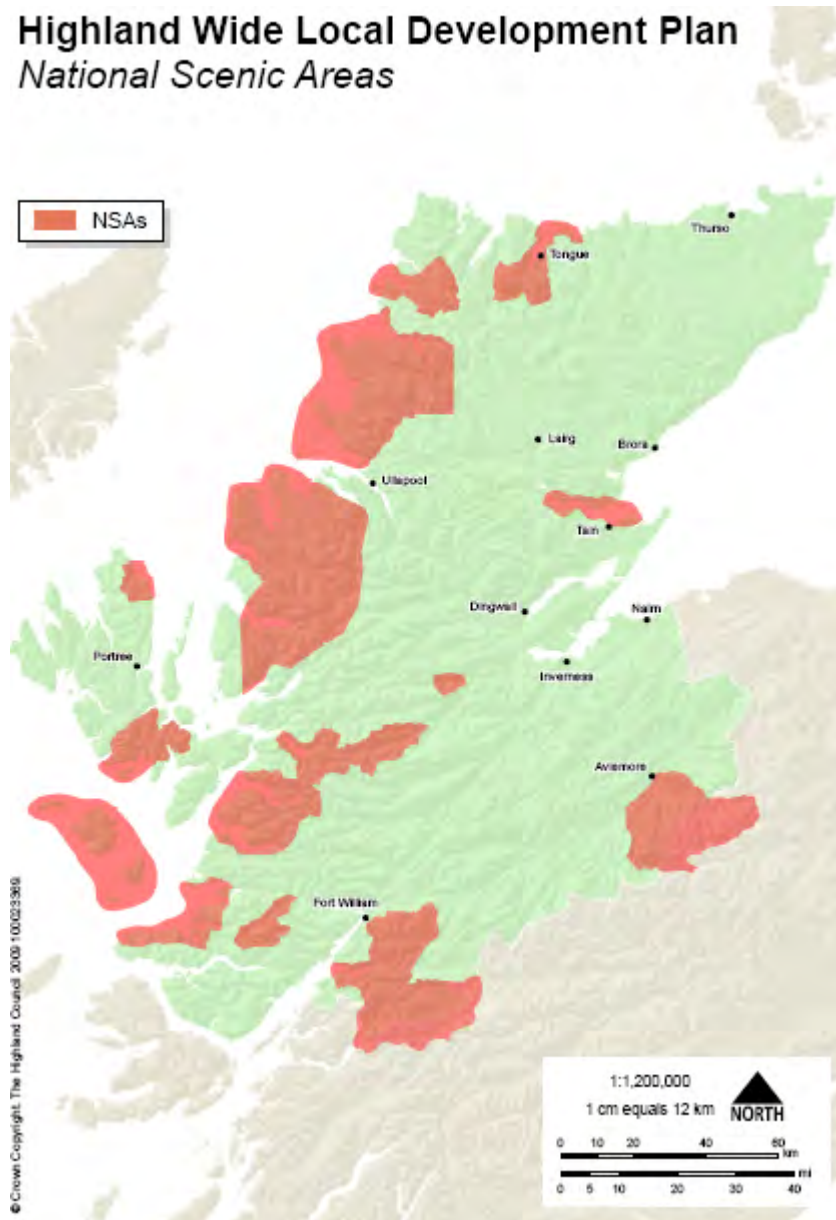
Highland Wide Local Development Plan

National Nature Reserves



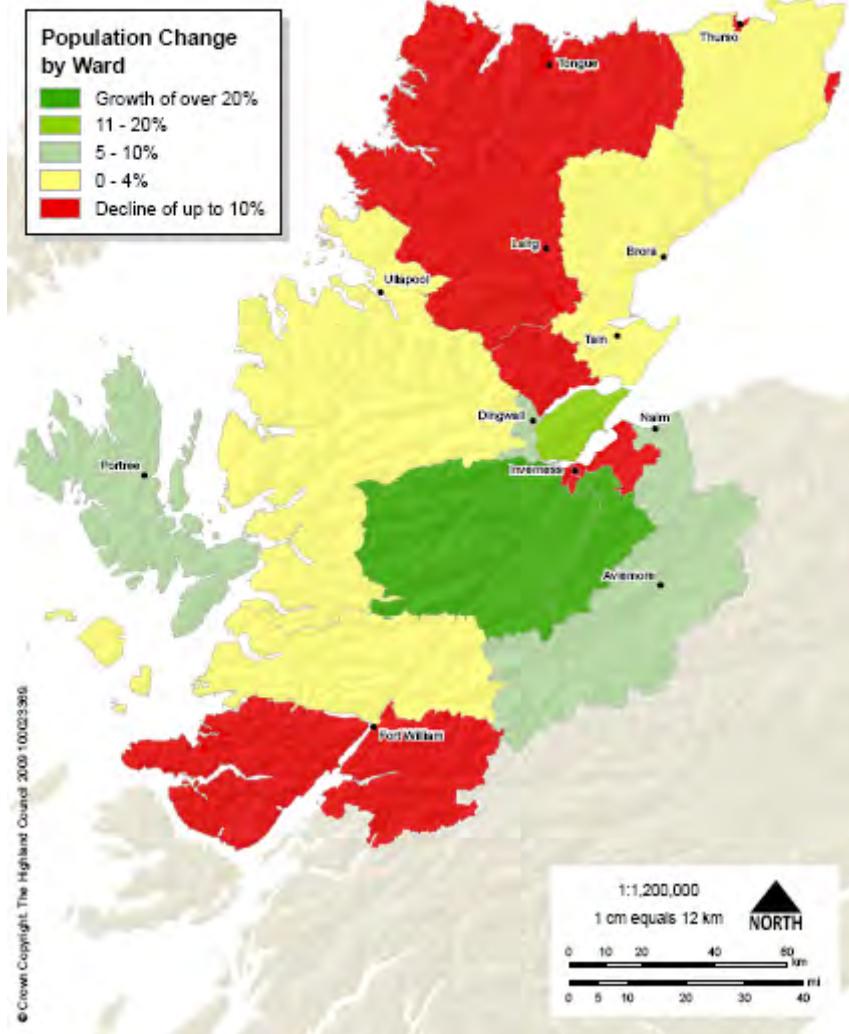
Highland Wide Local Development Plan

National Scenic Areas



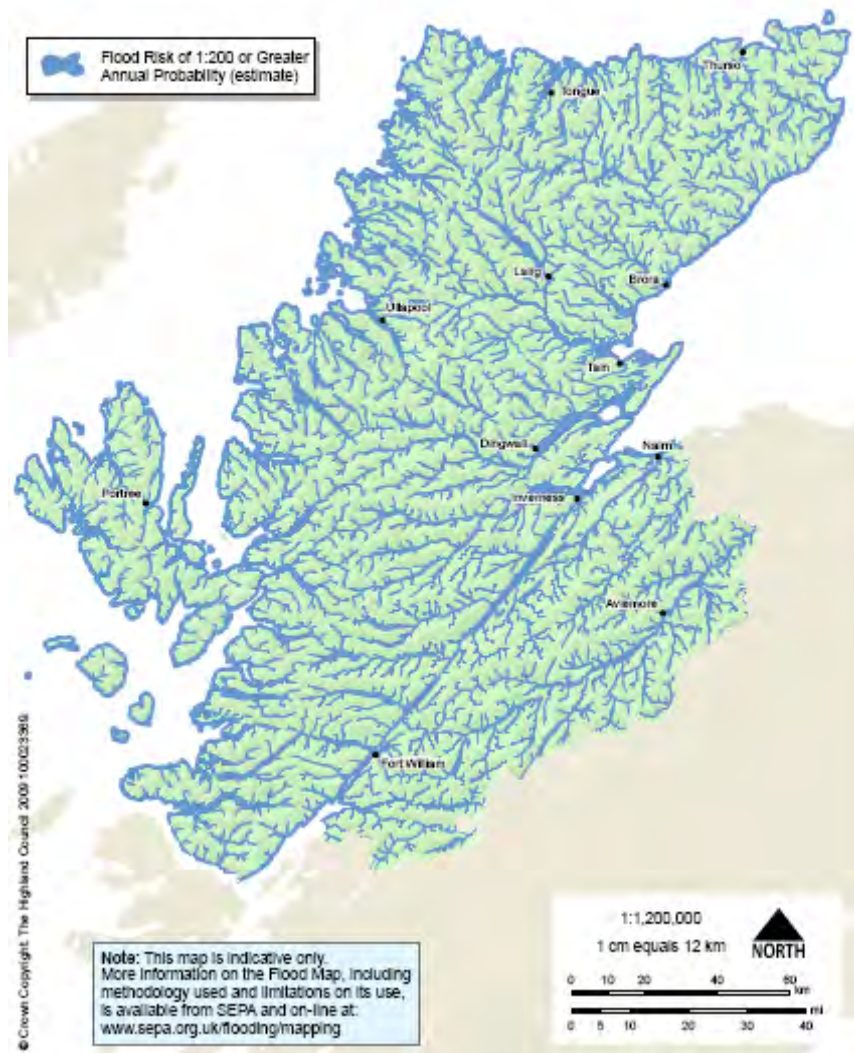
Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Population Change 1998 to 2007

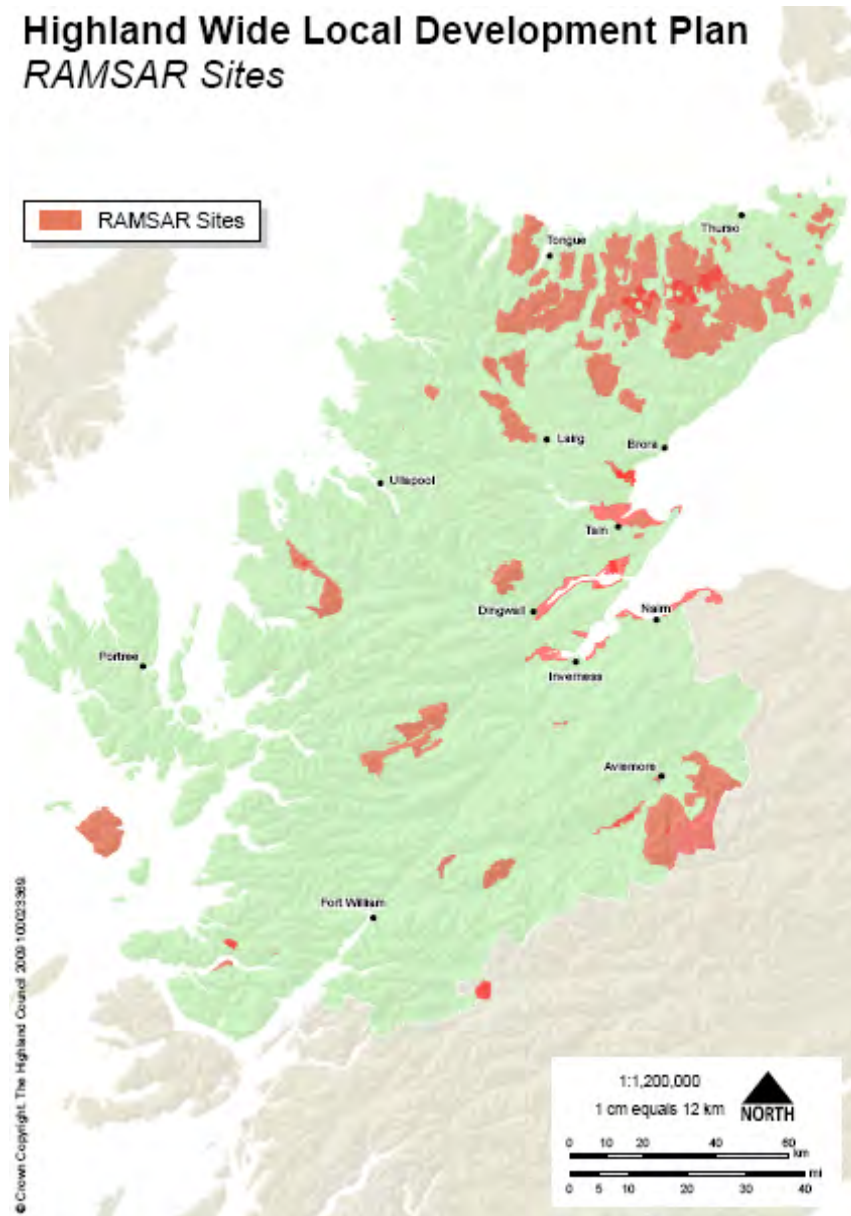


Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Highland Flood Risk

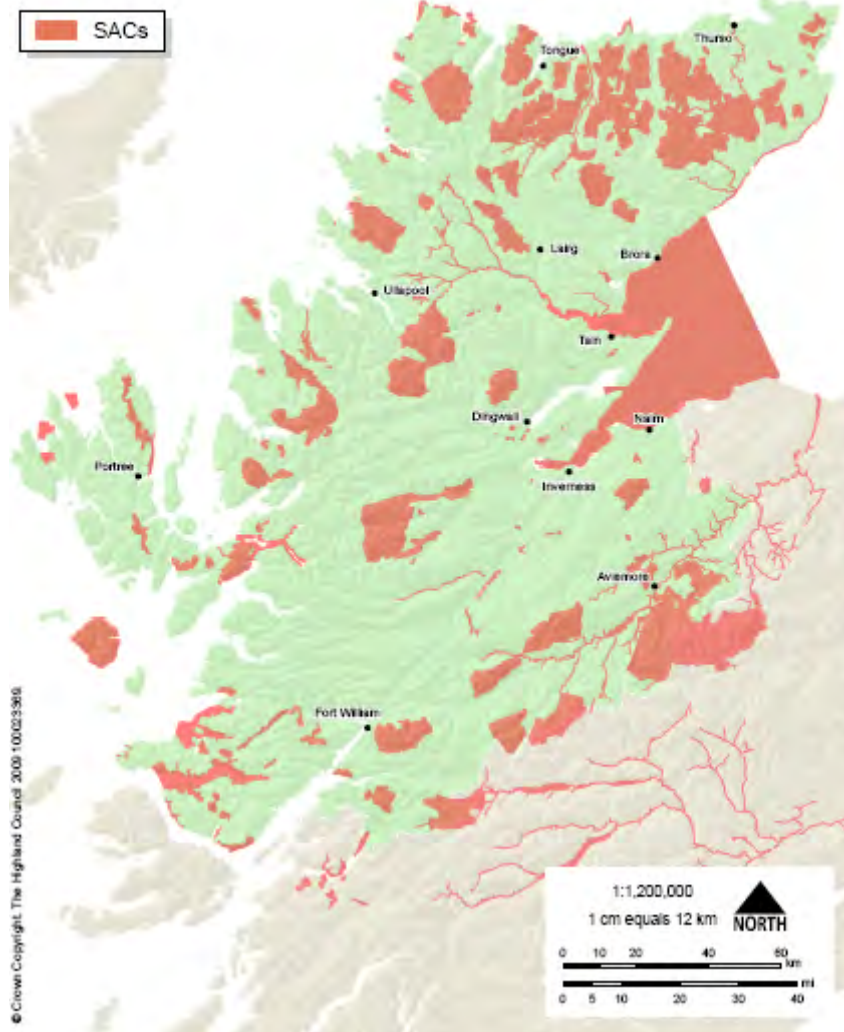


Highland Wide Local Development Plan RAMSAR Sites

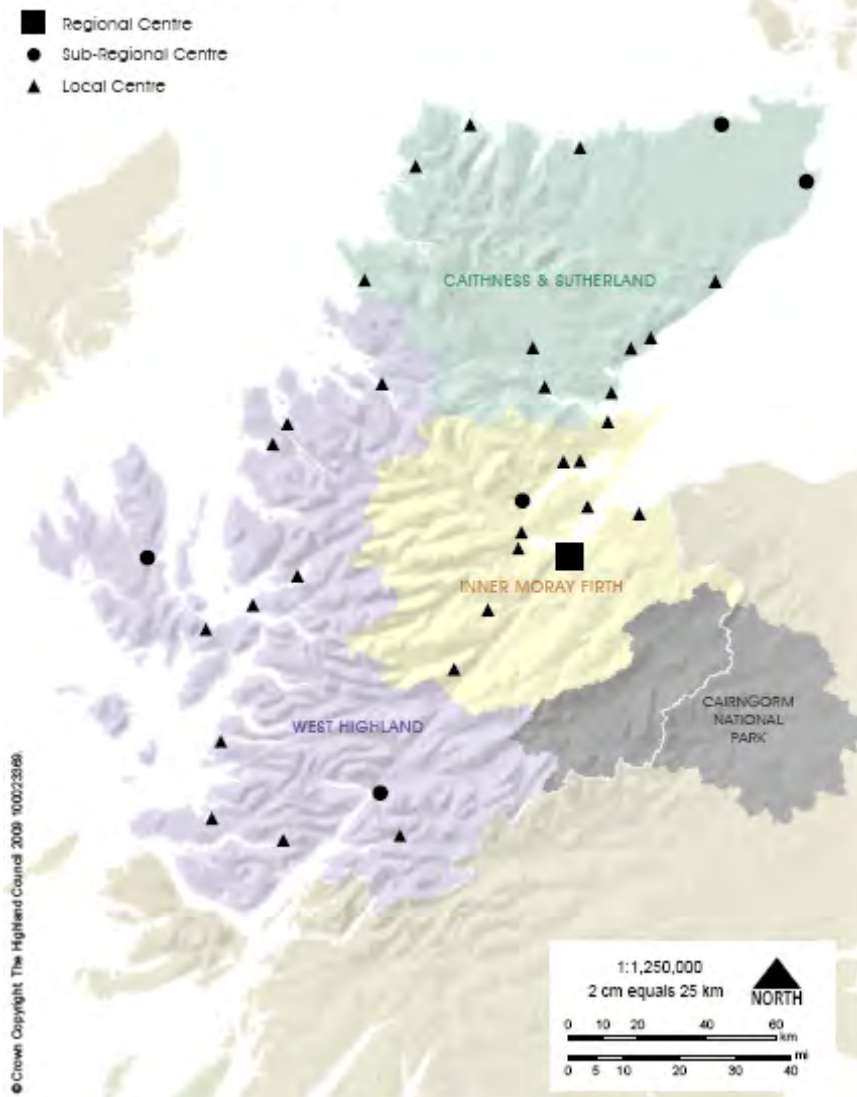


Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Special Areas of Conservation

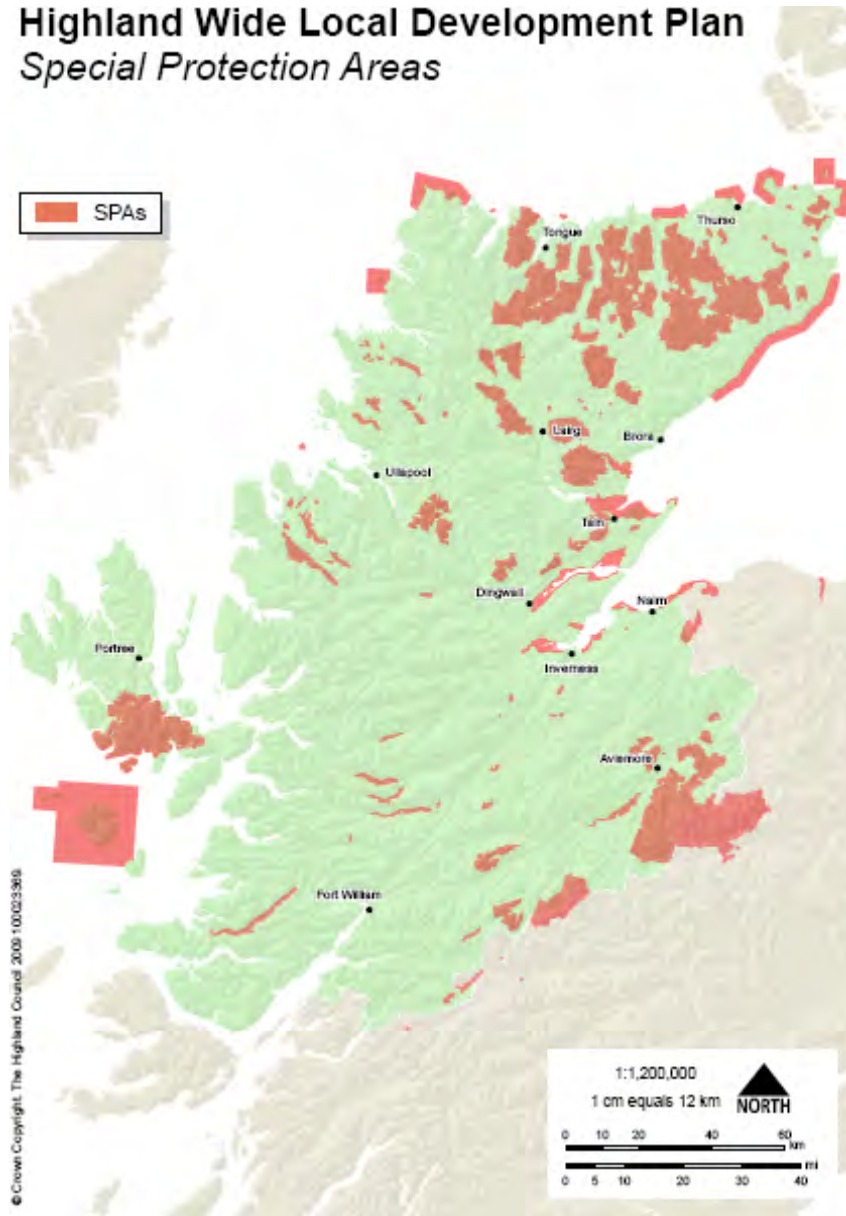


Highland Wide Local Development Plan Settlement Hierarchy

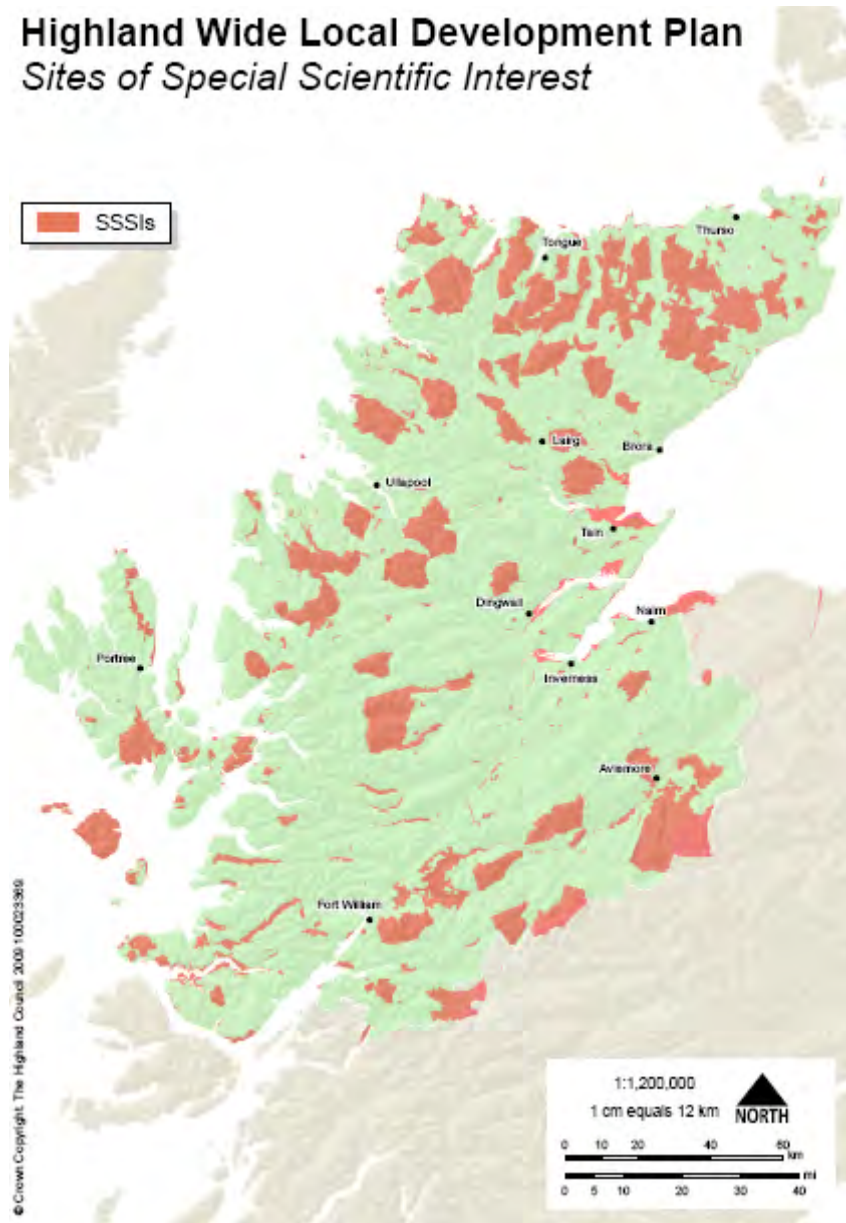


Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Special Protection Areas



Highland Wide Local Development Plan *Sites of Special Scientific Interest*



The baseline data has been derived from that used for the Highland wide Local Development Plan. We seek comment from the consultation authorities on its scope.

Appendix 2 – Example of Matrix to be used in assessing options

The assessments will be completed using the best available data and take into consideration a number of other plans, policies and strategies set out in the Scoping Report.

The key for the following matrices is below:

Significant Positive Impact	No minimal positive impact or	Neutral Impact	No minimal negative impact or	Significant negative impact	Unknown impact
++	+	=	-	--	??

In areas where it is possible that there may be a positive and negative impact a +/- symbol will be used.

High Sensitivity	H
Medium Sensitivity	M
Low Sensitivity	L

Each assessed alternative will be followed by a short commentary.

Explanation of Matrix

Below explains each column of the matrix and how it has been filled in.

SEA Objective		Considerations and Assumptions	Time Scale			Sensitivity (H/M/L)	Magnitude		Justification
			Short Term	Medium	Long Term		Local	Regional	
1	Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species avoiding irreversible losses	<p>Considerations</p> <p>Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland?</p> <p>Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?</p> <p>Will it contribute to achieving local and regional biodiversity action plan targets?</p> <p>Will habitats of importance to for biodiversity be protected?</p> <p>Will it prevent the fragmentation of green habitat networks?</p> <p>Assumptions</p>							

SEA Objective from Environmental Report

Considerations and assumptions made when assessing the approach against the SEA objective

When will the affect become apparent short(0-5yrs), medium (5-10yrs), or Long term (10+yrs)

How relevant is the approach to the SEA Objective

Will the approach have an impact locally or highland wide

Why the SEA has been given this assessment

Blank Matrix

SEA Objective		Considerations and Assumptions	Time Scale			Sensitivity (H/M/L)	Magnitude		Justification
			Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term		Local	Regional	
1	Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species avoiding irreversible losses	<p>Considerations</p> <p>Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland?</p> <p>Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?</p> <p>Will it contribute to achieving local and regional biodiversity action plan targets?</p> <p>Will habitats of importance to for biodiversity be protected?</p> <p>Will it prevent the fragmentation of green habitat networks?</p>							
		<p>Assumptions</p>							
2	Maintain, enhance and create green networks for wildlife and people	<p>Considerations</p> <p>Will it ensure the importance of the protected species of the area is made a priority?</p> <p>Will it contribute to education of local people and tourists in terms of their understanding of the local wildlife?</p> <p>Will it provide or enhance access to areas of high biodiversity value?</p>							
		<p>Assumptions</p>							

SEA Objective		Considerations and Assumptions	Time Scale			Sensitivity (H/M/L)	Magnitude		Justification
			Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term		Local	Regional	
3	Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments	<p>Considerations Will it safeguard the ability of people to experience qualities of wildness? Will it enhance responsible access to natural areas</p> <p>Assumptions</p>							
4	Protect and enhance human health	<p>Considerations Will it give additional benefit to human health? Will human health be significantly reduced? Will it ensure a more healthy lifestyle for the residents within the settlements? Will it ensure better opportunities for walking and cycling?</p> <p>Assumptions</p>							
5	Retain and improve quality, quantity, and connectivity of publicly accessible open space	<p>Considerations Will it increase the level of fit for purpose open spaces? Will it improve existing open spaces? Will it ensure better connectivity of open spaces? Will it ensure recreational access to green networks?</p> <p>Assumptions</p>							

SEA Objective		Considerations and Assumptions	Time Scale			Sensitivity (H/M/L)	Magnitude		Justification
			Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term		Local	Regional	
6	Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change	Considerations Will it ensure new developments are free from flooding? Will it enhance natural drainage? Will it reduce the vulnerability of existing areas to flooding? Will it facilitate species adaptation to climate change through the protection of or contribution to green habitat networks?							
		Assumptions							
7	Increase opportunities for recreation access to the outdoors and active travel	Considerations Will it promote the use of core paths by linking them to a green network? Will it improve links to the wider countryside? Will it be protect and enhance the existing path network? Will it provide opportunities to travel between settlements using active travel?							
		Assumptions							
8	Protect and where appropriate enhance the cultural heritage	Considerations Will it protect and enhance the historic environment?							
		Assumptions							

SEA Objective		Considerations and Assumptions	Time Scale			Sensitivity (H/M/L)	Magnitude		Justification
			Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term		Local	Regional	
9	Value and protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes	<p>Considerations</p> <p>Will existing landscape character be maintenance or enhanced?</p> <p>Will local diversity and distinctiveness be maintained or enhanced?</p> <p>Will it protect areas with strong qualities of wildness?</p> <p>Assumptions</p>							

We would welcome comment from the key agencies on our matrix approach and also the considerations for each of the SEA objectives.