

The Highland Council

Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee 19 August 2015

Agenda Item	15
Report No	PDI/ 53/15

Highland-Wide Local Development Plan Main Issues Report

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

This report presents the Main Issues Report (MIR) for the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) for approval. It marks the first formal stage in reviewing the existing HwLDP to create a policy only plan that provides an updated and consistent framework for planning decisions across Highland.

The MIR reflects an outcome based approach that shows how the new Plan could help deliver the Highland Single Outcome Agreement. It presents a vision based on four thematic outcomes - Guiding Development; Placemaking, Design & Travel; Resource Management; and Delivering Development – along with options for updating our policy framework to address these outcomes.

Committee is asked to approve the MIR to enable a public consultation to be undertaken. Comments received on the MIR will inform the preparation of the next stage of the review - the Proposed Plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 The enclosed Main Issues Report (MIR) marks the first formal stage in the review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (adopted 2012). The MIR proposes that the new HwLDP becomes a policy only plan leaving the Area Local Development Plans to focus on locationally specific aspects of the Development Plan. This review has involved comprehensive analysis of policies set out in the current HwLDP which is summarised in an accompanying Monitoring Statement.
- 1.2 The MIR is not intended to be read as a draft version of the Local Development Plan but rather as a report setting out the main issues for the future of the Highland area. The MIR provides options for dealing with each main issue, including the Council's preferred option, and these are presented for consideration by Committee. These preferences are the suggested initial position of the Council, and are not fixed.
- 1.3 Subject to the approval of Committee the MIR will be subject to full public consultation. Feedback received on the MIR will be reported to this Committee along with a Proposed Local Development Plan for approval. Once the final HwLDP has been prepared and adopted it will replace the existing Highland-wide Local Development Plan and eventually sit alongside three Area Local Development Plans. Supplementary Guidance will also be prepared or reviewed to support the policies contained within the Plan.

2. Steps Undertaken So Far

- 2.1 A considerable amount of research and analysis has been undertaken in preparing this MIR which is set out in the accompanying Monitoring Statement and Environmental Report. Copies of these documents are available to view in the Members' Library, Members' Intranet and the [HwLDP webpage](#).
- 2.2 We have considered how the Plan fits with the outcomes and priorities set out in the Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement. The Plan also takes account of emerging policy issues that have arisen in preparing and consulting on the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan and the Caithness and Sutherland Local Area Development Plan Main Issues Report.
- 2.3 We have also carried out a full assessment of future policy approaches taking account of the views of Council Members, Council officials and a number of external agencies through discussion and feedback from a series of workshops that were held. This included a range of Council services, as well as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Consultation Authorities (Scottish National Heritage, Historic Scotland and Scottish Environment Protection Agency).

3. The Main Issues Report

- 3.1 The HwLDP will seek to deliver outcomes that benefit all those who live, work and visit the area, as well as those who invest in it. The suggested vision for the Highland area set out in the MIR is therefore represented by the following four outcomes which we believe reflect what the HwLDP should try to achieve for the area by 2037. These are:

Where we Guide Development	A network of successful, sustainable communities where people want to live, which provide the most convenient access to services, education and employment within a strong and diverse economy with a wide labour market that is competitive, adaptable and prosperous.
Placemaking, Design & Travel	Healthy, sustainable places to live and work that integrate high standards of design and green infrastructure and prioritise easy access to services by active travel and public transport.
Resource Management	World class Carbon Clever energy and resource management which strikes a balance between secure energy supplies, maximising the responsible use of our resources, and protecting and celebrating our outstanding natural, historic and cultural assets, resulting in lasting economic and environmental benefits for all communities.

Delivering Development & Supporting Infrastructure	Provision of services and resilient infrastructure that enables development to happen with cumulative constraints being overcome through the integration of community and development initiatives.
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3.2 These outcomes are based directly on the priorities which the Council and community planning partners have agreed with the Scottish Government through the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 3. To further the collaborative nature of the MIR we propose to present the document to the CPP Board in early September to seek consideration of the content of the MIR and the outcomes set out within the document.

3.3 The MIR is split into six sections.

Section 1	Vision and Strategy
Section 2	Where We Guide Development
Section 3	Placemaking, Design and Travel
Section 4	Resource Management
Section 5	Delivering Development & Supporting Infrastructure
Section 6	Other Amendments

The first 5 sections contain questions for the consultation on each of the main issues. Section 6 contains a summary of other policy areas where more minor policy changes are proposed. All potential amendments to policy will be subject of the consultation of the MIR.

3.4 An associated Environmental Report (ER) has been prepared (available on the [HwLDP webpage](#), in the Members Library and the Members intranet) and will be published alongside the MIR. It is an integral part of the plan-making process and has influenced the content of policies and options for future development. Habitats Regulation Appraisal will be undertaken in due course and published alongside the Proposed Plan.

3.5 The MIR takes account of the National Planning Framework (NPF3) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) which were published by the Scottish Government on 23rd June 2014.

3.6 An Equalities Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken and will accompany the MIR.

4. Consultation on the MIR

4.1 The MIR is a consultation document. We aim to carry out this consultation commencing Autumn 2015. It is essential that communities, organisations and businesses are aware of the MIR and get engaged in the consultation.

4.2 Consultation itself will build on recent experience and we intend to actively engage with communities, businesses and agencies operating within the Highland area to seek views from a wide audience on the main issues identified within the MIR and any other issues of concern raised. We

specifically intend to hold consultation events utilising the existing Ward Forum network across the Plan area to engage people on the main issues. We will prepare a Consultation Strategy to show proposed arrangements and will review it in discussion with Members of this committee.

- 4.3 We will be in touch with Community Councils across the area to ensure that they have opportunity to get involved in the consultation and to encourage them to put forward comments on behalf of their communities. We will also be asking Community Councils and Members to help spread the word about the Plan and details of the consultation. This includes encouraging members and stakeholders of the local community to engage in the process and submit their comments.
- 4.4 We will widely publicise the consultation events by providing notification to Community Councils, all those on our mailing list, placing notices in the local press, distribution of display posters to communities and through the use of social media. As the HwLDP will not allocate specific sites for development this Plan will not involve neighbour notification.
- 4.5 We will encourage people to make comments on the MIR electronically and this consultation will be the first of our LDP consultations to use the new Development Plans consultation portal which is designed to make it easy for people to read and comment on Development Plans documents.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to approval by Committee, the MIR and associated Environmental Report will be subject to a period of public consultation. However, a number of presentational and typographical changes will be required prior to publication. This includes finalising and formatting of the document, making the document more accessible in both printed and online form. Any modifications will be agreed in consultation with the Chair of this Committee.
- 5.2 The results of the MIR consultation will be reported back to this Committee for consideration and to decide on the contents of the Proposed Plan.

6. Implications

- 6.1 Resource
Resources to prepare the Local Development Plan are available from the Development and Infrastructure Service budget.
- 6.2 Legal
There are no known legal implications arising from this report.
- 6.3 Equalities
An Equalities Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken.

6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

The MIR outlines specific options for delivering the Carbon Clever initiative. A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been integral to the production of the MIR which assesses the potential impacts of development options and to ensure that we make informed decisions about which locations we steer development towards. In due course the Plan will be subject to Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

6.5 Risk

There are no known risks arising from this report.

6.6 Gaelic

All headings in the MIR will be provided in Gaelic.

6.7 Rural

The MIR addresses a range of development-related rural issues.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to:

- (i) approve the MIR for public consultation, including the preferred options for dealing with the main issues identified;
- (ii) agree that any minor modifications, presentational and typographical changes required to the MIR and ER documents prior to publication can be made by the Director in consultation with the Chair;
- (iii) agree to the MIR and associated Environmental Report being subject of public consultation to commence in the Autumn of 2015;
- (iv) agree the proposed arrangements for consultation and role of Members in encouraging people to engage in the plan process;
- (v) agree that the results of the consultation will be reported to this Committee in due course for consideration and deciding on the contents of the Proposed Plan; and
- (vi) note that the Monitoring Statement will be published as a supporting background document.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 3 August 2015

Author: Scott Dalgarno (Development Plans Manager) 01463 702592
Brian MacKenzie (Principal Planner) 01463 702276

Background Papers:

All available on the HwLDP website www.highland.gov.uk/
HwLDP2 Main Issues Report (Committee stage, for approval) – Appendix 1
HwLDP2 Monitoring Statement (Committee stage)
HwLDP2 Environmental Report (Committee stage)
HwLDP2 MIR EQIA Screening (Committee stage)