

Issue 44		Tourism	
Development plan reference:		Policy 44 (Para 20.8, Page 92)	Reporter:
Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (including reference number)			
The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (2), Laid Grazings Committee (83), Nairn West Community Council (101), Elizabeth Budge (148), Mrs Annie Stewart (172), Glen Urquhart Community Council (174), Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) (190), Sleat Community Council (304), Inverlochry & Torlundy Community Council (318), A Currie (368), Highland Film Commission (491)			
Provision of the development plan to which the issue relates:		Vision, Caithness & Sutherland Vision, West Highlands and Islands Vision, Policy 44 Tourism, Policy 57 Travel	
Council's summary of the representation(s):			
Support efforts to grow this sector of the economy. (174)			
Concerns that tourism is not the number one priority for Caithness and Sutherland as it is already a big employer with potential for expansion. (83)			
Concerns regarding the lack of protection for natural environment as tourism assets (2, 101)			
Concerns that not all representations on Tourism will be incorporated [assumed]. (148)			
Concerns regarding the lack of all-weather tourism facilities in the Inner Moray Firth Area to enhance tourist sector and compete with other parts of UK. (172)			
Concerns that transport links to the area are insufficient to support tourism. (172)			
Concerns regarding the lack of good tourist facilities proposed by the plan. (172)			
Concerns that major new facilities don't provide a one-stop-shop which completes with existing facilities or fails to encourage longer stays within an area. (174)			
Concerns that proposals for new tourist developments might be restricted to locations with a settlement boundary. (190)			
Concerns regarding the lack of proposals for new tourist developments on Skye. (304)			
Concerns that the sector isn't supported sufficiently enough given its role in supporting other businesses such as crofting, fishing and forestry in fragile			

rural communities. (318)

Concerns regarding the lack of protection for the International Cycle route. used by cyclists from cruise ships at nearby Invergordon and other international cyclists. (368)

Concerns regarding the lack of acknowledgement that film tourism contributes to the economic development of the Highland area. (491)

#### **Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

Amend the Caithness and Sutherland Vision [xref Issue 82] to place bullet point 7 “have a high quality tourist industry” at the top of paragraph 5.2.1 [assumed] to identify it as the number one priority in terms of economic development. (83)

Amend the Policy to require that new tourism proposals safeguard the natural heritage assets. (2, 101)

Amend the Policy to incorporate all representations made if possible [assumed]. (148).

Amend the Policy to identify particular locations for tourist facilities, particularly all-weather proposals. (172)

Amend Policy 57 Travel to support improved transport links to/from the area. (172)

Amend the Policy to assess proposals for new tourist facilities to assess the extent to which they displace tourists from existing facilities. (174)

Amend the Policy to allow for appropriate sustainable tourism facilities outwith Settlement boundaries. (190)

Amend the West Highlands and Islands Vision [assumed] to incorporate support for tourism on Skye. (304)

Amend the Policy to assess the extent to which new proposals support existing businesses such as crofting, fishing and forestry in fragile rural communities. (318)

Amend Policy 57 Travel [assumed] to provide specific protection for The International Cycle Route. (368)

Amend the Vision [assumed] to highlight the link between economic development and film tourism. [xref to Issue 45]. (491)

#### **Summary of responses (including reasons) by Planning Authority:**

The Caithness and Sutherland Vision already acknowledges the priority of having a high quality tourist industry, but this is only one of a number of important sectors of the economy in the area. Given the increasing level of interest in Marine Renewables, particularly in Caithness, it would not necessarily be beneficial to prioritise tourism above all other sectors, indeed a more broad-based economy is required in order to ensure the continued sustainability of communities in the area. This latter point is highlighted in bullet point 8. No change is deemed necessary. (83)

Protection for the natural and environmental assets which are key attractors for tourism is already provided for elsewhere in the Proposed Plan under the General Policies detailed within Section 21 “Safeguarding Our Environment” (2, 101)

All representations regarding this Policy will be considered and incorporated where relevant and practicable. (148)

More specific opportunities for new or enhanced tourism facilities will be identified in subsequent Local Development Plans. (172)

Improvements to the Highland area’s transport links have already been considered under the Council’s [Local Transport Strategy](#) which the Highland-wide Local Development Plan must take cognisance of. In addition, major tourist-related transport links outwith the area considered at a National level through the [Strategic Transport Projects Review](#) which prioritises enhancements to both the trunk road and rail networks. No change is deemed necessary. (172)

To restrict the development of new tourist facilities because of a potential impact on existing facilities would likely impose an artificial restriction on the expansion of this important business sector, and at the same time potentially stifle innovation and change to meet new tourism market requirements & expectations. No change is deemed necessary. (174)

Given that many of the tourist ‘attractors’ within the Highlands are outwith settlements – generally, the areas natural heritage – it would seem appropriate to allow tourism-related developments outwith settlement boundaries in line with HIE’s suggested amendment, but only where they don’t adversely affect the landscape character or natural heritage of the area. SNH have suggested a form of words relating to Policy 45 Tourist Accommodation which would also appear appropriate for this Policy. Thus, the following additional sentence is suggested, inserted between the bullet points for assessment and the final paragraph:

Where a site is outwith a settlement boundary, developments will only be permitted where they do not adversely affect the landscape character or the natural heritage of the area.

(190)

General support for tourist proposals throughout the West Highlands and Islands has been given within bullet points 8 and 9 of the Vision for the area, and specific tourist proposals for Skye have already been identified in the [West Highlands and Islands Local Plan](#). Specific proposals will also be considered by the future Local Development Plan for the area. No change is deemed necessary. (304)

The importance of the tourism sector to the Highland economy as a whole is already highlighted within the overall Vision [para 4.2.3] and reiterated within the area Visions. This emphasis, combined with this proactive Tourism Policy (44) Tourism and Policy 45 Tourist Accommodation, is deemed sufficient in terms of supporting this important industry sector. (318)

The International Cycle route (National Cycle Route 1) has already been considered under the Council's Local Transport Strategy, and includes policies which show how the Council will work with Sustrans on improving this route under the overarching [Cycling Action Plan for Scotland](#). No change is deemed necessary. (368)

The link between economic development and the film tourism is referenced, albeit indirectly, within the Vision for the Plan [para 4.2.3], which highlights both tourism and creative industries as being key sectors for a sustainable Highland economy. The expectation is that particular priority 'themes' for the Highland tourism industry, such as film tourism, would be highlighted in the "[Highland Area Tourism Partnership Plan 2005-2015](#)", and that this would inform future Area Local Development Plans and other planning guidance. (491)

#### **Any further plan changes commended by the Council**

None

#### **Reporter's conclusions:**

For Reporter

#### **Reporter's recommendations:**

For Reporter